

ACTON PUBLIC and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETINGS minutes (approved 8/1/12)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

February 2, 2012
7:00 pm Joint SC Meeting Open Budget Hearing
followed by AB SC Meeting
followed by JT and AB SC Executive Session

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Dennis Bruce, Mike Coppolino (7:05), Xuan Kong, Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, Maria Neyland, John Petersen, Bruce Sabot
Members Absent: none
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Stephen Mills, Beth Petr

The Acton-Boxborough Regional and the Acton Public School Committees were called to order by John Petersen and Kim McOsker, respective Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at 7:00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

John Petersen stated that two very important discussions will take place at this meeting involving our community – Acton-Boxborough K-12 Possible Regionalization and the accomplishments of the Collaborative Working Group on Health Care Plan Design. He expressed his deepest thanks to all involved in the Health Care proposal. Projected annual savings to the town and schools are more than \$1 million.

STATEMENT of WARRANT

AB warrant #120015 dated 1/12/12 in the amount of \$2,393,580.11 and warrant #12-016 dated 1/26/12 in the amount of \$2,989,325.33 was signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures. APS warrant #201215 dated 1/24/12 in the amount of \$528,982.40 was signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

APPROVAL of MINUTES

The Joint School Committee meeting minutes of January 5, 2012 were approved as amended. The minutes of the Joint School Committee meeting on January 28, 2012 will be voted at the next meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Policy Subcommittee Update

6.1.1 Head Injury Management Policy and Procedures File: JJIF – **SECOND READING**

Liza Huber presented this new proposed policy again. She said that long term substitutes are trained in concussion management although it is not feasible for all subs to be trained. Awareness about concussion is definitely increasing and that is good. When asked how this policy would affect Community Education (CE) instructors, Liza said that the training is made available to all who instruct/coach for CE. It is not mandatory, but visible. CE Director Erin Bettez said that the League Directors go through the formal training, and they will raise it for their coaches. A direct link is on the CE website. They use the same accident reports as the school staff.

ABRSD VOTE:

Materials for this meeting are posted at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.

It was moved by Xuan Kong, seconded by Mike Coppolino and unanimously,
VOTED: to adopt the Head Injury Management Policy, File: JJIF, as amended in
the first sentence to include Acton Public School staff, families and students.

APSC VOTE:

It was moved by Xuan Kong, seconded by John Petersen and unanimously,
VOTED: to adopt the Head Injury Management Policy, File: JJIF, as amended in
the first sentence to include Acton Public School staff, families and students.

6.1.2 Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members File: BHE – **FIRST READING**

Brigid said the changes are due to the archiving requirement. School Committee members will get new AB google email accounts to be used for all Committee business. There can be no forwarding of the new google email to private email accounts because responses would not be archived. The new accounts will set up by March 1st.

6.1.3 Home Schooling File: IHBG – *This will be reviewed at the next meeting.*

6.2 Regional School District Study Committee (RSDSC) Presentation

(Peter Ashton, Mary Brolin, Adria Cohen, Kristin Hilbert, Xuan Kong, Mac Reid)

A summary of interviews on the educational impact of Regionalization with Boxborough and other RSDSC materials are found at: <https://sites.google.com/site/abregionalstudycmt/>
Mac Reid began the presentation. The RSDSC has an aggressive schedule of meetings to inform the SC and the community. Eventually, a proposal will go to both Town Meetings and the vote would be for the committee to come up with a new regional agreement that will then be brought back for a vote by the two communities a year from now. They are trying to “listen to the info with a neutral ear” during this process. They understand that it is very important to do outreach in many forms to reach many different groups of people in various ways. The Superintendent and his staff were thanked for all the time spent answering questions for the RSDSC.

The Committee agreed that the key question is “What is best for the kids?” One member cautioned that if the main savings driver is transportation reimbursement, that could be changed by the state. Another member urged the effort to proceed to Acton and Boxborough Town Meetings and “let the towns decide”. John stated that for Acton, there is a tremendous organizational benefit to combining districts and that benefit is hard to capture.

The School Committee instructed the RSDSC to proceed full speed ahead and take the question to both Town Meetings.

Becky Neville spoke from the audience stating that she wished votes on the School Committee were the same as on the RSDSC (one person, one vote). She also pointed out that Boxborough will lose lots of control because 2/3 of the Boxborough budget will be voted as an assessment. She believes that the only place to cut in the future (for Boxborough) would be first responders, police, fire, etc. with the rest of the budget tied up in the school assessment. She advocated for going to Town Meeting with the question, but thinking very hard about giving up so much budgetary control.

6.3 Acton and Boxborough Town Elections – The Acton deadline is Feb 6th

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPEN BUDGET HEARING (8:15)

(See 1/28/12 Budget Binder, posted online at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>)

6.4 FY’13 Budget Update

6.4.1 Recommendation to Approve FY’13 ABRSD Budget and Assessments – **VOTE**

Don Aicardi presented the numbers and said that the Regional SC must vote a preliminary number tonight but can revote later to a lower number. The final number is needed in early March. By then the following will be factored in: savings from the bus lease bid, additional electricity savings, and savings from the health insurance design changes (slide 6).

ABRSC VOTE:

Xuan Kong moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED:

recommends that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year of July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 be set at \$39,915,260 and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the Education Reform Law and the terms of the Agreement and amendments thereto as follows: Acton \$25,849,330, Boxborough \$6,045,558, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$6,616,437, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of \$39,229, Transportation Aid, Chapter 71, Section 16C in the amount of \$594,048, a transfer from E&D Reserves in the amount of \$770,000, and a transfer from the Junior High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$658.

Gary Kushner, from the Boxborough FinCom had an issue with an amount for the Lower Fields Project cost being included in this budget. He requested that it be taken out and made into a warrant article. John Petersen spoke against doing that and stated that Acton and Boxborough should have a chance to vote on this project at their Town Meetings.

6.5 Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB)

6.5.1 ABRSC Consideration of OPEB Liabilities - *John Petersen*

6.5.2 Actuarial Valuation and Review of OPEB as of 12/31/10, *Segal Group*

6.5.3 Presentation Slides

6.5.4 Retiree Health Care: The Brick That Broke Municipalities' Backs, *MA Taxpayers Foundation*

6.5.5 State and Local Government Retiree Health Benefits – Liabilities are Largely Unfunded, but Some Governments are Taking Action, Nov 2009, *U.S. Government Accountability Office*

John said that no questions would be taken on this topic because it is informational for this meeting. Don Aicardi presented saying not to focus too much on the numbers at this time because it is complicated and they are changing. Mike thanked Don for the clear explanation. OPEB will be discussed often and in detail in the future.

6.6 ALG Report

Xuan and John reported on the meetings held 1/12/12 and 1/30/12. Some ALG members are concerned that the Regional Budget will use more reserves than agreed upon. ALG is trying to reach consensus on Revenue Assumptions, Reserve Use, and Expense Allocation. The entities were asked to go back to their groups for input. Next meeting is 2/14/12.

6.7 BLF Report

Maria Neyland reported that the last BLF discussed budgets and how Lower Fields was being funded.

6.8 Acton FinCom Report

Steve Mills and Don Aicardi presented the budgets to the Acton Finance Committee. They explained the Long Range Strategic Plan and investment budgets and how they developed. There were many questions about adding to the investment budget in regard to sustainability. This will be a key issue.

6.9 Acton Health Insurance Trust (HIT) Report

6.9.1 FY'10 and FY'11 Financial Statements, Management's Discussion and Analysis and Auditor's Report., *Bill Fraher, CPA (FYI)*

The official report is out. The HIT will meet in 2 weeks to set rates for FY13.

6.10 Health Insurance Working Group Recommendation - **VOTE**

Meeting minutes are found at: <http://www.acton-ma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=142&Type=&ADID=> Materials from the 1/30/12 BOS meeting are posted in the packet. Kim McOsker reported that all 8 unions of the town of Acton are in agreement that will result in significant savings. The Acton Board of Selectmen agreed at their meeting and now all members need to ratify it. Several people described the process as "wonderful", to see how the town all came together on this important effort with very impressive results. Marie Altieri reported that the outcome is that all Acton employees will have the same copays, etc. These eight groups represent 1000 employees. These plan design changes will result in \$880,000 savings between Town and school.

Kim McOsker moved, and Maria Neyland seconded that,

the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee accept the Health Insurance Working Group proposal to increase co-pays effective July 1, 2012, as listed in the attached proposal (dated 1/25/12), and that there will not be further changes to health insurance plans for FY13, FY14 and FY15.

It was clarified that we are in the first year of the three year contract period. Once the employees ratify, the School Committee chairs will sign a side letter particular to each contract. Parallel to that, new plans go out to Harvard and Blue Cross for actuarial work. All go into effect July 1.

A friendly amendment was made and accepted to include school committee packet # 6.10.2 on the proposal referred to in the motion.

When asked how agreeing not to touch anything for the next 3 years would affect the Regionalization Study Committee's work, Marie said that if Regionalization moves forward, all contracts will be re examined. The unions have stated that if something drastic happens during the three years, all parties will sit down and discuss it.

ABRSC VOTE:

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee VOTED unanimously to support the motion as amended.

APSC VOTE:

Kim McOsker moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the Health Insurance Working Group proposal to increase co-pays effective July 1, 2012, as listed in the attached proposal # 6.10.2 (dated 1/25/12), and that there will not be further changes to health insurance plans for FY13, FY14 and FY15.

John Petersen said that he is deeply appreciative of this significant accomplishment and the many hours of work done by the Health Insurance Working Group, particularly Marie Altieri and Kim McOsker. Acton Town Manager, Steve Ledoux, was quoted saying, *“In my 35 years in Municipal Government, I have never seen all town and school employee groups come to an agreement like this and have the same health insurance benefit... I learned something through this process.”*

6.11 SMART Goals Update

Dr. Mills highlighted the February updates to the SMART Goals. The Committee asked about the budget process in the future. Xuan Kong stated that it would be helpful for ALG if the Administration had some data for future years to help project expenses going forward. John emphasized that point and expressed concern about what FY14 and 15 look like. Projections are difficult due to the number of assumptions that go into the calculations. Assistant Town Manager John Murray and Don Aicardi will work to help define a common view for FY14 and 15.

The Acton Public School Committee meeting was suspended at 9:36 p.m. ABRSC continued.

AB SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1 Lower Fields Project Update

7.1.1 Community Preservation Committee Presentation, 1/26/12

7.1.2 Memo re Allowable Use of CPA Funds for Lower Fields, *Stephen Anderson, Acton Town Counsel 1/25/12*

Some significant changes have been made this week. Dr. Mills stated that it is in his, and others', best judgment that at this time, the schools' interests are not well served by continuing the request for Community Preservation Committee funds. More numbers will be available at the next meeting, including bond costs. FOLF President Dave Wilson followed Dr. Mills' presentation. He agrees that tenants' length of agreement is very important. Dave said that they are looking for a 7 year term, but are closer to agreeing to a 5 year term.

The Committee was asked for comments. John Petersen stated that the financial risk is outweighed by the highly significant benefits to our core programs – our Physical Education classes, interschool athletics, etc. all benefit. For this reason, he is comfortable funding some of this expense out of the operational budget. With the kind of revenue that could be generated, this is a good risk to him. The tenants who are coming forward are people whom Dave Wilson has had long term relationships with. Mike Coppolino emphasized that the Project could not have gotten close to this stage without the many dedicated FOLF volunteers.

Maria Neyland emphasized that she still needs numbers. She is supportive as long as the numbers bear it out and letters of intent are signed. Paul Murphy said that the Committee just approved a budget that had a 3.7 % drop in a line item for special needs programs. He would like unused money to be spent on kids who might not get to use this field. Liza pointed out that all kids would have a chance to use the fields during the school day. Assuming the numbers work, Brigid thinks this is a terrific plan that will benefit lots of kids, not just varsity athletes. It was the sense of the Committee that they are grateful for the work done and look forward to more information, including financials, at the next meeting.

7.2 Recommendation to Accept Gift from Cambridge Savings Bank to ABRHS - VOTE

It was moved, seconded and unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the gift from Cambridge Savings Bank to ABRHS Community Service Program with gratitude.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

8.9 Explanation of Additional Athletic Fees

Xuan asked how the actual costs for these programs compare to the fee charged. This discussion needs to include Steve Desy and Alixe Callen. The Committee was asked if more should be charged for some sports based on cost data. Mike asked if the ice hockey coach expenses were correct.

The Acton Public School Committee reconvened at 10:15 p.m. The Joint SC resumed.

JT EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:15 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 with respect to collective bargaining.

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

John Petersen declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session after the executive session only to adjourn.

At 10:15 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 with respect to collective bargaining.

YES (Bruce, Coppolino, Kong, McOsker, Murphy, Petersen)

Mike Coppolino declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session after the executive session only to adjourn.

At 10:15 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 with respect to litigation.

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

John Petersen declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session after the executive session only to adjourn.

The Acton Public School Committee adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETINGS:

February 16 – 7:00 pm, Open Budget Hearing (APSC meeting) at RJ Grey JH Library

March 1 – 7:30 pm, ABRSC meeting at RJ Grey JH Library

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used:
See agenda attached
#6.10.2 Health Insurance Working Group Proposal

Draft Proposal from Health Insurance Working Group

Jan 25, 2012

6.10.2
2/2/12
Sc meeting

The Health Insurance Working Group reached unanimous consensus on the following cost saving changes to current health insurance plan design and employee split. This proposal will bring all town and school employees to the same health insurance plan design and cost sharing.

1. Move all remaining employees to 75%/25% for HMOs and 50%/50% for Master Health Plus and PPO (approximate additional cost for family HMO = \$1,800 per year and individual HMO = \$800 per year).

a) Mitigation for new adoptees of reducing the HMO split to 75%-25% split will be:

- 1) 10% of insurance premium per Family and Individual plan in the first year
- 2) \$1200/\$500 in the second year, and
- 3) \$600/\$300 in the third year
 - i. Net savings -- year 1 = \$0;
 - ii. Second year --Net savings = \$163K
 - iii. Third year -- Net savings \$264
 - iv. Fourth year -- Net Savings \$350K

Saves \$350k (not counting mitigation)

Plus

2. Plan design changes for all employees:

Office Visit Co-Pay \$20
Specialist Office Visit \$35
ER \$100
Hospital \$200
Day Surgery \$100
High Tech Imaging \$100 (CAT/CT/PET Scans)
Rx 10/25/40 for 30 Days
Rx \$20/\$50/\$80 for 90 Days

Saves \$486K

Total Savings before mitigation: \$350K + \$486K = \$836

Total Savings (Town of Acton plus APS) after paying mitigation:

FY '13 \$486K

FY '14 \$649K

FY '15 \$750K

FY '16 \$836K

FY '17 \$836K

Five year average annual savings: \$711K per year.

In Addition, the Regional Schools adopting these changes would result in an additional savings of \$394K in the first year. Total Cost savings per (after mitigation) combining Town of Acton, APS and AB is \$836K + \$394K = \$1.23M

The employees have agreed to ratify these changes by February 10, 2012. They would like the Board of Selectmen and the School Committees to agree that these plans will be in place for at least the next three years without any more proposals for changing health insurance.

ACTON PUBLIC and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETINGS

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

February 2, 2012
7:00 pm Joint SC Meeting Open Budget Hearing
followed by AB SC Meeting
followed by JT and AB SC Executive Session

AGENDA with addendum

- 1.0 JT SC CALL TO ORDER (7:00)
- 2.0 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION
- 3.0 STATEMENT of WARRANT
- 4.0 APPROVAL of MINUTES
 - 4.1 JT SC meeting, January 5, 2012 (addendum)
 - 4.2 JT SC Budget meeting, January 28, 2012 (next meeting)
- 5.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- 6.0 JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS (7:10)
 - 6.1 Policy Subcommittee Update (7:10)
 - 6.1.1 New: Head Injury Management Policy and Procedures File: JJIF – **SECOND READING - VOTE** – Liza Huber
 - 6.1.2 Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members File: BHE – **FIRST READING** – Brigid Bieber
 - 6.1.3 Home Schooling File: IHBG – (next meeting)
 - 6.2 Regional School District Study Committee (RSDSC) Presentation (7:30)
Peter Ashton, Mary Brolin, Adria Cohen, Kristin Hilbert, Xuan Kong, Mac Reid
 - 6.2.1 Summary of Interviews on Educational Impact of Regionalization with Boxborough (addendum)
 - 6.2.2 Presentation slides (addendum)
 - 6.2.3 Additional RSDSC materials found at:
<https://sites.google.com/site/abregionalstudycmt/>
 - 6.3 Acton and Boxborough Town Elections – Acton deadline, Feb 6th – John Petersen (oral)
- JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPEN BUDGET HEARING** (8:15)
(Please bring 1/28/12 Budget Binder, posted online at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>)
 - 6.4 FY'13 Budget Update – Steve Mills/ Don Aicardi (8:15)
 - 6.4.1 Recommendation to Approve FY'13 ABRSD Budget and Assessments – **VOTE** – Steve Mills (addendum)
 - 6.5 Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) – Don Aicardi, John Petersen (8:30)
 - 6.5.1 ABRSC Consideration of OPEB Liabilities - John Petersen
 - 6.5.2 Actuarial Valuation and Review of OPEB as of 12/31/10, Segal Group

Materials for this meeting are posted at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.

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- 6.5.3 Presentation Slides (*brought to meeting*)
- 6.5.4 Retiree Health Care: The Brick That Broke Municipalities' Backs, *MA Taxpayers Foundation* (*addendum*)
- 6.5.5 State and Local Government Retiree Health Benefits – Liabilities are Largely Unfunded, but Some Governments are Taking Action, Nov 2009, *U.S. Government Accountability Office* (*addendum*)
- 6.6 ALG Report – *John Petersen/Xuan Kong* (9:00)
 - 6.6.1 Draft minutes of 1/12/12 meeting
 - 6.6.2 Meeting materials, 1/30/12 (*addendum*)
- 6.7 BLF Report – *Maria Neyland* (*oral*)
- 6.8 Acton FinCom Report – *John Petersen/Xuan Kong* (9:15)
- 6.9 Acton Health Insurance Trust (HIT) Report – *John Petersen*
 - 6.9.1 FY'10 and FY'11 Financial Statements, Management's Discussion and Analysis and Auditor's Report., *Bill Fraher, CPA* (*FYI*)
- 6.10 Health Insurance Working Group Recommendation - **VOTE** – *Kim McOsker, Marie Altieri* (9:30)
 - 6.10.1 Meeting minutes:
<http://www.acton-ma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=142&Type=&ADID=>
 - 6.10.2 Memo and Proposal (*addendum*)
 - 6.10.3 Materials from 1/30/12 BOS meeting (*addendum*)
- 6.11 SMART Goals Update – *Steve Mills* (9:45)

APS SC is suspended. AB SC continues.

- 7.0 **AB SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS** (9:50)
 - 7.1 Lower Fields Project Update – *Steve Mills*
 - 7.1.1 Community Preservation Committee Presentation, 1/26/12
 - 7.1.2 Memo re Allowable Use of CPA Funds for Lower Fields, *Stephen Anderson, Acton Town Counsel* 1/25/12
 - 7.2 Recommendation to Accept Gift from Cambridge Savings Bank to ABRHS Community Service Program – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*
- 8.0 **FOR YOUR INFORMATION** (10:00)
 - 8.1 ABRHS
 - 8.1.1 Discipline Report, January 2012 (*addendum*)
 - 8.1.2 Donations to the Community Service Program, Class of 2015, “The Window Seat” and ASHA (Student Activity Fund)
 - 8.2 RJ Grey Junior High
 - 8.2.1 Discipline Report, January 2012 (*addendum*)
 - 8.3 Pupil Services
 - 8.3.1. ELL Student Population, January 1, 2012
 - 8.4 Monthly ABRSD Financial Reports (*addendum*)
 - 8.5 ABRSD FY'11 Final Audit Report (*brought to meeting*)
 - 8.6 Monthly Enrollment Report – January 1, 2012
 - 8.7 School to Business Partnership Meeting 1/12/12
 - 8.8 Correspondence from the Community (*additional in addendum*)
 - 8.9 Explanation of Additional Athletic Fees (*addendum*)

APS SC is reconvened. JT SC resumes.

9.0 JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION – strategy with respect to collective bargaining, discussion of possible changes to AEA Coaching and Activity Stipends (Schedule B), possible **VOTE** (10:05)

APS SC adjourns. AB SC continues.

10.0 AB SC EXECUTIVE SESSION - strategy with respect to litigation (10:15)

11.0 NEXT MEETINGS:

February 16 – 7:00 pm, Open Budget Hearing (APSC meeting) at RJ Grey JH Library

March 1 – 7:30 pm, ABRSC meeting at RJ Grey JH Library

ADJOURN (10:20)