

**ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Minutes** (approved 10/20/11)

**Cafetorium**  
**Conant School**

**May 19, 2011**  
**7:00 p.m. Acton Public SC Meeting**

Members Present: Michael Coppelino, Xuan Kong, Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, John Petersen  
Members Absent: none  
Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

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The Acton Public School Committee was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by John Petersen, chair.

**GUEST PRESENTATION** – Mary Brolin, Boxborough School Committee Chairperson  
Mary presented on Boxborough’s efforts to address their declining school enrollment. This included discussion of a Job sharing and Regionalization Letter to the APS and ABR School Committees, Boxborough Town Meeting’s warrant articles that requested attendees’ Sense of the Meeting on the issues, and Blanchard School’s decision to allow school choice next year.

Two years ago they began looking at the structure of their Administration. Three ideas under consideration are: continuing the current model, job sharing, and full regionalization with Acton. They envision \$58,000 in savings with a job sharing model. It was suggested that the ABRSC could appoint a study group on regionalization. This would be a multi year process. Mary asked the Committee to consider if this is something that the region wants to consider going forward. The Boxborough School Committee will talk about what they want their AB Regional School Committee members to consider going forward.

Steve Mills said that this is a question for the schools, as well as the Acton and Boxborough taxpayers, but from his perspective as Superintendent, it makes a lot of sense to regionalize because there is so much duplication and inefficiency in our current system. He agreed to prepare some preliminary analysis about savings that could potentially be realized.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S INTRODUCTION**

John Petersen thanked his fellow School Committee members and Steve and his staff for their support this past year while he was Chairperson.

Steve Mills opened the floor for nominations regarding next year’s Acton Public School Committee officers.

*It was moved, seconded and unanimously:*

**VOTED:** that Michael Coppelino serve as Chairperson of the Acton Public School Committee for the 2011-2012 school year.

*It was moved, seconded and unanimously:*

**VOTED:** that Kim McOsker serve as Vice-Chairperson of the Acton Public School Committee for the 2011-2012 school year.

*It was moved, seconded and unanimously:*

**VOTED:** that Beth Petr serve as Secretary of the Acton Public School Committee for the 2011-2012 school year.

John Petersen was thanked for his service as chair this year, including his extensive work on the negotiations and health insurance trust subcommittees.

**Letter of Resignation**

New Chairperson, Mike Coppolino, read Terry Lindgren's resignation letter dated May 12, 2011 for the record. John wished Terry well and thanked him for all of his volunteer efforts for the community. Steve Mills thanked Terry for being such a great supporter in his first 2 years as superintendent. Mike read the policy outlining how to fill an unexpired term. Terry had one more year. Mike spoke to Acton Board of Selectmen Chair, Mike Gowing about holding a joint meeting on June 6. Interested candidates should contact Mike Coppolino. Beth will publicize.

### **STATEMENT OF WARRANT**

Warrant #201123 dated 5/17/11 in the amount of \$211,223.54, warrant #201122 dated 5/3/11 in the amount of \$96,831.05, warrant #201121 dated 4/19/11 in the amount of \$185,684.86 and warrant #201120 dated 4/5/11 in the amount of \$131,893.97 were signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Joint SC minutes of March 24, 2011 were approved as amended. Kim McOsker abstained because she was not there. These were approved with amendments by ABRSC on 5/5/11. The Joint SC minutes of April 2, 2011 were approved. Kim McOsker and Paul Murphy abstained. These were approved by the ABRSC on 5/5/11.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Bill Guthlein spoke as a parent of two elementary age children who asked about the process for how students are placed in classes for the next year. He would like it to be more transparent. Steve Mills will bring this up with his Administrative Council. The process varies between schools.

Paul Malchody spoke as a parent and volunteer Community Education basketball coach concerned about the missing lights in the PDB gym. He feels the darkness could be a safety issue. McCarthy Towne Principal David Krane said he is working on this with JD Head.

### **EDUCATION REPORT** – Damian Sugrue, Conant School Principal

Mr. Sugrue presented on Reading Data Collection, the Use and Sharing of Data, the Increased Utilization of PowerSchool and the Value and Accomplishments of having an Assistant Principal.

In Grades 1 and 2, Fountas and Pinnell are used for Reading, while DRA 2 is used for Grades 3 – 6. Both assessments ensure program continuity from year to year. Planned usage of online resources include: attendance, lunch counts, report cards, continued development of curriculum documents and website improvement and expansion. Mr. Sugrue spoke about the importance of investing now in technical resources. Dr. Priscilla Kotyk is the Assistant Principal shared between Conant and Gates Schools. At Conant her primary responsibility is to assist the Principal with day-to-day operations and facilitating the use of technology. This allows the Principal to visit classrooms more often, collaborate with teachers to improve student outcomes and meet with teachers more often to discuss curriculum and teaching practices. The addition of the assistant principals has been extremely valuable this year. Mr. Sugrue concluded by thanking his staff, students and parents, PTO, fellow administrators, Dr. Mills and the School Committee for helping him through his first year at Conant.

The PTO was thanked for the nice refreshments for the meeting.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- 7.1 ALG Report - *no meeting*
- 7.2 Acton Finance Committee Report – Xuan gave an update on the 5/10/11 meeting.  
Steve Mills will be presenting at FinCom next Tuesday night at the Chair's request.
- 7.3 BOS Update – School Committee representatives are needed for the FY12 positions.
- 7.4 FY'11 and FY'12 Budget – *Steve Mills*
  - 7.4.1 Closing out FY'11 Budget and Superintendent's Purchasing Initiative

- 7.4.1.1 SMARTBoard Survey Results: 1st & 2nd Grade Teachers
- 7.4.2 5/19/11 Presentation Slides
- 7.4.3 FY'11 Status Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

Steve Mills asked the School Committee to endorse his decision to use some of the available FY11 budget capacity to address some significant needs beyond his level service budget. Although a vote is not required, he asked for the Committee's support for spending \$575,000 for one time expenses for next year, per slide 12:

FY'11 Year End Surpluses – APS	
From Recurring Sources:	\$419k
From Non-Recurring Sources:	\$702k
Less Amount Used to Balance FY12:	(\$128k)
Less FY11 One-Time Expenditures:	(\$575k)
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Current FY11 Year End Estimate	\$417k

The elementary principals as well as IT Director Amy Bisiewicz and Curriculum Director Deborah Bookis presented supporting data from the staff. The requests for Smart Boards were overwhelming. It was estimated that 3 weeks of additional instruction time per year could be generated by using this technology.

A School Committee member pointed out that it is important to recognize that a key driver in the FY11 budget was that each of the unions were given a 0% COLA for FY11 and these numbers are a result. Steve was complimented on the careful thought and explanations of how the expenditures contribute to learning, not just spending money. Most of these requests were previously outlined in the January 22, 2011 Budget Saturday presentations. The School Committee agreed to make this commitment to technology and emphasized that a plan must be in place to cover repairs and assistance to staff using it. Grade 1 will receive 16 SMARTBoards and Grade 2 will receive 15 for a total cost of \$123,000.

They also agreed to the proposed textbook purchase plan, addressing two years of the three-year textbook plan outlined last January.

The Committee agreed with the Superintendent that it is wise not to spend the full amount of excess and that turning some back is key. The remaining FY11 balance of \$417,000 will flow back into Free Cash. The Superintendent thanked the School Committee for their support of this plan.

## 7.5 Health Insurance Trust Report

- 7.5.1 John Petersen reported on the 4/28/11 meeting. Mike asked if the HIT would consider looking at the Dept of Revenue list of comparable towns that he brought up earlier this year.
- 7.5.2 Marie Altieri reported on the Health Insurance Open Enrollment results.

## 7.6 Subcommittee Updates

### 7.6.1 Policy

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

**7.6.1.2 Consider Need for New Policy re Use of School Buildings & Properties in Community Education** – Steve Mills reported that there is some urgency to adding an Acton member to the Policy Subcommittee so that this policy can specifically be addressed. There may be an opportunity

to work with Acton Boxborough Youth Soccer to significantly upgrade the lower fields at the High School. A committee member asked for an explanation of how Community Education is legally organized so that the Superintendent and Director of Comm Ed can effectively administer the School Committees' decisions. This information will be provided at a future meeting. The subcommittee will consider revision of Policy KF.

**7.6.1.3 Recommendation to Delete Assignment of Students From Other Schools to Classes Policy (File: JCAC) FIRST READING**

Marie Altieri reported that after revising Kindergarten Entrance Policy: JEB to be stricter about not allowing families to apply for early admission if their child turns 5 in September or October (after the September 1 deadline), the Central Administration and Principals would like to be stricter regarding students transferring from other schools. They would like these students to be placed in the grade level for which they are age appropriate. Because this may be interpreted to be in conflict with Assignment of Students from Other Schools to Classes Policy: JCAC, it is proposed that JCAC be deleted. Three Committee members felt that this request needed more study by the Subcommittee. It was suggested that "In regard to kindergarten and first grade..." could be added to the policy. Xuan referred to Attleboro's specific policy. At the next meeting, an Acton subcommittee member will be chosen so a review can begin.

7.6.2. Long-Range Strategic Planning Forums, May 12 and 23

Steve Mills reported that Public Forums will be held on May 12 and 23.

7.7 Cost Savings Joint SC Task Force Update

Xuan Kong reported that the school has provided lots of input and more is being gathered from the Town and community.

7.8 Class Size Task Force Update

Amy Hedison will present the survey results at the Regional SC meeting.

7.9 2011-2012 School Calendar revision

*It was moved, seconded and unanimously*

**VOTED:** to approve the amended 2011-2012 School Calendar to change the Elementary Schools' Early Dismissal Day from Nov 2 to Nov 15 and to add April 30<sup>th</sup> to the calendar.

7.10 Coordinated Program Review Update

Liza Huber updated the Committee on the DESE's review of our program. Of the 45 categories, we exceeded the requirements in 43 of them. The two small areas of focus involved ELL including making sure that progress reports are done on the same schedule as the usual report cards. John Petersen asked how the schools are helping our non-english speaking families. Liza said we received commendations on our extensive translation services for families. It was also mentioned that families from different cultures often do not know how to be involved and what the expectations are for how families can support their children's education in this country. PTOs have been helpful in this regard. Family dinners and events in the schools have been very popular. Some schools have brochures telling families all the ways they can be involved.

**NEW BUSINESS**

8.1 Acton 2020

Margaret Wooley Busse and Jim Snyder Grant, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Acton 2020 invited all to their June 23<sup>rd</sup> public outreach event about creating a Master Plan for the future of Acton. See [www.acton2020.info](http://www.acton2020.info). Because the schools are involved in so much of what goes on in Acton, the Acton 2020 Committee is anxious to get feedback and maintain close communication with the School Committees.

8.2. Kindergarten Enrollment

Marie Altieri reported that the FY11-12 Kindergarten Enrollment/Lottery resulted in 288 kindergarteners for September 2011. This is as projected, and 40 fewer students than last year. The drop in enrollment that was projected is starting to appear. Conant kindergarten has gone from 46 – 50% Asian students to 59% at this time.

- 8.3 Recommendation to Approve FY' 12 TEC Bid  
*It was moved, seconded and unanimously*  
**VOTED:** to approve the FY' 12 TEC Bid
- 8.4 Recommendation to Accept Gift to Gates School from Math Olympiad  
*It was moved, seconded and unanimously*  
**VOTED:** to accept the Gift to Gates School from the Math Olympiad enrichment program surplus with gratitude
- 8.5 Recommendation to Accept Gift to the APS Preschool  
*It was moved, seconded and unanimously*  
**VOTED:** to accept the Gift to the Acton Public Schools Preschool from Rebecca Allen with gratitude
- 8.6 Recommendation to Accept Gift to the Conant School from the surplus for Sessions I-III of Community Education/Conant Enrichment Programs  
*It was moved, seconded and unanimously*  
**VOTED:** to accept the Gift to the Conant School from the surplus for Sessions I-III of Community Education/Conant Enrichment Programs
- 8.7 Recommendation to Accept Gift to the Acton Public Schools from the projected surplus from the All Day Kindergarten Program for FY' 11  
*It was moved, seconded and unanimously*  
**VOTED:** to accept the Gift to the Acton Public Schools from the projected surplus from the All Day Kindergarten Program for FY' 11 (first disbursement)

#### **ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE**

- 9.1 School Committee Meeting Schedule, 2011-2012  
Beth will send a meeting wizard out to confirm dates with the Committee.

#### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

- 10.1 Monthly APS Financial Reports  
10.2 ELL Student Population Report, 5/1/11 and 4/1/11  
10.3 OnTeam Newsletter, April-May  
10.4 Dismissal Times for Last Day of School  
10.5 Open House Dates – Fall 2011  
10.6 Enrollment Report – May 1, 2011  
10.7 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Presentation, May 11, Dr. Carolyn Imperato  
10.8 All-Staff Retirement Party – June 9, 2011, 3:00 – 5:00, Wedgewood Pines, Stow  
10.9 Correspondence from the Community  
10.9.1 “Class Sizes Need to be Addressed”  
10.9.2 Public Records Request (M.G.L. Chapter 66, Section 10), 4/27/11, A. Nitschelm and C. Kadlec  
10.9.3 Open Meeting Law Complaints (2), 4/27/11, A. Nitschelm and C. Kadlec  
10.9.4 “Acton FinCom gives incorrect information to Town Meeting”  
10.9.5 Attorney letter re Marcus Lewis Tennis request for use of facilities  
10.10 School Newsletters –  
10.11 “Students Make Their Mark” exhibit through May 30 at Acton Senior Center

#### **NEXT MEETINGS**

- June 2, 7:30 p.m. AB Regional SC Meeting, Jr High Library June 6<sup>th</sup> at BOS meeting  
June 16, 7:30 p.m., Acton Public School Committee Meeting, Jr High Library

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

Documents Used: see agenda attached

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Cafetorium  
Conant School

May 19, 2011  
7:00 p.m.

AGENDA with addendum

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **GUEST PRESENTATION** – Mary Brolin, Boxborough School Committee Chairperson
  - 2.1 Job sharing and Regionalization Letter to APS and ABR School Committees
  - 2.2 Boxborough Town Meeting warrant articles re Sense of the Meeting
  - 2.3 Boxborough's Blanchard School to allow school choice next year
3. **Acton Public School Committee Meeting:**  
**SUPERINTENDENT'S INTRODUCTION**
  - 3.1 School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting (File: BDA)
  - 3.2 School Committee Officers (File: BDB)
  - 3.3 Election of School Committee Officers, 2011-12
    - 3.3.1 Chairperson
    - 3.3.2 Vice Chairperson
    - 3.3.3 Secretary
  - 3.4 Letter of Resignation (*addendum*)
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES and STATEMENT OF WARRANT**
  - 4.1 March 24, 2011 (Joint SC, approved with amendments by ABRSC 5/5/11)
  - 4.2 April 2, 2011 (Joint SC, approved by ABRSC 5/5/11)
5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
6. **EDUCATION REPORT** – Damian Sugrue, Conant School Principal
7. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
  - 7.1 ALG Report – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
  - 7.2 Acton Finance Committee Report – 5/10/11, *Xuan Kong*
  - 7.3 BOS Update – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
  - 7.4 FY'11 and FY'12 Budget – *Steve Mills*
    - 7.4.1 Closing out FY'11 Budget and Superintendent's Purchasing Initiative
      - 7.4.1.1 SMARTBoard Survey Results: 1st & 2nd Grade Teachers (*addendum*)
    - 7.4.2 5/19/11 Presentation Slides
    - 7.4.3 FY'11 Status Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter
  - 7.5 Health Insurance Trust Report – *John Petersen*
    - 7.5.1 4/28/11 Meeting
    - 7.5.2 Health Insurance Open Enrollment Update – *Marie Altieri*
  - 7.6 Subcommittee Updates
    - 7.6.1 Policy
      - 7.6.1.1 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan – revision accepted by DESE -. *Liza Huber (no vote needed)*
      - 7.6.1.2 Consider Need for New Policy re Use of School Buildings & Properties in Community Education – *Steve Mills*
      - 7.6.1.3 Recommendation to Delete *Assignment of Students From Other Schools to Classes* Policy (File: JCAC) **FIRST READING** – *Marie Altieri*
    - 7.6.2. Long-Range Strategic Planning Forums, May 12 and 23 – *Steve Mills*
  - 7.7 Cost Savings Joint SC Task Force Update – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
  - 7.8 Class Size Task Force Update – *Amy Hedison*

- 7.8.1 Survey
- 7.9 2011-2012 School Calendar revision – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills (addendum)*  
(Elem Early Dismissal Day moved from Nov 2 to Nov 15 AND Apr 30 added)
- 7.10 Coordinated Program Review Update – *Liza Huber (oral)*

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

- 8.1 Acton 2020 - *John Petersen*
- 8.2 Kindergarten Enrollment
  - 8.2.1 Update on FY11-12 Kindergarten Enrollment/Lottery – *Marie Altieri*
- 8.3 Recommendation to Approve FY'12 TEC Bid – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*
- 8.4 Recommendation to Accept Gift to Gates School from Math Olympiad enrichment program surplus – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*
- 8.5 Recommendation to Accept Gift to the APS Preschool from Rebecca Allen – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*
- 8.6 Recommendation to Accept Gift to the Conant School from the surplus for Sessions I-III of Community Education/Conant Enrichment Programs – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*
- 8.7 Recommendation to Accept Gift to the Acton Public Schools from the projected surplus from the All Day Kindergarten Program for FY'11 (first disbursement) – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*

9. **ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE**

- 9.1 School Committee Meeting Schedule, 2011-2012

10. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

- 10.1 Monthly APS Financial Reports
  - 10.1.1. Budget Status Summary
  - 10.1.2. Budget Status Summary – SPED
  - 10.1.3. Conant School
- 10.2 ELL Student Population Report, 5/1/11 and 4/1/11
- 10.3 OnTeam Newsletter, April-May
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  - 10.9.3 Open Meeting Law Complaints (2), 4/27/11, A. Nitschelm and C. Kadlec
  - 10.9.4 “Acton FinCom gives incorrect information to Town Meeting”
  - 10.9.5 Attorney letter re Marcus Lewis Tennis request for use of facilities
- 10.10 School Newsletters –
  - Acton Public School Preschool: <http://ab.mec.edu/Preschool/index.htm>
  - Conant Crier: <http://conant.ab.mec.edu/pto/newsletter.html>
  - Douglas Digest: <http://douglas.ab.mec.edu/index.html?pto/pto>
  - Gates Gazette: <http://gates.ab.mec.edu/gazette.html>
  - McCarthy-Towne Bulletin: <http://www.mctptso.org/bulletin/>
  - Merriam Community News: <http://merriam.ab.mec.edu/newsletters.html>
- 10.11 “Students Make Their Mark” exhibit through May 30 at Acton Senior Center (*addendum*)

11. **NEXT MEETINGS**

- June 2, 7:30 p.m. AB Regional SC Meeting, Jr High Library
- June 16, 7:30 p.m., Acton Public School Committee Meeting, Jr High Library

**ADJOURN**