

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES (approved 8/2/11)**

**Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School**

**May 5, 2011
7:15 p.m. AB Exec Session
7:30 p.m. AB Meeting**

Members present: Brigid Bieber, Mike Coppolino, Xuan Kong, Terry Lindgren, Kim McOsker, Maria Neyland,
Members absent: Paul Murphy, John Petersen, Bruce Sabot
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

1.0 The AB School Committee meeting was called to order at 7:18 p.m. by Brigid Bieber, chair.

AB EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:20 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously
VOTED by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into
Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation
YES (Bieber, Bruce, Coppolino, Kong, Lindgren, Neyland)

This was done after Brigid Bieber declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board.

At 7:25 p.m., the Committee was polled and voted to go out of Executive Session.

AB School Committee meeting continues

2.0 **CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION**

The ABRHS School Committee student representatives for FY11 were thanked: Rosa Huang, Nikhil Manocha, Abha Patil, Allison Wang and Betty Yang. Nikhil thanked the Committee for giving him such a valuable learning experience. The Committee responded with a round of applause for his enthusiastic participation this year.

Laurie Maylander and students presented the annual ABSAF Donation check for \$93,000. ABSAF was thanked for their very generous donation and strong commitment to our schools.

3.0 **APPROVAL of MINUTES**

Minutes from the 3/24/11 Joint/AB SC meeting were approved as amended. Kim McOsker abstained. Minutes from the 4/2/11 Joint SC meeting were approved as written. Kim McOsker and Maria Neyland abstained.

STATEMENT of WARRANT

Warrant #11-021 dated 4/7/11 in the amount of \$1,545,339.93
Warrant #11-022 dated 4/21/11 in the amount of \$1,929,331.38
Warrant #11-023 dated 5/5/11 in the amount of \$1,319,934.74
were signed by the Chairperson and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

4.0 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - none

5.0 **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

5.1 ALG Report – ALG has not met since the last SC meeting.

5.2 Acton FinCom Report – FinCom has not met since the last SC meeting.

5.3 BLF Report

Maria Neyland reported that the BLF met and did a pre-Town Meeting meeting.

5.4 FY'11 and FY'12 Budget Update

Don Aicardi reported on the process of closing out the FY11 budget and proceeding with an overdue purchasing initiative. Details will be presented at the May 19th APS meeting and June 2nd AB SC meetings. The intention is to spend \$575,000 in APS and \$317,000 in ABR on nonrecurring items such as technology and textbooks as this year is closed out. A responsibility is also felt to replenish town reserves. Dr. Mills hopes to replenish the APS Free Cash by \$400,000 and ABR E&D by \$200,000 by the close of FY11.

Deborah Bookis, Amy Bisiewicz, J.D. Head, Alixe Callen and Craig Hardimon presented on why these purchases are needed. New technology will include 13 SMART Boards, resulting in 25% of our High School classrooms being equipped with these tools. Amy would also like to purchase 30 netbooks for a pilot mobile lab for the Junior High. APS/ABRSD is now a Google “Apps for Education” site which is very exciting. Steve Mills said that the only new item that has not been seen before is the new High School gym floor. The current one is 42 years old. There is a sense of urgency to this project now due to large cracks. If done now, we can use the current floor as a base. If we wait we need to put down a new base, it is more expensive. Alixe Callen stated that she recognizes that it is a tough economic time and many colleagues are suffering. She thanked the Committee for considering these additional items that are so needed, and is very grateful for the thoughtful work that has gone into putting this plan together. Craig also thanked the Committee as well for their support this year and for these new items.

Committee members asked about supporting more professional development during the year, including some time for staff to try new technology for the SMART boards. There is still discussion over the equipment being left by ACAT and what needs to be purchased. 120 High School students are registered for classes in the fall using this studio. Dick Calendrella spoke as a member of the ACAT Board of Directors. He said that ACAT will fully support what the High School needs. They will be moving to bigger quarters this summer due to their exponential growth. ACAT has offered 3 options to the HS: 1. ACAT would teach the classes. 2. They would leave and donate everything needed for the High School. 3. They would maintain a studio B at the High School and would share equipment. Discussion will continue.

The Committee thanked Steve and the staff at the Junior High and High School for really taking a hard look at how effective the schools are and what is needed. Through careful thought and discussion, a good plan for needed items of the highest priority appears to be in place. The staff looks forward to sharing the results with the School Committee next year.

Mike Coppolino asked about electronic textbooks and if there is a purchase plan in place for. Craig Hardimon said that electronic copies of textbooks are not available now unless the hardcopy textbooks are purchased, but that will probably change. Amy Bisiewicz said that a long term vision is being formed. Some departments have their content digitized already and some teachers have theirs done. Amy hopes to present a more complete plan next year.

When asked, Don Aicard said that examples of recurring sources are vacancy factor and energy savings.

Although a vote was not needed, the Committee was in agreement to support the proposed FY11 Year End Expenditure Initiative at the Region.

Xuan Kong asked for Committee input on his “Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Budget Process” handout (5.4.3) before it is distributed to the public.

5.5 Health Trust Report

5.5.2 Health Insurance Open Enrollment

Marie Altieri reported that there is some savings from what was budgeted for insurance, but it is pretty close. Mike Coppolino asked if an incentive could be given to people to not subscribe to the more expensive plan, as the Town of Acton is doing.

5.6 Subcommittee Updates

5.6.1 Policy – Brigid Bieber

5.6.1.1 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan – Liza Huber reported that the recent revision was accepted by DESE.

5.6.1.2 Consider Need for New Policy re Use of School Buildings & Properties in Community Education – Steve Mills requested this due to a number of concerns that have come up recently regarding community use of school facilities. Consistent rates and procedures need to be established. This includes use of our tennis and basketball courts, as well as classrooms. Community Education Director Erin Bettez would like more guidance on structure from the Committee.

An Acton member is needed for the policy subcommittee. Brigid will bring the list of about 5 policies that the Subcommittee is now working on to the next meeting for prioritizing.

5.6.2 Long-Range Strategic Planning & Flyer

Steve Mills reported that the survey is out and 175 responses have been received. Two forums are coming up for the public. He thanked the Beacon for their publicity.

5.6.3 Cost Savings Task Force

Xuan reported that the group has not met recently, but information will be coming soon.

5.7 Class Size Task Force Update

Terry Lindgren reported that this group will expand soon to create recommendations that will be brought to the School Committees soon.

5.8 Superintendent’s Evaluation

5.8.1 Process and Timeline, 5/7/11 is the due date for input

5.8.2 Job Description, 2010-2011 Goals, Evaluation Form – *see 3/24/11 packet*

The public is welcome to send comments to the SC mailbox on the website. Submissions by SC members are part of the public record.

5.9 Regional MCAS AYP Update – See memo from Liza Huber in packet.

5.10 2011-2012 School Calendar Revision

The revision is a move from an early release model to a late start one. There is no change to the number of days. Alixe used this model at other schools and it has been very successful. There would be three days during the year when classes would start at 10:00 a.m. The cost is \$1400 for the year.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: to approve the revised 2011-2012 school calendar as proposed

6.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

6.1 Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Cultural Exchange Trip to Spain 4/14 – 4/28/12

Materials for this meeting are posted on the schools’ website at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.

Terry stated that this is an example of what he hopes the policy committee can look at because it is a very expensive trip.

It was moved, seconded and

VOTED: to approve the ABRHS Cultural Exchange Trip to Spain 4/14 – 4/28/12
Terry Lindgren abstained. All others voted YES.

6.2 Boxborough Town Meeting Plan

Brigid invited all to attend Boxborough Town Meeting. The regionalization discussion is expected to be on Tuesday.

6.3 Recommendation to Approve FY' 12 TEC Bid

Don Aicardi requested the annual vote to join the TEC (The Education Cooperative) consortium that results in good savings for participating school systems. This also streamlines purchasing for the schools.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: to approve the FY' 12 TEC Bid as proposed

6.4 Letter from Boxborough School Committee Regarding Regionalization

Brigid Bieber said that they have been looking to address their declining enrollment and related issues that have come up. They are considering Job Sharing and Regionalization. Boxborough Town Meeting will ask for a consensus vote on regionalization and if approved, they will come back to the Acton School Committees to discuss.

7.0 **ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE**

7.1 School Committee Meeting Schedule, 2011-2012

The July meeting will be decided on at June meeting.

7.2 Acton Boxborough Youth Soccer Field Development Proposal

Steve Mills has had several meetings with this committee and the lower fields would be greatly improved with artificial turf and lighting. Acton would try to access CPC money. This would eventually require a Town Meeting vote next April. There are many questions still to answer, such as who will maintain the fields, costs, fees and scheduling. This could begin a year from now. The district has been asked to put together a list of questions that need to be addressed. Terry volunteered to join the Committee. Maria Neyland asked if the school had considered doing this on their own. She is concerned that regional collateral would be used on a note held by a private organization (ABYS). The Committee asked for more financials. More information will be provided at the June meeting.

7.3 Policy on Athletics Including Students

Mike Coppolino read a statement saying that part of School Committee's role is to act as a conduit between the public and the schools. He has heard from many parents who are upset that so few students are accepted on our sports teams. An example is Lincoln Sudbury HS baseball takes 22 students while AB only takes 14 and Concord has 18. He said the numbers are similar in lacrosse. He read from the student handbook that says inclusion is a primary part of our programs. Mike's concern is that the schools should not have a written policy that a coach can change. He believes in our philosophy and wants it to be followed. Mike has spoke to Steve Mills and Steve Desy about this and the need to be consistent with our policies. Steve said that all sports levels, sub Varsity, are per the handbook wording, but this does not apply to Varsity because that level is most competitive and is about winning. He agreed that 14 kids on a varsity baseball team is small, but he doesn't want to second guess his baseball coach. Kids need to be safe and not play varsity if they are not at that skill level. The MIAA goal for varsity is to win. Mike said that he would not want to equate a coach's success with children with winning. Maria Neyland cautioned that the Committee should tread lightly in this debate. She felt that just as the Committee would not tell a teacher how

to do their job, they should not tell a coach how to do theirs. Terry agreed with Mike that it is not all about winning. Inclusion should be maximized. Numbers should not be in the policy. Katherine Stein spoke from the audience about her email to the Committee. At *Race to Nowhere*, sports were emphasized as one way to include kids and we are not doing this. She felt more kids could be accepted on our teams and thanked Mike for bringing this up. Steve Mielke, former President of AB Town Baseball, spoke about his concern regarding the trends being seen with our teams. He emphasized that we need to create opportunities for these kids as they move through our system and suggested that Sudbury's connection to their HS program should be a model that AB strives for. Brigid encouraged people to speak with the coaches and Athletic Director about this. Xuan said that a policy with a number in it will not work. As a public school district, he said the Committee's responsibility is to include students in all kinds of opportunities. The Committee agreed that this could be an agenda item for the summer workshop.

8.0 **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

9.0 **NEXT MEETINGS**

May 9, Boxborough Town Meeting begins

May 19, 7:30 pm APS SC Meeting at CONANT School

June 2, 7:30 pm JT SC Meeting at RJGJHS Library (*new location*)

The AB School Committee adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: School Health Insurance Enrollment, 5/5/11, M. Altieri
Statement read by Michael Coppolino re sports teams 5/5/11
See Agenda attached

Statement read by Michael Coppolino at 5/5/11 AB School Committee meeting:

The reason I asked to put this item on the agenda is because part of our roles as SC members is to act as a conduit for communication between the public and the schools, and though the policy that is of concern is not a formal SC policy, the fact the public is impacted by its implementation led me to bring this forward.

Athletics have been an important part of my life, and I'm sure many of yours, whether it's been personal participation or that of a child. Making and not making teams is a big part of growing up and there's much life-long benefit to both. The highs and lows in high school are a healthy preview of what's to come in daily life.

Hundreds of parents did not come forth complaining about team size, however this issue still resonates with me, both from a sense of fairness and honesty. The Schools should not have a written policy that is ignored or bent to accommodate a coach's desires; high school sports are all about kids, camaraderie and competing. Decisions about how many should be on a team should not be driven by coach convenience, or reticence to take a few more because their parents might complain that their child isn't playing enough.

The stated policy is: “

... Inclusion is one of the primary objectives of the program; the goal is to involve as many young people as possible in an athletic experience. Each coach, together with the Director of Athletics must, determine his/her game plan, strategy and quality of competition. However, the aim is to have young people be participants rather than bystanders. Through participation they learn that self- sacrifice, discipline and cooperation are necessary ingredients of teamwork. They learn, too, the value of respect for all who are involved in the competition-teammates, opponents, coaches and officials. Good sportsmanship is one of our highest priorities.

I agree completely with the stated philosophy, and recommend that we truly need to say what we mean and mean what we say. If coaches can't accept or implement this philosophy, they should do something else.