

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

**Superintendent's Conference Room
R.J. Grey Junior High School**

**June 16, 2011
7:00 p.m. JT SC Exec Session
7:30 p.m. APS Meeting**

Members present: Brigid Bieber, Dennis Bruce, Mike Coppolino, Xuan Kong, Kim McOsker (7:55), Paul Murphy, Maria Neyland, John Petersen, Bruce Sabot (left at 7:45)
Members absent: none
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

The AB School Committee meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by John Petersen, chair. The APS School Committee meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Michael Coppolino, chair.

JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:02 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel.

YES (Bieber, Bruce, Coppolino, Kong, Murphy, Neyland, Petersen, Sabot)

This was done after John Petersen declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board.

At 7:02 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED by role call: that the **Acton Public School Committee** go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel.

YES (Coppolino, Dennis, Kong, Murphy, Petersen)

This was done after Michael Coppolino declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board.

At 7:40 p.m., the Committees were polled and voted to go out of Joint Executive Session.

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPEN MEETING

2.1 2011 Administrators' Benefits Manual – minor revision

Marie Altieri proposed a revision to the Administrators' Benefits Manual due to the change this year in health insurance. This change is consistent with the OSA and AFSCME contracts and the policy has been in effect actually since last fall. The School Committees asked to approve all changes to the manuals.

Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee

It was moved, seconded and *unanimously*

VOTED: to accept the changes to the Administrators' Benefits Manual as proposed

Acton Public School Committee

It was moved, seconded and *unanimously*

VOTED: to accept the changes to the Administrators' Benefits Manual as proposed

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #11-026 dated 6/16/11 in the amount of \$3,715,487.75 was signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

The AB School Committee was adjourned at 7:50 pm

APS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

2. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Committee welcomed Dennis Bruce as a new member, replacing Terry Lindgren.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of May 19, 2011 will be reviewed at the next meeting. The minutes of June 6, 2011 (Joint Meeting with Acton Board of Selectmen) were approved. Dennis Bruce abstained because he was not a member at the time of the meeting.

4. STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #201125 dated 6/14/11 in the amount of \$496,267.92 was signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1 Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Report

ALG has not met since the last SC meeting.

6.2 Acton Finance Committee Report

Finance Director Don Aicardi presented at a recent Fincom meeting. Questions have come up about year end spending of FY11 funds. Steve Mills explained that he focused on a level service budget for next year but as the months have gone by, things have changed. The budget is a fluid document that relies on estimates. Health insurance and utilities are trending very well now. He already recommended a reallocation of \$150,000 of FY12 funds at the regional level for two new positions. Although this is above level service, it is very much needed. No one could have predicted in February or March that these balances would exist. It does not make sense to let the money sit when serious educational needs exist. Tonight, Steve will recommend reallocating \$108,000 for needed assistants at the APS. This is less than 1/2% of our budget. Regarding FinCom's concern that this is above level service, Steve said that in good faith, he felt that this was what he should be spending money on. It is also the same amount approved by voters at Town Meeting. John Petersen echoed what Steve said and emphasized that the Committee went to Fincom to be transparent and explain what the plan was. Steve will contact FinCom Chair Bill Mullin and be sure that any misunderstanding is cleared up.

6.3 Acton Board of Selectmen Report

Acton BOS Chair Mike Gowing is asking each of the local boards and committees to identify 2 or 3 goals that they hope to accomplish this year. Chairs of these groups, including Mike Coppolino, are invited to a meeting on July 25th to discuss these goals and see which are common and unique for the groups, as well as communication in general. Mike asked the SC to send him input for this, as well as ideas for the summer workshop.

- 6.4 FY'11 and '12 APS Budget Update
 Steve Mills and Don Aicardi presented on the proposed FY'12 reallocations. Trends affecting FY'12 continue to be positive, including a shift from more expensive to less expensive health insurance plans and savings in electricity due to lower use. Dr. Mills' proposal for reallocation within the FY'12 APS budget includes:
- K-6 Mathematics Assistants (Regular Education Math Support for Students)
 Add 18 hours per week per school for total cost of \$54,000
 - K-6 Classroom Assistants (currently fund 44 hours per week per school)
 Add 18 hours per week per school for total cost of \$54,000

Director of Curriculum and Assessment Deborah Bookis talked about the math assistants who will work with the math specialist/coach that is being hired. She also highlighted the value of the additional classroom assistants. Mike Coppolino said that he hopes that this plan will become engrained in our district including professional development. He asked for accountability on these activities. Steve Mills agreed that it will be observed as the year progresses.

It was moved, seconded and *unanimously*

VOTED: To reallocate \$108,000 from within the current FY12 APS budget as currently approved:

FROM:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Health Insurance | \$16,000 |
| Electricity | \$92,000 |

TO:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| K-6 Math Assistants | \$54,000 |
| K-6 Classroom Assistants | \$54,000 |

- 6.5 Health Insurance Trust Report – *John Petersen*
 See update in packet.
- 6.6 Staffing Update
 Marie Altieri reported that 7 new certified staff have been hired at the APS level. Three of them are one year only due to leaves of absence. She budgets for Master's level and the average is 4M on the steps and lanes chart. The number equals years of experience. Orientation is the Wednesday before school starts just for new teachers. As soon as they're hired, a mentor is identified for their first year. They meet monthly. This all creates a very supportive system for our new certified staff.
- 6.7 Cost Savings Task Force Update
 Xuan reported that the task force has not met recently but one of the projects that the HS is looking at involves replacing disposable trays with re-usable ones in the cafeteria. Kirsten Nelson is doing a pilot program with 50 new trays. A video of students' reaction to the pilot program will be posted on the website.
- 6.8 Long Range Strategic Planning Subcommittee Update
 Steve Mills shared the mission and values statement that the LRSP Committee has come up with. His cabinet will attach goals and strategies to this statement. It is hoped that this process will be completed by Thanksgiving, in time for the next budget process. The subcommittee asked the SC for approval that they are on the right track.
- 6.9 Kindergarten Update
 Marie Altieri reported that 290 kindergarteners have registered for September. This is significantly lower than in the past.
- 6.10 Class Size Task Force
 Parent Amy Hedison presented for the Task Force. She stated that conceptually accessibility to a trained adult in the classroom is key, with a need to increase student -

teacher interaction. She stated that we need to be creative about addressing this issue because there is not a lot of money for more teachers and/or more buildings. 579 people responded to the survey. The recommendations are ideas from parents, teachers and students that came out of conversations. They are not proposals. She said that the next step is for the School Committee to decide if they are committed to these suggestions for the future. Amy thanked everyone who responded and helped with this important effort.

When asked which recommendation should be addressed first, Amy said the modular units at Gates due to their space issues and then look at ways to reconfigure assistant hours. A thoughtful process question was asked. At the elementary level we have a building centric system where principals hire their staff. As a process, if the SC were to adopt and enforce a consistent assistant model how would you rationalize that with the building centric model? The member noted that School Committee members are not educational experts. They allocate money and let the staff decide how to spend it educationally.

Parent Bill Guthlein spoke from the audience. He suggested that the Committee think of this as, "How can we improve student outcomes?" Class size is something that affects this. Parent Maureen Flynn spoke from the audience. She asked how this can even be discussed when the budget is not paying for the assistants we already have. PTOs pay for so much of this expense. A question for the Summer Workshop should be, "What would happen if we gradually moved the PTOs away from funding assistants?" Mike referred to the Boxborough Class Size Report (packet) as well as a good report from Lincoln.

- 6.11 School Committee Meeting Schedule, 2011 – 2012
The Committee weighed the options of a combined Joint SC Summer Workshop and Business Meeting or separate workshop and business meetings.
- 6.12 Update on AB Youth Soccer Field Development Proposal
Steve Mills reported that representatives from the schools continue to meet with the ABYS reps on this important project.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- 7.1 Appointment of FY12 School Committee Reps to ALG
John Petersen will attend as Regional School Committee chair. Xuan Kong will also participate because the other APS members are new and Mike cannot. ALG meetings are always open to the public.
Regarding other Committee assignments for FY12:
EDCO: Xuan
Acton Finance Committee liaison: Dennis
Health Insurance Trust: John
Legislative issues: Dennis to serve on Rep. Jen Benson's group, someone is needed for Rep. Cory Atkins' group
Policy subcommittee: Kim and Paul will join Brigid and Maria
PTO liaison: Kim
Sped PAC: Paul
Warrant signers: Kim, Brigid, Dennis
Corporate Sponsorship: Mike, with Xuan as back up
Class Size Task Force: School Committee to decide how to move forward on this
Negotiations Subcommittee: School Committee to decide if this should be a standing subcommittee to do preparatory work, or only active when in negotiations. Marie Altieri said that the district has an active task force about evaluations and they will be present to SC in the fall. The State is coming out with all kinds of regulations about this. Marie also continues to work on Schedule B and SC should decide how to proceed on this. Schedule

B involves extracurricular activities and how coaches are compensated. This is mainly a regional issue and is expected to be presented to SC in September or October.

Cost Savings Task Force sub: Xuan

Long Range Strategic Planning Task Force: Bruce

ABYS Field Development: Mike, Brigid

7.3 Revision of DARE program

Steve Mills emphasized the tremendous value that Officers Trish Sullivan and Keith Campbell provide to the schools but we will be moving away from the DARE curriculum. He has spoken to the Chief. Eileen Sullivan and everyone involved in DARE over the years was thanked for their efforts. Scientific evaluation surveys have shown that DARE is not as effective as hoped. We will be using iSafe, an online program that is the gold standard. Deb Bookis said that we will bring the youth officers in to support some of this teaching. A committee member asked how we will measure this program's success. Deb will talk to Amy Bisiewicz. It will probably take a year or two. Kim McOske asked if iSafe includes any plans to involve parents for collaboration between home and school. Paul Murphy noted that parent involvement is the key component to what we need to do on this topic.

7.4 Teacher-to-Teacher Update

Deb Bookis showed two clips of extraordinary examples of the new Teacher to Teacher initiative this year. McT teachers Heather Wilson and Heather Matthews worked together and Conant teacher Mary Tsacoyeanes and High School English teacher Maria Anthony collaborated. Maria also participated in Teacher Groups that were very valuable at the HS. Xuan Kong pointed out that this is a fine example of one of our goals of being life long learners by seeing these teachers learning. Steve Mills said that this is what our school system is all about! It was a very inspiring presentation.

8. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

NEXT MEETINGS

- Joint /AB/APS School Committee Summer Meeting, July 26 at 6:00 p.m. - Sargent Library in Boxborough (possible meeting on Aug 2 at 7:30 p.m.?)
- Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting – Thursday, Sept 1, 7:30 p.m. at RJGJHS Library
- Acton Public School Committee Meeting – Thursday, Sept 15, 7:30 p.m. at Douglas School

The APS SC adjourned at 10:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used:
See agenda attached
Administrators' Benefits Manual, page 11, M. Altieri

of the Administrator. No written reprimand or more serious discipline shall be issued unless the Administrator has been informed of the identity of the individual who has complained, and has been given an opportunity to respond.

ARTICLE 10
INSURANCE AND ANNUITY PLAN

10.1 The district(s) will provide the cost of additional life insurance for each Administrator to cover 90% of his/her salary (rounded down to the nearest \$1,000).

10.2.1 Benefits Eligible Administrators will be offered the opportunity to purchase health insurance as part of the group plan(s) offered by the district(s), as in effect from time to time for employees of the district(s) generally. Effective July 1, 2011, the District(s) will pay 75% of any HMO family or individual plans offered from time to time to employees of the districts generally and 50% of all other family or individual plans so offered. Coverage is placed into effect as of the first day of employment. Health insurance premiums may be paid with pretax dollars in accordance with applicable law.

10.2.2 A retired Administrator shall be entitled to membership in all insurance programs at existing group rates, provided that the retired individual pays fifty percent (50%) of the cost to the district(s) on a monthly basis.

10.2.3 An Administrator's health insurance coverage will be continued during the period of an unpaid leave of absence granted pursuant to Article 4, provided the Administrator pays the total monthly cost of such coverage to the district.

10.2.4 If an Administrator and another member of the school staff belong to a single family unit and are eligible for coverage under Section 10.2.1 above under the same policy, each may, at his/her option, have his/her entitlement applied to the full cost of a single policy covering said family unit.

10.2.5 As in 10.2.4, each may, at his/her option, have his/her entitlement applied to the full cost of a single policy.

**ACTON PUBLIC and ACTON BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

June 16, 2011
7:00 p.m. Joint SC Executive Session
Followed by Joint SC Open Meeting
7:30 p.m. APS Open Meeting

AGENDA with addendum

1. JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE:
CALL TO ORDER
2. EXECUTIVE SESSION
"strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel"

Followed by JOINT OPEN MEETING
2.1 2011 Administrator's Benefits Manual – minor revision – VOTE

REGIONAL MEETING ADJOURNS, APS MEETING BEGINS

3. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION (7:30)
 - Welcome to new School Committee member, Dennis Bruce
4. STATEMENT OF WARRANT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - 4.1 May 19, 2011 (*addendum*)
 - 4.2 June 6, 2011 (Joint with Acton Board of Selectmen)
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (7:40)
 - 6.1 Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Report – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
 - 6.2 Acton Finance Committee Report – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
 - 6.3 Acton Board of Selectmen update – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
 - 6.4 FY'11 and '12 APS Budget Update – *Steve Mills (7:45)*
 - 6.4.1 Possible **VOTE** to reallocate FY'12 funds (*addendum*)
 - 6.5 Health Insurance Trust Report – *John Petersen (addendum) (8:05)*
 - 6.6 Staffing Update – *Marie Altieri (addendum)*
 - 6.7 Cost Savings Task Force Update – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
 - 6.8 Long Range Strategic Planning Subcommittee update – *Steve Mills (addendum) (8:10)*
 - 6.9 Kindergarten Update – *Marie Altieri (8:15)*
 - 6.9.1 Enrollment Chart (*addendum*)

 - 6.10 Class Size Task Force Presentation – *Amy Heddison (8:20)*
 - 6.10.1 Slides (*revised 6/15/11 in addendum*)
 - 6.10.2 Class Size Survey Data (*addendum*)
 - 6.10.3 Boxborough Class-Size Guideline Subcommittee Report (*addendum*)
 - 6.11 School Committee Meeting Schedule, 2011 – 2012 – *Mike Coppolino (8:35)*
 - 6.12 Update on AB Youth Soccer Field Development Proposal – *Steve Mills (oral)*

7. NEW BUSINESS

- 7.1 Appointment of FY12 School Committee Reps to ALG – *Mike Coppolino (oral) (8:40)*
- 7.2 Appointment of School Committee Rep to Rep. Jennifer Benson’s District Advisory Group – *John Petersen (oral)*
- 7.3 Revision of DARE program – *Steve Mills (8:45)*
 - 7.3.1 Follow-up memo from Eileen Sullivan (*addendum*)
- 7.4 Teacher-to-Teacher Update – *Deborah Bookis (oral) (8:55)*
- 7.5 Committee Goals 2011 – request from BOS Selectman, M. Gowing (*addendum*) (9:05)

8. FOR YOUR INFORMATION (9:15)

- 8.1 Monthly APS Financial Reports (*addendum*)
- 8.2 Student Enrollment Numbers/Class Size - June 1, 2011
- 8.3 ELL Student Population Report - June 1, 2011
- 8.4 School Committee Members List, 2011-2012
- 8.5 Curriculum Update
 - 8.5.1 Teacher-to-Teacher (*addendum, revised*)
 - 8.5.2 Leadership Institute Agenda
- 8.6 Summer Hours – ABRHS Cafeteria
- 8.7 Summer *Interaction* is found at <http://comed.ab.mec.edu>
- 8.8 *Lamplighter* – June 2011 (*posted next week*)
<http://ab.mec.edu/about/publications>
- 8.9 Correspondence from the Community
 - 8.9.1 “Correcting Erroneous Information”
- 8.10 Appeal of Public Records Request Response, Letter from Secretary of the Commonwealth, Public Records Division, 5/24/11
- 8.11 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>
- 8.12 OnTeam, Pupil Services, June 2011 (*addendum*)
- 8.13 “Green Ribbon Schools” Announcement, U.S. Dept of Education (*addendum*)
- 8.14 Email from Glenn Koocher (MASC) re K. Branch’s “Secretary Duncan May Announce Plans to Offer Regulatory Relief”, 6/10/11(*addendum*)
- 8.15 “Inadequacies of the Foundation Budget” email from P Schlichtman, 6/2/11 (MASC info) (*addendum*)

9. NEXT MEETINGS -

- Joint /AB/APS School Committee Summer Meeting, July 26 at 6:00 p.m. - Sargent Library in Boxborough (to be confirmed) (possible second meeting on Aug 2 at 7:30 p.m.?)

- Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting – Thursday, Sept 1, 7:30 p.m. at RJGJHS Library
- Acton Public School Committee Meeting – Thursday, Sept 15, 7:30 p.m. at Douglas School

10. ADJOURN