

**JOINT ACTON PUBLIC (APSC) and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL (ABRSC)
and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)
MEETINGS Minutes (approved 5/1/14)**

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

Tuesday, January 7, 2014
7:30 p.m. Joint APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino, Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Dennis Bruce
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

The Acton-Boxborough Regional and Transitional School Committees were called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Chairperson Maria Neyland. The Acton Public School Committee was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Kristina Rychlik at 7:31 p.m.

1. Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 12/12/13 were approved by the ABRSC, the ABTSC and the APSC as written.

AB Warrant #14-013 dated 12/26/13 in the amount of \$2,043,073.59 was signed by the chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures. APS warrant #201413 dated 12/24/13 in the amount of \$163,451.08 and warrant #201414 dated 1/7/14 in the amount of \$69,650.44 was signed by the vice-chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

2. Public Participation - none

3. Blanchard School Principal Announcement

Dr. Mills announced that Dana F. Labb has been appointed as the new Principal of the Blanchard Memorial School. Mr. Labb plans to attend the Budget Saturday meeting.

4. ABTSC Superintendent Search Update

Brigid Bieber reported that the search is on schedule. She encouraged everyone to try to attend the public forums for the finalists. It is hoped that finalists will be announced at the School Committee meeting on 1/15/14. The Committee should plan on a meeting on Saturday, January 25 for the public interviews. Brigid thanked Andrew Shen for his efforts as facilitator.

5. ABTSC FY15 Budget– Don Aicardi

Dr. Mills stated how exciting it is to be presenting one K-12 budget for the first time. The Regional School District Study Committee (RSDSC) projected this first year’s budget as part of the proposal. Our budget is \$800,000 less than what we thought it would be. As a result, Dr. Mills recommends that no new positions be added but he does recommend realigning some positions within the three budgets. He also insists on as much transparency as possible especially this year with the combination of the budgets. He is recommending a 3.8% increase for FY15.

Don Aicardi explained that he had to artificially recreate the FY14 budget as one (from the three) in order to create the new budget for next year. This was very complicated and comparisons should be made carefully. Although the FY14 “Final” to FY15 Preliminary budget percentage increase is 2.31%, the FY14 base should be lowered by \$1,089,570 to account for a change in the regional transportation. This changes the percentage increase to a more accurate 3.81% increase.

Dr. Mills resumed speaking at slide 24 to address the proposed realignment of additional staff for FY15 totalling \$567,000. His primary focus is increasing the half-time assistant principals in the Acton elementary schools to full time. The Blanchard school currently has a full-time assistant principal. Dr. Mills also advocated for adding a third special education coordinator for grades 6-8. He explained the positions that would be reduced to make this realignment possible.

Don Aicardi explained that JD Head is creating new Capital outlays accounts for buildings and replacement equipment. This is very important for planning purposes. Don is still waiting for the Health Insurance Trust to make final recommendations. Don expressed concern about the pace and amount of how much E&D is being used, although this is still a preliminary number. He said that significant money is being put in the OPEB Trust account and coming out of E&D. The SPED tuition increase of 28.89% is a concern. The School Committee will be asked to take a preliminary budget vote at the end of the Budget Saturday Meeting on February 1st.

Mike asked about slide 12 – ABRSD FY15 Operating Budget. The new Regional Agreement outlined the FY14 to FY15 variance shown. The pre-shift figure is the sharing of the savings from regionalization (preshift meaning it is allocated per the 3 year rolling average as is currently done). This is the population shift going from Acton to Boxborough. Mary Brolin explained that this is what the RSDSC built in, an adjustment to share the savings. This happens every year for five years but the proportion changes every year, over the years it's 80-20%.

Maria confirmed that the Budget Books will be available for the next meeting. She asked for details on the athletic budget because it has gone down substantially for the past 4 years. Don is planning to put the athletics special revenue account in the back of the budget book, but the details won't be ready for the next School Committee meeting. Maria asked for information to explain the shift including how many kids are participating and the total income from the athletic programs over the past few years. Dr. Mills will have Steve Desy and JoAnn Campbell present at a future meeting and include financial history for the past three years.

Citing the \$73,000 in Blanchard efficiencies, Maria reminded the Committee that the Regionalization Financial Oversight Subcommittee will be tracking some of these amounts. Don will provide this list on Friday. Maria wants to be sure this is tracked for the next five years per the Agreement.

6. MCAS Schedule modification at the High School

JoAnn Campbell and Steve Martin explained the need for High School students to come late five days in the spring when MCAS testing is being done. This will have a positive impact on learning in the schools. Up to 50% of our High School classes are cancelled during MCAS testing time right now. A second reason for the change is that the number of students on IEPs who receive accommodations has increased from 57 to 87 from last year to this year. We have less and less space available for these required testing spaces. The proposal is a much more efficient way to do MCAS for everyone.

Mary Brolin asked how this would affect the number of hours of teaching. Deborah Bookis replied that it does impact the hours but we still make the 990 hours required. Brigid supports the proposal but she does not support that MCAS is taking more attention and focus. Kids are out of the classroom even more now. Liza explained the increase in accommodations is due to many reasons. More students are in district now that were previously educated out of district. There is much more assistive technology and a wider variety of disabilities. The mental health issues of many of our students are increasing and create the need for special accommodations. Liza said that there has been a significant increase in that student population at the High School.

ABRSC VOTE

Mary Brolin moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the revised FY14 school calendar to accommodate the MCAS testing schedule at the High School.

7. APS/ABRSC/ABTSC Policy Update

1. Elementary Class Size, File: IIBA – **SECOND READING – VOTE**
Kristina and Paul submitted comments since the last meeting. Maria asked if there were other comments. Brigid thanked everyone for their feedback and stated that she feels more work is need on this policy. Although the Superintendent proposed a recommendation at the last meeting Brigid would like to consider it at the Summer Workshop. She said that the budget discussion should be separate from the policy discussion.

Kristina has reviewed all of the Boxborough material and stated that not all districts have class size policies. Deanne advocated for spending more time on it over the summer. Kim stated that if that is the sense of the Committee, that more study is needed, it does not make sense to vote a number now (for class size guidelines) because it does make a statement. Mike does not see the issue about waiting because we have a policy in place until July 1. He also pointed out that this has always been a guideline, not a hard and fast policy. Maria feels the policy is a statement, not just a guideline.

ABTSC VOTE:

Mike Coppolino moved and Brigid Bieber seconded the

MOTION: to accept the class size policy as proposed by the policy subcommittee.

The Committee **VOTED** and the motion failed.

(Coppolino, Murphy and McOsker voted YES, 3 Acton members x 2 = 6 votes)

(Rychlik, Neyland, Brolin and O’Sullivan voted NO, 2 Acton members x 2 = 4 plus 2 Boxborough members = 6 votes) Brigid Bieber abstained.

It will be confirmed whether or not the current Elementary Class Size policy stays in effect after July 1 for the new expanded Region if a new policy is not voted.

2. ABTSC/APSC/ABRSC Policies - Consent Agenda #3 – **FIRST READING**
– *Maria Neyland* (incorporating Blanchard policies with APS/ABRSD)
i. Section D: Fiscal Management (*selected policies*)
ii. Section E: Support Services (*selected policies*)

8. Acton and Boxborough Local Elections

Kim McOsker will not be seeking another term. Paul Murphy will run again. Acton and Boxborough will both have an additional School Committee member that starts July 1 as outlined in the new Regional Agreement in Section 1. B.

9. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Mike reported on the Demographic survey. He met with the BC professors and asked School Committee members to prioritize their top 4 or 5 items from the list so they could focus on them.

The ABRSC and ABTSC and APSC were adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Beth Petr
List of Documents Used: see agenda