

**JOINT ACTON PUBLIC (APSC) and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL (ABRSC)
and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)
MEETINGS Minutes** (approved 6/24/14)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

June 5, 2014
7:00 p.m. ABTSC/ABRSC Open Meeting
8:00 p.m. Joint ABTSC/ABRSC/APSC Open Meeting

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce (absent from 7:12 – 8:02 p.m.), Michael Coppolino, Maria Neyland, Paul Murphy, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Amy Krishnamurthy, Deanne O’Sullivan
Others: Marie Altieri, Deb Bookis, Steve Mills, Maya Minkin, Katie Neville, Beth Petr, Officer Scott Howe

1. Call to Order – Joint ABRSC/ABTSC Meeting

Dr. Mills called the ABTSC and ABRSC to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Election of Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Officers for 2014-2015

(Note: APSC and its Chair is in place until June 30, 2014)

ABRSC VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to suspend Policy BDA, *School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting* for the 2014-2015 school year. (2/3 vote required)

ABTSC VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Dennis Bruce seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to suspend Policy BDA, *School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting* for the 2014-2015 school year. (2/3 vote required)

ABRSC VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to elect one Chairperson, one Secretary and one Acton Vice-Chairperson and one Boxborough Vice-Chairperson as outlined in the memo dated 5/15/14 found in the packet.

This structure will be tried for the upcoming year and then evaluated to see if having a consistent vice chair between the School Committee and the two towns’ boards is helpful. The Vice chairs will be the primary conduit between the towns and the School Committee.

ABTSC VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to elect one Chairperson, one Secretary and one Acton Vice-Chairperson and one Boxborough Vice-Chairperson as outlined in the memo dated 5/15/14 found in the packet.

ABRSC and ABTSC VOTES

Dr. Mills asked for nominations for officers of the FY15 Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee.

Dennis Bruce moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that Kristina Rychlik serve as the FY15 ABRSC Chairperson

Mike Coppolino moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that Dennis Bruce serve as the FY15 ABRSC Acton Vice-Chairperson

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

VOTED: that Brigid Bieber serve as the FY15 ABRSC Boxborough Vice-Chairperson

Paul Murphy moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously.

VOTED: that Beth Petr serve as the FY15 ABRSC Secretary

(Dennis Bruce left at 7:12 p.m.)

3. Chairmen's Introduction

Kristina Rychlik thanked the Committee for voting her in as the new chair.

4. Approval of Minutes and Statement of AB Warrants

1. Minutes of 5/1/14, 5/14/14 and 5/22/14 will be done at the next meeting.
2. AB warrant #14-023 dated 5/15/14 in the amount of \$1,933,469.01 and #14-024 dated 5/29/14 in the amount of \$2,022,100.98 were signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

5. Public Participation

Kristina spoke about how other Committees handle public participation and the need to balance public input with getting business done within legal requirements.

Teacher Martha Bethel spoke about the importance of Thursday afternoon planning and professional development time. She encouraged School Committee members to come in and observe teachers in the classrooms more often. With the exception of one, School Committee members all have children currently in our schools and many volunteer in the classrooms. Parent Orissa Lawrence asked why Thursday afternoons are being added to the calendar. Kristina Rychlik responded that this issue is not black and white, but very complex. The district must be sure to continue to be in compliance and this new schedule gives a cushion and will provide more instructional time for our students.

Parent Corinne Hogseth invited all to a Common Core Forum that she is hosting on June 16th. She feels families are just hearing about this, even though the School Committee and Administration have been out in front of the issue. She had a number of questions that Dr. Mills and Deborah Bookis will address. When asked what would happen if our schools refused to participate, Dr. Mills stated that our Chapter 70 state funding could be withheld.

6. Presentation: Long Range Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016 Update

Dr. Mills stated that the Long Range Strategic Plan could be considered one of the most important documents in the school. "If you don't know where you are trying to go, how will you know if you get there?" Many people have given input and have come and gone from the planning committee to get to the new document. It was noted that Goal #5 regarding facilities and a capital plan has been added.

Dr. Mills concluded with Goal 6 regarding the development and implementation of strategic budgets that aim for continuous improvement over time. He called for continued collaboration with the towns' leadership to develop funding strategies to meet goals and the examination of funding reallocations to prioritize services for students. He thanked

Mary Ann Ashton for her guidance especially with school finances over the past few years. He thanked the Finance committees for supporting the school budgets every year. Dr. Mills highlighted all of the assets that the District has now that they did not have five years ago. He is proud to leave the District with the new staff outlined in the memo and he introduced the following who were in the audience: Blanchard School Principal Dana Labb, full time assistant principals Abigail Dressler, Jenna Larrenaga, Priscilla Kotyk, Juliana Schneider, Matt McDowell and Karen Tower. Jean Oviat-Rothman and Sharon Ryan were introduced as the respective K-6 Science and Literacy/Social Studies Curriculum Specialist/Coaches. Deborah Bookis will be the point person for this document in the coming year. Dr. Mills stated that he will hand this Plan to incoming Superintendent Glenn Brand for next year.

7. Recommendation to Approve Revised FY15 School

Marie Altieri explained the FY15 Calendar changes now that the AEA contract has been ratified. The early release dates are now identified and a second professional learning day is added on January 16, 2015. The proposed snow day is the Tuesday after MLK day, January 20, 2015. The Jr High staff feels that early releases are better for instruction so late starts have not been scheduled this year. The late starts at the High School when MCAS tests are administered will continue, however those dates will not be known until the fall. (Dennis returned at 8:02 p.m.)

ABTSC VOTE

Brigid Bieber moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve the calendar as proposed.

A parent spoke from the audience asking why Thursday afternoons have been changed. She asked if it is because we are comparing ourselves to other Districts. She noted that eliminating early release on Thursday afternoons for Acton elementary schools will cost the PTOs especially Merriam because they pay for the assistants and a “micro economy” has grown around Thursday afternoons. Kristina thanked her stating that the Committee’s task is to be sure students have the instructional time that they need. She noted how complicated the issue is and that many aspects were considered when this decision was made.

8. Policy Subcommittee Update

ABTSC/ABRSC-Policies (*incorporating Blanchard policies, see separately posted document*)

1. Consent Agenda #6 – **FIRST READING** – *Maria Neyland*
2. Tobacco Use on School Property, File: ADC,GBED, JICG – **FIRST READING**
Mary Brolin thanked the subcommittee for including a restriction on electronic cigarettes in this policy. The language came from the High School handbook.

9. Call to Order APSC

At 8:11 p.m. Dennis Bruce called the APSC to order.

JOINT ABRSC/ABTSC/APSC MEETING

APS Warrant

APS warrant #201424 dated 5/27/14 in the amount of \$214,944.25 was signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

Kristina Rychlik thanked the FY14 School Committee officers for a very busy year: Maria Neyland (ABRSC and ABTSC Chairperson), Dennis Bruce (APSC Chairperson) and Beth Petr (Secretary).

10. Lower Fields Quarterly Report

Dr. Mills thanked the Friends of the Lower Fields group (FOLF) for their tremendous efforts this year. This project will be a revenue generator eventually. He noted that three sink holes developed this spring that could have been dangerous. JD Head addressed them but it could be foreshadowing. JD said it was a contractor problem and he is taking care of it. Future needs of the area include: more lighting and attention to how pedestrians are walking through. Sufficient handicap parking is being worked on. Goal pockets are a community need. Dennis Bruce asked about the finances. He noted that FOLF projects to bring in approximately \$254,000 by July 1, 2014. Last year was \$218,000. The Committee asked for an income statement on the project for the next meeting so the Town can be shown that financially it is a success.

13. AB Track update

JD Head reported that the AB track project is going along very well. The issue about changing the surface of the “D-zone” has been resolved because the main community fundraising partners have announced that they will continue their efforts to raise the additional \$45,000 needed. The Committee thanked them for their continued generosity. JD stated that the project should be completed finished by mid to late July. Coach Feit, who was in the audience, stated that this will be a “showcase track”.

14. Regionalization Update – Steve Mills

1. Notice to APS and BPS families that ownership of their school records are being transferred from the Towns to the ABRSD

Dr. Mills explained that nothing will change with students’ records, however because the ABRSD will now be the owner, families should be notified.

APSC VOTE

Mike Coppolino moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

- VOTED:** to let APS families know that ownership of their school records are being transferred from the Towns to the ABRSD

Dr. Mills will instruct the principals to let their elementary school parents know about this. Boxborough School Committee will vote the same at their June 11th meeting.

15. Safety Task Force End of Year Report

Steve Mills gave an update. Youth Officer Keith Campbell explained the ALICE method at one of the meetings and how valuable it has been in some communities. Research is showing that running and evacuating could be more effective than locking down when a school is in crisis. He asked that next year’s meeting dates for this group be publicized in the fall. Mary Brolin noted that Boxborough has implemented ALICE in their school and the Boxborough library staff is being trained. Glenn Brand chaired Sharon’s task force and they have implemented it there.

16. Wellness Committee End of Year Report – to be done at next meeting

17. School Committee Member Reports

1. Acton Finance Committee - Dennis Bruce attended the 5/27/14 meeting and presented on the ratified Teachers’ contract. They asked for a financial update and Dennis will do that on 6/24/14. They have been informed that there will be no year end spending projects by the schools.

- 18. Annual Superintendent’s Evaluation** – *Maria Neyland will do at next meeting*
- 19. School Committee Meetings**
1. Summer Workshop –Thur, July 24 6:30 pm business starts at 7:00, JH library
 2. Business Meeting – Monday, August 4 7:00 pm in the JH library
 3. Proposed FY15 ABRSC Meeting Calendar, 7:30 p.m. start time in JH library
- 20. MCAS/PARCC Options**
- Dr. Mills reported that he and Glenn Brand have been discussing this topic. A decision about which tests to administer next year must be submitted to DESE by June 30, if a District wants to be assured of their request. They feel strongly about not over-testing kids. Next year is still a test year and Dr.Mills feels it would be beneficial to do PARCC next year so administrators can experience it before it counts. One decision can be made for grades 3-8 and one for the High School. Maria Neyland read the MASC legal opinion stating that School Committees should vote on this with a recommendation from the superintendent. This was mailed to all School Committee members. Dr. Mills is not sure the Committee needs to vote. He will get a legal opinion for the next meeting.
- Maria suggested this be a topic for the July School Committee workshop or a forum in the fall so parents can learn more. The Committee agreed that something in the fall would be beneficial.
- 21. FOR YOUR INFORMATION**
1. Steve Mills thanked Marc Lewis for being the AEA President for so many years and he congratulated Karen Sonner for being the new AEA president.

The School Committees adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

NEXT MEETINGS:

- ~~June 19~~, 7:00 p.m. APSC meeting, Junior High Library – ***CHANGED to Tuesday, June 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library, APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC meeting***
- July 24, 7:00 p.m. ABRSD Annual Workshop, Junior High Library

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda