

# ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes (approved 6/21/12)

Cafetorium  
Conant School

May 17, 2012  
7:00 p.m.

---

*Members Present:* Dennis Bruce (7:20), Michael Coppolino, Xuan Kong, Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, Deanne O'Sullivan

*Members Absent:* none

*Others:* Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

---

The Acton Public School Committee was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairperson, Kim McOsker.

## **CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION**

Kim McOsker and the Committee thanked Michael Coppolino, FY12 APS School Committee Chairman.

## **STATEMENT OF WARRANT** - none

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the April 3, 2012 and March 15, 2012 APS School Committee meetings were approved as written. Deanne O'Sullivan abstained from both votes because she was not on the School Committee at the time of the meetings.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - none

## **EDUCATION REPORT**

Damian Sugrue, Principal of the Conant School presented on the numerous community service activities completed by his students and staff over the past school year. Conant's motto is, "The Whole Child is the Whole Idea." emphasizing that in addition to strong academics, teaching children to be good citizens is also important and provides many teachable moments.

## **APS SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### 7.1 Kindergarten Registration and Lottery Update

Dr. Mills and his staff take responsibility for making decisions about the number of sections based on enrollment. He knew it would be difficult for some people to agree with going from 15 to 14 Kindergarten sections last month. Marie Altieri reported that currently 269 students are enrolled for kindergarten. With 14 sections that translates to an average class size of 19.2 students. It is expected that 14 kindergarten sections will be appropriate for the next several years.

When asked about available space in our schools, Marie reported that almost every classroom in every school every year is in use. There is one room available at Merriam. Douglas and Conant each have modulars. Gates is the school with the least available space at this time. Gates Principal, Lynne Newman, stated that her school is excited about this opportunity to give space to art and music. Her staff considers it an excellent potential for collaboration.

Marie reported that in the past, demand for All Day Kindergarten has been 50% and only 30% could be accommodated. This year demand is at 60%. Douglas Principal, Chris Whitbeck spoke about the decision to add a second all day Kindergarten at Douglas. A one year half day Kindergarten teacher will be hired. The two Douglas Kindergarten teachers will do the two all day sections.

Xuan Kong asked that if a significant change involving families' school choices is made in the future, it be communicated clearly and in a timely manner to the public. Marie Altieri stated that the Administration always appreciates constructive criticism. She explained that the District had 10 days to

react, including vacation week, and that all Gates families who registered for kindergarten were mailed information.

Xuan asked about future plans including what would happen if the District decides to add another all day kindergarten next year (September 2013). Marie stated that while many people would like to see universal all day Kindergarten as a goal, it costs money and requires space. A no cost alternative half day program must be offered. While it would be helpful to set the expectation ahead of time, Marie said that this decision would depend greatly on the demand by families who are registering. The \$4500 cost for all day K is relatively high compared to other communities', but compared to the cost of child care it is low.

#### 7.2 APS School Lunch Increase

Marie Altieri reported that is a formula-based federal requirement, similar to what was done at the Region. For next year, APSD has to increase lunch prices from the current \$2.35 to at least \$2.45 and eventually to \$2.50. Kirsten Nelson reported that there has been concern about the decreasing fund balance at APS Food Service account for the past few years.

Paul Murphy asked if last year's price increase caused a drop in children buying lunch. Marie responded that a percentage drop always occurs when prices go up. With the new electronic system it is hard to know yet to what extent this will happen. Kirsten feels that Food Service has gotten ahead of the curve with the new requirements (offering more whole grains, fruit and vegetables) although these products cost more and some kids don't like it as much so they may not buy it.

Xuan Kong advocated for a 10 cent increase instead of 15 cent because increasing too much could cause a bigger drop in sales. He suggested that the Administration could come up with ideas for how to absorb some of the health care costs in the account and consider other ways to address the fund balance concern. Kirsten responded that even though \$30,000 was spent on the Point of Sale system this year, a new oven costs \$35,000 and each year large unexpected expenses, usually involving equipment, occur. She agreed that moving the health insurance would help the fund balance. Marie stated that this would be looked at seriously and reiterated that capital expenses occur consistently every year in Food Services.

Deanne O'Sullivan asked what happens next year if lunch prices are raised to \$2.50. Marie said that the District would be in compliance with the government, but could raise it for other reasons if desired.

Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was,

**VOTED:** to accept the recommendation to increase the APS lunch prices by \$.15 to \$2.50 effective 8/27/12

(Yes: Bruce, Coppolino, McOsker, Murphy, O'Sullivan No: Kong)

#### 7.3 Policy Revision - Assignment of Students from other Schools, File: JCAC

Paul Murphy read the proposed policy for a First Reading. No comments.

#### 7.4 Boxborough Town Meeting - Update on Regionalization

The Regionalization article was approved, which was very significant. The Study Committee was applauded for all their hard work. Governance and how the new School Committee will look will be the tough issues to work out. The Study Committee (RSDSC), a subcommittee of the AB Regional School Committee, would like input from the School Committees (APS and Boxborough), Finance Committees and Boards of Selectmen from both towns to identify the important issues to address and the process to use. Xuan asked these groups to consider that membership of the RSDSC may need to be adjusted now. They will be asked for input on this. Xuan stated that the two towns need to decide about this membership, not solely the Regional School Committee, at this point in the process.

#### 7.5 Acton Health Insurance Trust Report

Kim McOsker reported on the 4/26/12 meeting. The Trust is projecting a loss of \$500,000 for the year, with approximately \$3.6 million in reserves. The contract with Borgatti Harrison was renewed. The Cook and Company contract will be reviewed next month. The Trustees agreed to request bids for the annual

audit as well as a RFP for Stop Loss Insurance. Next meeting is May 24. Monthly meetings are held through the summer. John Petersen feels more secretarial report is required for HIT because of the complicated nature of the topic, and the need for documentation. As a member of the public, he asked if the schools should provide secretarial support for the HIT. Xuan Kong stated that based on the number of school employees in the Trust, he felt someone from the schools should assist with the minutes. Kim will work with Dr. Mills to see what resources can be applied to this request.

## 7.6 FY'13 Budget

7.6.1 ALG Report – Xuan Kong reported that ALG has not met recently but asked the Committee to think about how OPEB should be funded and how the APSC will work with the Finance Committee's long range financial model. The Committee made a commitment to do this over the summer when it came up during the budget sessions. This will be a summer workshop agenda item.

7.6.2 Acton BOS/Finance Committee Reports – Xuan reported that Pam Harting Barratt is the new Acton Board of Selectmen chairperson.

## 7.7 FY'12 Budget, 3rd Quarter Report

Don Aicardi was at a Massachusetts Association of School Business Officers (MASBO) meeting so Dr. Mills presented the budget. Health Insurance, Circuit Breaker and utilities are the biggest budget items right now. Don is projecting that the APSD is ending the third quarter of FY12 with a \$336,421 year end fund balance. The FY12 Budget was not underwritten with any ARRA, SFSF or Ed Jobs grants funds. SPED tuition was prepaid from FY12 to FY11 in the amount of \$128,000.

Dr. Mills stated that the Administration would like to invest in a few small items for next year with year end surplus funds. These include: Conant School basketball court/parking lot expansion (\$40,000), Gates School abatement/floor replacement, and Parker-Damon building storage space increased (\$18,000) and balcony improvements (\$15,000). Although no vote is required to transfer these funds, the School Committee has asked to review any significant year end spending proposals.

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

### 8.1 ELL Student Enrollment Reports

Mike Coppolino asked for a year to year report on this, instead of monthly to provide a better picture.

### 8.3 Student Enrollment Numbers/Class Size Info – May 1

Xuan Kong asked for Integrated Preschool enrollment numbers for the next meeting. The Committee would like to know the trend. Siting Liza's connections with the early intervention agencies, Mike Coppolino asked her to give the Committee a heads up on the children coming up. Liza stated that their usual planning for 14 – 18 students has worked very well with minimal fluctuations. This year's 8 extra students and Concord's 21 extra students was highly unusual.

**NEXT MEETINGS:** June 7, 7:00 p.m. JT/AB SC meeting at RJGJHS Library  
June 21, 7:00 p.m. APS SC meeting at RJGJHS Library  
Thurs, June 28 at 6:00 p.m. in Blanchard School Library JT Workshop  
Wednesday, August 1 at 7:00 in JH Library, JT SC Business meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of documents used: see agenda

## ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Cafetorium  
Conant School

May 17, 2012  
7:00 p.m.

---

### AGENDA

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER (7:00)
- 2.0 CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION – *Kim McOsker*  
Thank you to Michael Coppolino, FY12 APS School Committee Chairman
- 3.0 STATEMENT OF WARRANT
- 4.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - 4.1 APS SC April 3, 2012
  - 4.2 APS SC March 15, 2012
- 5.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- 6.0 EDUCATION REPORT - *Damian Sugrue, Principal, Conant School* (7:10)
- 7.0 APS SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS
  - 7.1 Kindergarten Registration and Lottery Update – *Marie Altieri* (7:25)
  - 7.2 APS School Lunch Increase – **VOTE** – *Marie Altieri* (7:45)
  - 7.3 Policy Revision (7:50)
    - 7.3.1 JT/Assignment of Students from other Schools, File: JCAC – **FIRST READING** –  
*Paul Murphy*
  - 7.4 Boxborough Town Meeting Update on Regionalization – *Steve Mills (oral)* (7:55)
  - 7.5 Acton Health Insurance Trust Report – *Kim McOsker (oral)*
  - 7.6 FY'13 Budget (8:00)
    - 7.6.1 ALG Report – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
    - 7.6.2 Acton BOS/Finance Committee Reports – *Xuan Kong (oral)*
  - 7.7 FY'12 Budget, 3rd Quarter Report – *Steve Mills* (8:05)
- 8.0 FOR YOUR INFORMATION (8:25)
  - 8.1 Pupil Services
    - 8.1 ELL Student Enrollment Reports – April 1, May 1
  - 8.2 FY'12 Monthly APS Financial Reports
  - 8.3 Student Enrollment Numbers/Class Size Info – May 1
  - 8.4 School Newsletters

Conant Crier:	<a href="http://conant.ab.mec.edu/pto/newsletter.html">http://conant.ab.mec.edu/pto/newsletter.html</a>
Douglas Digest:	<a href="http://douglas.ab.mec.edu/pto/digest.html">http://douglas.ab.mec.edu/pto/digest.html</a>
Gates Gazette:	<a href="http://gatesschoolpto.org/gazette">http://gatesschoolpto.org/gazette</a>
McCarthy-Towne Bulletin:	<a href="http://www.mctptso.org/bulletin/">http://www.mctptso.org/bulletin/</a>
Merriam Comm News:	<a href="http://www.merriampto.org/Merriam">http://www.merriampto.org/Merriam</a>
Acton Public School Preschool:	<a href="http://ab.mec.edu/Preschool/index.htm">http://ab.mec.edu/Preschool/index.htm</a>
- 9.0 NEXT MEETINGS: June 7, 7:00 p.m. JT/AB SC meeting at RJGJHS Library  
June 21, 7:00 p.m. APS SC meeting at RJGJHS Library
- 10.0 ADJOURN (8:30)