

**Acton Public, Acton-Boxborough Regional,
Acton-Boxborough Transitional
School Committees**

December 12, 2013

**7:00 p.m. ABRSC Executive Session
7:05 p.m. APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Meeting**

in the Blanchard Memorial School Library, Boxborough

Note: This meeting replaces the meeting previously scheduled for 12/19/13.

**JOINT ACTON PUBLIC (APSC) and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL (ABRSC)
and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)
MEETINGS**

Library

December 12, 2013

Blanchard School, Boxborough

7:00 p.m. ABRSC Executive Session

7:05 p.m. Joint APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Meeting

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order – ABRSC (7:00)**
2. **ABRSC Executive Session** – strategy with respect to litigation
3. **Call to Order – ABTSC and APSC for Joint Open Meeting (7:05)**
4. **Chairmen’s Introduction**
5. **Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes**
 1. Minutes of 10/3/13 meeting (APS, ABRSC, ABTSC) (*addendum*)
 2. Minutes of 11/21/13 meeting (APS, ABRSC, ABTSC)
 3. Minutes of 12/5/13 meeting (APS, ABRSC, ABTSC) (*addendum*)
6. **Public Participation**
7. **ABTSC Superintendent Search Update – *Brigid Bieber (oral)***
8. **ABTSC FY15 Budget– *Don Aicardi (7:15)***
9. **ABTSC Recommendation to Approve 2014-2015 Preschool Tuition – VOTE – *Steve Mills (7:40)***
10. **APS/ABRSC/ABTSC Policy Update (7:45)**
 1. Elementary Class Size, File: IIBA – **FIRST READING** – *Marie Altieri*
 2. ABTSC/APSC/ABRSC Policies - Consent Agenda #2 – **SECOND READING – VOTE** - *Maria Neyland* (incorporating Blanchard policies with APS/ABRSD, see separately posted document)
 - i. Section B: School Board Governance and Operations (*selected policies*)
 - ii. Section C: General School Administration (*selected policies*)
11. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION (7:55)**
 1. Acton Leadership Group: 12/12/13 agenda, 11/7/13 draft minutes
 2. Regionalization Transportation Update – Early December 2013
 3. 2014-2015 Kindergarten Registration - REVISED location for 1/14/14 meeting
10. **ADJOURN**

NEXT MEETINGS:

- Tuesday, January 7, 7:00 p.m. ABRSD/ABTSC meeting, Junior High Library
- Thursday, January 16, 7:30 p.m. APSC meeting, Junior High Library
- Saturday, January 25, 9:00 a.m. Public Interviews of Superintendent Finalists, Junior High Library
- Saturday, February 1, 9:00 a.m. ABRSD PreK- 12 BUDGET MEETING, Junior High Library

JOINT ACTON PUBLIC (APSC) and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL (ABRSC) and
ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC) MEETING Draft Minutes

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

October 3, 2013
7:30 p.m. Joint APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Meeting
7:45 p.m. ABTSC Meeting

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Michael Coppolino (7:35),
Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, Maria Neyland, Deanne O'Sullivan,
Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: none
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills,
Beth Petr

The Acton Public, Acton-Boxborough Regional and Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committees were called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairpersons Dennis Bruce and Maria Neyland.

1. Chairmen's Introduction

The Committees welcomed the FY14 Acton-Boxborough High School Representatives: Caroline (Coco) DeFrancesco, Jennie He, Josh Reinstrom and Raymond Yu.

2. Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes

APS Warrant #201407 dated 10/1/13 in the amount of \$439,659.41 was signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

AB Warrant #14-006 dated 9/19/13 in the amount of \$1,871,904.07 and warrant #14-007 dated 10/3/13 in the amount of \$1,663,008.75 were signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

The ABRSC, ABRSC and APSC approved the minutes of the 9/10/13 meeting. The ABTSC and APSC approved the minutes of the 9/19/13 meeting.

3. Public Participation - none

4. ABRSD Track Renovation Update

JD Head gave an update on the Dow Track Project timeline and the anticipated impact on other users. The project is set to begin on November 18 and conclude on June 30, minimizing the impact to regular spring activities. JD stated that under no circumstances will there be any disruption to ABRHS Graduation on June 6, 2014.

5. Superintendent's Security Task Force Update

Dr. Mills reported on the recent meeting of the Security Task Force.

6. Policy Update

1. Mission, Values and Goals (File: AD) revision and deletion of School District Goals and Objectives (File: ADA)– **FIRST READING**
Brigid Bieber reported that these policies were redundant.

7. School Committee Member Reports

1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG)
Dennis Bruce distributed the current and several proposed new spreadsheets that ALG is considering using this year.

2. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)
Kim McOsker reported that the HIT's next meeting is Oct 17.
3. Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Task Force
Dennis Bruce will miss the next meeting on Wednesday but Don will attend.
4. Acton Finance Committee
Steve Mills presented at FinCom last week including showing the members how the regionalization savings will be achieved.

The ABRSC and APSC adjourned at 7:47 p.m. and the ABTSC continued.

8. ABRSD Superintendent Search Update

1. Proposed slate for Search Committee – **VOTE**
2. Search Firms and Interview Schedule
3. Proposed Search Timeline, 10-3-13

Maria Neyland stated that most of the packet material is for the next meeting. She reviewed the proposed slate for the Search Committee and thanked all who volunteered.

ABTSC VOTE:

Mary Brodin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the slate for the Superintendent Search Committee as proposed.

9. Blanchard School Principal Search Update

Marie Altieri updated the Committee briefly.

10. 2014-2015 School Calendar

1. Parent/Staff Survey Memo and Results
2. Possible Calendars for next year (*to be voted at 11/7/13 meeting*)
3. Letter from Congregation Beth Elohim Religious School Committee, 9-30-13

Steve Mills reviewed the survey results regarding the FY15 School Calendar and Thursday afternoons. He felt it was important to survey again this year because the Blanchard School is now included and their calendar is different. More than 2100 parents/guardians and about 550 staff members completed the survey. Due to the lateness of Labor Day in 2014 and the survey results, Dr. Mills recommends starting after Labor Day next year. Dr. Mills presented two calendars for consideration, one with school on Good Friday and Rosh Hashanah, and one without school on these two religious holidays.

Boxborough has held school on these two holidays for the past 4 years. Maria Neyland asked Dr. Bates to put together some information on this for the next meeting. The Committee discussed the other religious holidays mentioned by people in the survey, including Diwali (77 respondents), Chinese New Year (38 respondents), Eid holidays (15 respondents) and Passover (10 respondents), and a handful of other holidays mentioned by one or two respondents. The Committee reminded the public that they are required to vote on the School Calendar every year and that is why the discussion keeps coming up. The reason why the Tuesday in November is no school for students and professional development for staff is because it is Election Day and the Junior High and Conant are polling places.

The many members of the public in the audience were invited to comment briefly. Many people said that children do not like to miss school because of the workload, or because it makes them feel different. Most speakers said they value highly that the Acton elementary and the Regional schools do not have school on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (when on a school day). Several, including Rabbi Lewis Mintz, described how the primary way of observing the Jewish High Holidays is to be at the temple during the day. The only way to observe these days is to go to the services. This is compared to some other religious holidays that are more easily celebrated with a meal, or as a festival, or at a non-school time service.

The importance of all staff knowing, understanding and complying with the School Committee policy regarding observing religious holidays was emphasized. The ABTSC will vote on the FY15 School Calendar next month.

In response to the survey, parents/guardians responded almost 3 to 1 in favor of the current Boxborough practice of having one early release day a month for professional development.

11. 2014-2015 Regional School Transportation Report

JD Head presented a proposed plan for getting to one tier busing and having all 6 elementary schools on one schedule. While there are many pros, as well as cons, there are many variables that will not be known until more time goes by. He welcomes feedback and input from people. He noted that 83 passenger busses work well for small children, but they are not as comfortable when full with older students. The current use of bus passes is another issue that complicates a one tier system. A motivating factor for considering this change is the increased reimbursement from the state due full Regionalization next year.

In addition to the cost of additional buses and staff, the Committee briefly discussed switching the two schedules of the Elementary and Regional Schools (early and late). This has been considered in the past and some other communities have done it successfully. It was decided that this would be a topic for the Summer Workshop, but not something to consider for next year.

Everyone agreed that having the elementary schools switch from early to late schedule every year is very inconvenient. JD said that the carbon footprint would be greatly improved with a one tier system, but a big disadvantage is that the bus drivers would be working less hours and this is concerning everyone. JD asked for direction from the Committee as all of this affects the budget for next year. The School Committee asked JD to continue working on this possibility and return to a future meeting with more details and a recommendation.

Several members of the public spoke about a one tier system for the elementary students. A parent thought more families would drop off and pick up their children, possibly creating unsafe situations due to the layout of most of the school entrances. Another stated that, "Bus passes give Acton a connectivity that is essential." A parent added that bus passes make up for not having neighborhood schools. Safety issues about having very full busses and many children walking to school is a concern. The public may email the School Committee at abrsc@abschools.org if they have comments to share.

12. PreK – 12 Regionalization

1. Transitional Administrative Team Weekly Meetings Update
 - i. Letter from Boxborough Teachers, 9/13/13
 - ii. DRAFT Response, 9/27/13

Dr. Mills, Marie Altieri, AEA President Marc Lewis and Dr. Bates are meeting with the Blanchard staff tomorrow to begin to address the understandable concerns and answer questions for the staff. He asked the School Committee to review the draft response letter in the packet.

- iii. Regionalization Savings

See memo in packet. Dr. Mills is working with counsel to draft the intermunicipal agreement, with help from Don Aicardi and Tess Summers. John Fallon said that the Boxborough Committee would be ready to meet with Dr. Mills about their Agreement by November. John said that they do not need to be voted on at Town Meeting, only by the School Committees and Boards of Selectmen.

Because of the timing of the Superintendent Search, Maria Neyland asked that Budget Saturday be moved from January 25th to Saturday, February 1, 2014. This would allow January 25th to be a full day of the final Superintendent interviews. The School Committee agreed.

Maria thanked Amy Bisiewicz and her staff for their excellent efforts to help Blanchard get connected to abschools.

2. Transitional Policy Subcommittee Update

Maria Neyland reported that the subcommittee continues to make progress on combining the policies.

13. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

JD Head gave a brief update on the Hayward Road construction. The Town of Acton is installing new water pipes. It is unfortunate that the timing is the same as the start of school.

The Committee adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

NEXT MEETINGS:

- October 9, 7:00 p.m. ABTSC Meeting - Search Firm Interviews, Junior High Library
- October 10, 7:30 p.m. Boxborough School Committee meeting, Blanchard Library
- October 17, 7:00 p.m. Acton Public School Committee meeting, Junior High Library
- November 7, 7:00 p.m. Joint ABRSC/ABTSC/APSC Meeting, Junior High Library

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC), ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) and ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE (APSC) MEETINGS Draft Minutes

**Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School**

**November 21, 2013
7:00 p.m. Joint APSC ABRSC Meeting
7:15 p.m. Joint APSC ABRSC ABTSC Meeting**

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

The Acton Public School Committee and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee were called to order by Dennis Bruce and Maria Neyland, respective chairs, at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Presentation to APS Food Services Staff - Healthier US School Challenge Award**
Katie Millett from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education presented Kirsten Nelson and her five APS cafeteria managers with plaques for their achievement. Only 6% of the schools in the US have been given this award from the US Dept of Agriculture. She spoke about how nutrition in school meals is key. She commended Kirsten on her outstanding leadership including her recent work with an intern from Framingham State University.
2. **Recommendation to Accept Gift of \$450,000 from the Richard E. Dow Track Fundraising Committee/Friends of Leary Field – ABRSC VOTE – Steve Mills**
Dr. Mills thanked parent John Raguin for being persistent about this fundraising project from the very beginning. The group's efforts were so successful that several items from the "wish list" will be accomplished in addition to the original plan. Construction has begun on Phase 1. Coach Brian Crossman was also instrumental in this effort. John thanked all involved and said that it was a big effort on many people's part. Maria Neyland said this has been a fantastic public/private partnership for the school district.

ABRSC VOTE:

Brigid Bieber moved, Mike Coppolino seconded, and it was unanimously, **VOTED** to accept the gift of \$450,000 for the Richard E. Dow Track Renovation with great gratitude.

APSC VOTE:

3. **Recommendation to Accept Gifts to the Acton Elementary School Libraries from the Friends of the Acton Libraries –VOTE**
Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED:** to accept the gift from the Friends of the Acton Libraries

ABRSC VOTE:

4. **Recommendation to Accept Gifts to the R.J. Grey Junior High and ABRHS Libraries from the Friends of the Acton Libraries –VOTE**
Mary Brolin moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED:** to accept the gift from the Friends of the Acton Libraries

The ABTSC was called to order at 7:15 p.m. and the Joint APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Meeting began.

5. **Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes from the 11/7/13 APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Meeting and the 10/3/13 APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Meeting will be reviewed at the next meeting.

APS warrant #201410 dated 11/12/13 in the amount of \$164,404.99 was signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

6. **Public Participation** – none

The APSC and ABRSC were suspended and the ABTSC continued.

7. **Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Superintendent Search**

Brigid Bieber and Dr. Herb Levine from Future Management Systems gave an update. Brigid will share the SpedPAC information from the last School Committee meeting with the Search Committee. Currently FMS has received 20 inquiries, 10 have turned into applications, and 5 are from out of state. Dr. Levine considers this pretty good at this time in the process. Applications so far have been based on ads, not solicitations. Next meetings are December 6th and 17th. It is expected that a statement about the selection will be released on January 27th.

A Leadership Profile was developed from the input from the focus groups, survey and discussions. Dr. Levine said that three major issues have been identified that the new Superintendent will have to deal with immediately, most notably due to full regionalization:

1. Budget and Finance
2. The elementary school choice program and if it would have to change
3. Boxborough and how it will be brought into the school district. It is very important that Boxborough residents are heard and feel good about the process.

Longer term issues that came up include a capital plan for longer term, class size and decreasing student population. Ethnic diversity is a strength but could be a challenge for the next Superintendent to balance the schools and attendant resources that go with that kind of issue. This would include language resources. Another major issue was student stress and high expectations and if the schools have enough adults to deal with the students. Survey comments will be given to Beth Petr for review if Committee members would like them.

Dr. Levine thanked Andrew Shen and Brigid Bieber for their excellent assistance. He concluded that the skill that came through over and over as essential for the new Superintendent to possess was that he/she be a very clear communicator and someone who enjoys building relationships with Town boards and committees as well as listening to faculty, parents, and other stakeholders.

ABTSC VOTE:

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

VOTED: to accept the Leadership Profile as presented.

This profile will be used as a guide as the Search Committee moves forward to find the candidate with the best fit for our community.

The Committee discussed the Superintendents' salary charts in the packet. Brigid noted that there are so many data points for comparisons that she wonders how valuable it is to look too closely at them. She advocated for not deciding on a salary range yet, but to get further into the process. Dr. Levine agreed. Different candidates will have different needs and requests. He recommends waiting to decide on a salary. The sense of the Committee was not to set a salary range yet.

The APSC and ABRSC reconvened and the JOINT APSC, ABRSC and ABTSC continued.

8. **Elementary Class Size**

(Discussion only, FIRST READ of revised policy File: IIBA planned for 12/7/13 meeting)

1. Class Size Policy Options
2. Current Acton and Boxborough policies
3. Study Material from Boxborough School Committee presentation on 3/10/11 (posted with 11/7/13 School Committee meeting materials)
4. Class Size financial estimates (Section Planning)

Marie Altieri asked for the Committee's input regarding class size for planning for the upcoming year. She presented the cost of the four options with #1 and #3 being cost neutral. Option 3 is recommended by the Administration. An additional classroom with one teacher and benefits costs \$70,000. The Ashtons will present the annual enrollment projections at the 12/5/13 School Committee meeting.

The Committee discussed the value of adding more classroom assistants when class sizes have risen in past years. There is not currently an assistant in every Acton elementary classroom. While assistants are not the same as certified staff, with assistants included the adult-student ratio it is closer to 10 – 1. A base amount is funded in the appropriated budget for assistants and then PTOs subsidize this in all of the schools to varying degrees. There is approximately 18 hours of assistant time at each grade level (about 6 hours per classroom per week). The exception is at Merriam where there is an 18 hr/week assistant in every classroom. Marie noted that having additional All-Day Kindergarten seats available next year means less of an increase in the next year's Grade 1.

The Committee discussed what it means that the policy is only a guideline. Guidelines show what priorities are and set the tone for the classes. Several members voiced support for Option 3 because there is no cost implication and it is not a major change for this first year of regionalization. This could be reviewed again in a year.

The Administration would love to recommend option 2 or 4 but practically they recommend option 3 and then a review in a few years. Paul Murphy expressed concern about the grade 4 jump in curriculum but acknowledged the substantial cost. Kristina Rychlik was on Acton's class size subcommittee headed up by Amy Hedison a few years ago. She advocated for the chance to set guidelines that the Committee might be able to now meet. She also recognized that there are conflicting priorities regarding space constrictions and costs. Declining enrollment will help in the upcoming years. It was agreed that resulting future savings, however, will be applied wherever the School Committee and Town Meetings decide.

Nancy Sherburne spoke for the SpedPAC. She encouraged the Committee to embrace setting a policy based on their educational beliefs about what children need to be successful. She stated that if the Committee believes the research and values it, they should put it in a policy and discuss the financial aspects of it at another time. Brigid agreed that the Committee should not be basing policy on cost, but on education. That said, class size decisions must be prioritized with everything else. Maria Neyland shared the experience in Boxborough where a small group of students showed improvement due to their small class size.

Maria Neyland does not want the budget to drive the policy. Kristina reminded the Committee about the increased teacher workload with larger class sizes. The Committee will continue this discussion at their 12/5/13 meeting.

9. **APS/ABRSC/ABTSC Policy Update**

1. Notice re District Policies for this year – **SECOND READING**
ABTSC VOTE:

Mary Brolin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously
VOTED: to approve the notice as presented for the period 7/1/13 – 6/30/14

APSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the notice as presented for the period 7/1/13 – 6/30/14

ABRSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the notice as presented for the period 7/1/13 – 6/30/14

2. Nondiscrimination (File: AC) revision – **SECOND READING**

ABTSC VOTE:

Dennis Bruce moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Nondiscrimination policy revision as proposed.

ABRSC VOTE:

Dennis Bruce moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Nondiscrimination policy revision as proposed.

APSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Nondiscrimination policy revision as proposed.

3. Prohibition of Harassment (Combining Files: ACAB, JBA, GBA) revision with form – **FIRST READING**

Liza Huber explained the changes. The language now compliments the revised Nondiscrimination policy.

4. ABTSC/APSC/ABRSC Policies - Consent Agenda #1 – **SECOND READING** (incorporating Blanchard policies with APS/ABRSD, see separately posted document)

a. Section A: Foundations and Basic Commitments (*selected policies*)

b. Section B: School Board Governance and Operations (*selected policies*)

The Committees discussed the proposed policy revisions. File: ACD-R, procedures for *Acknowledging Religious Holidays* would not be voted because the Committee only votes on policy. It was emphasized that the DESE list of holidays must accompany the School Calendar whenever it is posted. File BB: *School Committee Legal Status* was not included in the vote because “established by law” notation needed clarification.

ABTSC VOTE:

Brigid Bieber moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Consent Agenda of policies #1 with very minor editing revisions, excluding File: BB and File: ACD-R

Only ABTSC voted because Notice 9.1 (voted earlier in the meeting) states that “For the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014, all references to the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District in the Districts’ policies should be read to include the Acton Public Schools.”

10. **2013-2014 SMART Goals – SECOND READING**

A February update will be added to Goal #4.

ABRSC VOTE:

Brigid Bieber moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the FY14 SMART Goals as amended.

APSC VOTE:

Mike Coppolino moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the FY14 SMART Goals as amended.

11. **School Committee Member Reports**

3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)

Dennis read a report from Kim McOsker about the HIT meeting that morning. The year to date cash flow is positive and encouraging. They are hopeful that it signals that the expenses are aligning with the income from co-payments. It is believed that the town and school budgets will reflect an 8% increase for planning purposes for next year's rates. There is some disagreement among members as to how high the increase will need to be but this will evolve as data comes in over the year.

5. **Acton Finance Committee**

Dennis Bruce attended the recent meeting and shared the Committee's feedback re FinCom's Point of View (POV) document. He summarized that the School Committee was feeling very apprehensive about the POV.

The ABRSC and ABTSC adjourned at 9:20 p.m. and the APSC continued.

12. **FY14 Financial Report – 1st Quarter**

Don Aicardi reported that this first quarter is very tight, like the ABRSD report at the last meeting, with a projected year end fund balance of \$4,935. He is looking for trends and lessons to incorporate into the FY15 budget. The year end fund balance will have a sharp effect on the turnback number. Particularly in the Facilities department, they have depended on turnback numbers for assistance at year end, and that won't happen this year. They will be more aggressive about using energy savings to create a type of capital budget plan that JD Head can use for these type of needs.

13. **Recommendation to Accept Gift from Douglas PTO – APSC VOTE**

Deanne O'Sullivan moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to accept the Douglas PTO gift with gratitude.

20. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

7. The 2014-2015 ABRSD School Calendar is posted to the website.

8. The 2014-2015 Kindergarten Registration Schedule is posted. January 14, 2014 is Kindergarten Registration Night.

NEXT MEETINGS

- December 5, 7:00 p.m. APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Meeting, R.J. Grey Junior High Library
- December 12, 7:30 p.m. Boxborough School Committee, Blanchard Library – This might be made into an ABTSC meeting as well.
- December 19, 7:00 p.m. APSC Meeting, R.J. Grey Junior High Library

The APSC adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of documents used: see agenda

**JOINT ACTON PUBLIC (APSC) and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL (ABRSC)
and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)
MEETINGS Draft Minutes**

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

December 5, 2013
7:00 p.m. Joint APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Michael Coppolino, Kim McOsker, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan (7:10), Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Paul Murphy
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

The Acton-Boxborough Regional and Acton Public School Committees were called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Maria Neyland and Dennis Bruce, respective Chairs.

1. Chairmen’s Introduction

2. Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the 11/7/13 meeting (APS, ABRSC, ABTSC) were approved by the three Committees as amended. The minutes of the 10/3/13 and 11/21/13 meetings (APS, ABRSC, ABTSC) will be voted at the next meeting.

APS Warrant #201411 dated 11/26/13 in the amount of \$75,144.25 was signed by the Chair and circulated for signatures. AB Warrant #14-010 dated 11/14/13 in the amount of \$1,903,962.66 and warrant #14-011 dated 11/27/13 in the amount of \$1,867,776.43 were signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

3. Public Participation - none

4. Student Enrollment Projections

Peter and Mary Ann Ashton, from Innovation and Information Consultants, Inc. presented the annual projections. Peter noted that it was exciting to talk about enrollment as one K-12 region for the first time. Enrollment continues to decline with a net overall decline of 84 students or -1.7% (K-12) this year. Last year the Ashtons *correctly* predicted this year’s enrollment at 5571 students. Enrollment is expected to decline for the next 6 years at the elementary level and for the foreseeable future at grades 7 – 12. Total region enrollment declines through 2023, then starts to increase again. This is due in part to a decline in births and new construction. Regional elementary enrollment drops by about 400 students between now and 2020; then increases back to almost today’s level by 2025. JHS/SHS both continue to drop; total decline is 700 students between now and 2025. Acton’s share of total regional enrollment continues to increase until 2021, then Boxborough’s share slowly increases but remains at about 15% by 2025. The Ashtons were thanked for their extremely valuable and accurate data again this year.

It was noted that the colors on slide 3 should be reversed. Blue means under predicted, and red means over predicted.

5. FY15 Transportation

Dr. Mills said that JD Head has done a lot of work looking into a one tier transportation system for our elementary schools but the results are not turning out the way we had hoped. FUTURES Ed last year suggested that more money be spent on infrastructure for transportation at the current level. For these reasons, Dr. Mills stated that adding to the

system and not increasing funding is not the right thing to do at this time. He advocated for keeping 2 tiers as busing is done now for next year and then reexamine the one tier issue to see if it is feasible in a year or two. JD agrees and is not comfortable advocating for one tier right now due to the many unknowns about next year. He stated that they do know that 4000 students will be looking for a ride to school on September 3rd and they have to be ready.

The Administration's greatest concern is staffing a one tier system knowing that 13 – 17 additional drivers would need to be hired. Now that JD has run the proposed routes, other potential safety issues have come up. Operational support is also a concern. JD recommends Option 2 for next year because it is the most likely to be cost effective and gives the District the most flexibility. It means purchasing 7 buses and hiring 7 new drivers to incorporate the Blanchard School students. This would be a first step toward moving toward a one tier system.

Kristina Rychlik expressed concern about the current state of operational support for our transportation services. She mentioned buses being parked on donated land and that the maintenance shed is not large enough for work to be done in. JD said that LMI has donated their space to the schools for a very long time for the buses. The blue maintenance shed is shared by the grounds crew, diesel mechanic and bus mechanics. Even though only half a bus can fit in the shed at a time, 90% of the problems happen and are fixed on the road. JD acknowledged that with some of the services that Acton families are offered, including bus passes (of which 99% are honored), it is hard to go out to bid and find an operation willing to take it on. The difference between an in house service and a contracted service is that we can offer what our families are asking for.

Maria Neyland asked JD to provide the information on outsourcing the entire operation over the next year. JD will do this, but the last time he did, no company would do the whole operation. He reminded the Committee that these are for profit companies. School Choice also makes it complicated because of the added routes. The bus passes are a risk because they create room for error when a child's routine changes and sometimes a parent cannot be reached.

6. **ABTSC Blanchard School Principal Search Update**
Marie Altieri reported that four finalists have been named. Parents are invited to the open sessions next week with each candidate. A final decision is expected by the winter break.
7. **ABTSC Superintendent Search Update**
Brigid Bieber reported that the Search Committee is meeting tomorrow night.
8. **ABTSC FY15 Budget**
Don Aicardi gave an excellent explanation of the new Table 6 to be used for the K-12 ABRSD FY15 Budget process. Some of the numbers used are very preliminary and some are just for illustration purposes at this point. More details will be provided at the next School Committee meeting.
9. **ABTSC PreK – 12 Regionalization**
Dr. Mills reported that the Transitional Administrative Team Weekly Meetings continue to be very productive. They assume level service and no cuts. They are carefully discussing how the combining of Acton and Boxborough's resources will go. The Blanchard staff just joined abschools.org. Blanchard Kindergarten teachers joined Deb Bookis' grade level meeting and they said that they really enjoyed being part of a larger group of teachers for that discussion.

10. Elementary Class Size

(FIRST READ of revised policy File: IIBA at 12/12/13 meeting?)

1. Class Size Policy Options
2. Current Acton and Boxborough policies
3. Study Material from Boxborough School Committee presentation on 3/10/11 (posted with 11/7/13 School Committee meeting materials)
4. Class Size financial estimates (Section Planning)

After a long discussion at the previous meeting the School Committee was asked to give direction to the policy subcommittee so a First Reading could be done on a revised Class Size policy (incorporating Acton and Boxborough's elementary classes) next week. Implementing Acton's current policy would call for 123 sections while Boxborough's policy would call for 125 sections. Affordable class sizes are required. Dr. Mills recommended option 3 with 123 sections. Committee members discussed the need to set policy that is educationally sound but there were various opinions about whether budgetary concerns should be considered. The Administration's recommendation was also a consideration. The Committee agreed that they should spend time at the Summer Workshop discussing Class Size for Junior High and High School classes. (The current policy only covers K-6 classes.)

Several members spoke strongly in favor of option 2 (125 sections next year, but increasingly more sections in future years than option 3) but agreed to go with option 3 as long as the Committee returns to the discussion in the summer and considers the full gamut of class sizes. One member asked that the summer agenda item include diversity, sped/ell, and the composition of the classes by school.

Several members felt making large decisions like this in the infancy of regionalization was not prudent. Others saw this policy revision as the chance to "set goals for what is right for our students". After reviewing the background information, Kristina Rychlik said that the focus was on mitigating the effects of large class sizes. Teacher Karen Sonner was asked to speak about what it really means for the teacher and the students when class sizes are smaller. Karen said there is a big difference between 20 and 22 students because it means more time individually with each child. She also noted that in the past few years, the needs of the students have increased a lot. Maria Neyland spoke strongly that now is the time to set the priority for the kids. She said that while Option 2 has the research behind it, at the same time, the District is not going to be able to achieve it every year due to budget. She advocated for setting the priority and the policy for smaller class sizes.

Although not in agreement, the majority of the Committee felt the policy subcommittee should write a proposed policy around option 3 for a First Reading on 12/12/13.

11. Recommendation to Approve 2014-2015 All-Day Kindergarten Tuition – VOTE –

Dr. Mills reported that after much discussion, it is recommended that the difference between the two towns' All-Day Kindergarten tuition rates be split and the FY15 rate be set at \$4000. Erin Bettez noted that costs will be covered at this lower rate for Acton, but the financial assistance that will be needed is unknown every year. Acton has 7 All-Day K classrooms with about 145 kids. Boxborough has about 33 children, so 175 total students next year would be a projection.

ABTSC VOTE:

Kim McOsker moved, Kristina Rychlik seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the change in ADK tuition for next year as proposed.

12. Lower Fields Report

Erin Bettez reported that the Lower Fields have generated \$222,034 for FY13 and \$237,357 for FY14 to date. Both fields are nearly fully booked Fall 2013 and Spring 2014. A wish list includes a grooming machine that would be paid for after 3 times of use, lighting for the new rear parking lot, and fence pockets to “park” nets. Dennis reported that this has been a wonderful project and he is there all the time with his kids. The back parking lot needs a light for safety and it needs to be lined. Walking from the back lot is very dangerous right now. A yellow line is needed for where the cars should stay. Field 17 has woods half way then woods, consideration should be given to extending the net across there because if the ball goes over it the kids will get cut. He agrees with the pockets for nets. Erin said that connecting all of the parking lots with lighting is being discussed. Signage is needed right away for the handicap parking spots because they are not being used appropriately.

13. APS/ABRSC/ABTSC Policy Update

1. Prohibition of Harassment (Combining Files: ACAB, JBA, GBA) revision with form – **SECOND READING – VOTE**

ABTSC VOTE:

Brigid Bieber moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Prohibition of Harassment policy revision as proposed.

ABRSC VOTE:

Mary Brolin move, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Prohibition of Harassment policy revision as proposed.

APSC VOTE:

Deanne O’Sullivan moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the Prohibition of Harassment policy revision as proposed.

2. ABTSC/APSC/ABRSC Policies - Consent Agenda #2 – **FIRST READING** – *Maria Neyland* (incorporating Blanchard policies with APS/ABRSD, see separately posted document)
 - i. Section B: School Board Governance and Operations (*selected policies*)
 - ii. Section C: General School Administration (*selected policies*)

Dennis Bruce asked if policy ADC – Smoking on School Premises includes electronic cigarettes and could they be considered a tobacco product because they contain nicotine. The policy subcommittee will review this question.

14. School Committee Member Reports

1. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – Brigid gave a brief update.
2. Acton Board of Selectmen – Katie Green reported that the Selectmen are closing the warrant at their next meeting.
3. Boxborough Board of Selectmen – Maria reported that the Selectmen discussed the new Minuteman School Agreement and feel the Boxborough SC should give an opinion on it.

The three School Committees adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

NEXT MEETINGS:

- **December 12, 7:00 p.m. APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC meeting** (replaces meeting on December 19) followed by Boxborough School Committee, Blanchard Library in Boxborough
- Tuesday, January 7, 7:00 p.m. ABRSD/ABTSC meeting, Junior High Library
- Thursday, January 16, 7:30 p.m. APSC meeting, Junior High Library
- Saturday, January 25, 9:00 a.m. Public Interviews of Superintendent Finalists, Junior High Library
- Saturday, February 1, 9:00 a.m. ABRSD PreK- 12 BUDGET MEETING, Junior High Library

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

Acton-Boxborough Regional
School District
Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

Transitional Regional School Committee
Meeting
December 12, 2013

1

Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

TONIGHT'S FOCUS:
"Chart of Accounts" Development
ABRSD Reserves Review
New ABRSD Budget Process
Main Assumptions
What's On The Horizon?
FY'15 Budget Schedule

2

Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

“Chart of Accounts” Development

3

Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

New Chart of Accounts

- Built from scratch
- Hired Abrahams Group with design
- This effort began in late June, 2013
- Three (3) “Fact Check” Tests conducted
- “More intensive” testing will be performed by MUNIS in January & February, 2014
- Consistently making corrections
- SOP for municipal conversions: 6 months

4

Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

The account numbers and titles for the FY'15 budget will be completely different than those used in previous budgets for APS, ABRSD and the Blanchard School.

Crosswalks will be provided to school staff to help familiarize them with the new structure.

Complex conversion due to **three** account structures using **two** systems into **one**

5

Review of ABRSD Reserves

Before we begin our discussion of FY'15, what is the current status of our reserves?

6

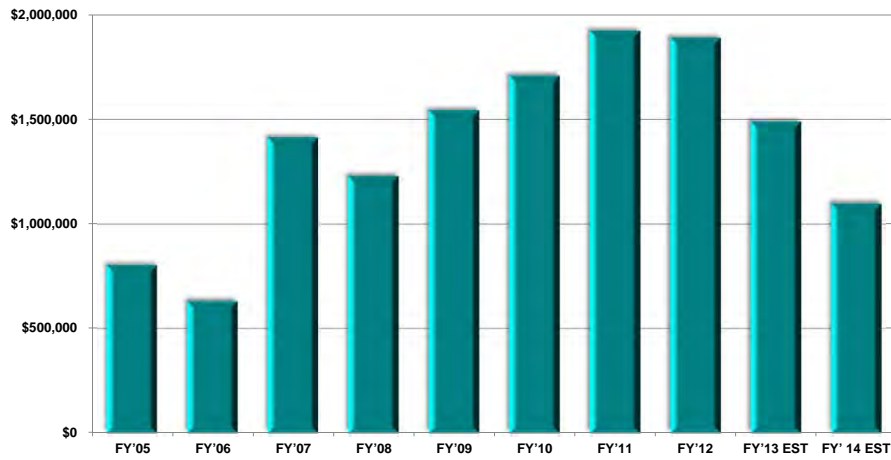
**Acton Boxborough Regional School District
Use of E & D (Reserves, in thousands)**

FY	E & D	FY	E & D
FY'98	\$0	FY'07	\$284
FY'99	\$99	FY'08	\$359
FY'00	\$100	FY'09	\$650
FY'01	\$230	FY'10	\$450
FY'02	\$330	FY'11	\$924
FY'03	\$300	FY'12	\$318
FY'04	\$45	FY'13	\$519
FY'05	\$500	FY'14	\$729
FY'06	\$398	FY'15	\$300 TBD

**Acton Boxborough Regional School District
Excess & Deficiency Balance FY'98 to FY'14**

FY	E & D	FY	E & D
FY'98	\$391,959	FY'06	\$632,349
FY'99	\$460,077	FY'07	\$1,415,970*
FY'00	\$803,026	FY'08	\$1,231,767*
FY'01	\$427,861	FY'09	\$1,545,953
FY'02	\$467,258	FY'10	\$1,711,823
FY'03	\$767,772	FY'11	\$1,925,118**
FY'04	\$605,464	FY'12	\$1,892,740
FY'05	\$805,557	FY'13	\$1,492,363 EST
		FY'14	\$1,100,000 EST

ABRSD Excess/Deficiency Balance: Where will we be in the fall?



Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

Budget Procedure for New ABRSD

Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

Dr. Mills has received budget requests for program expansion, capital requests, and staff

11

Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

Challenge for FY'14 to FY'15 comparisons:

Acton Public Schools

Boxborough Public Schools

Acton Boxborough Regional Schools

School Expenses located within Boxborough
Municipal Budget

School Expenses located within Acton
Municipal Budget

12

Introductory FY' 15 Budget Presentation

Three significant changes in this year's process:

- 1) One **(not three!!!)** budget group met
- 2) Boxborough Superintendent and Business Manager involved in all meetings
- 3) FY'15 "Base Budget" already included in new Regional Agreement

13

Introductory FY' 15 Budget Presentation

Complex Process for FY'15:

- A. Base: "essentially level service"
- B. Additions required to maintain level service
- C. **(Vacancy Factor):** Applied to select accounts
- D. **(Regionalization Staff Savings)**
- E. Retiree HI & Middlesex Retire & WC Adjusts
- F. **(Regionalization Efficiencies/Enrollment Decline)**
- G. Budget Drivers Reviewed/Corrections
- H. Proposed Additional Staff/Program Requests

14

Introductory FY' 15 Budget Presentation

Complex Process for FY'15:

$$A + B - C - D + E - F + G + H =$$

Recommended FY'15 Budget (January 2014)

Will Be Placed in new "Table 6" format

Comparison Can Be Made To "Net" Base
Budget As Outlined in Appendix A

15

ABRSD FY' 15 Operating Budget

The Administration will decide by the close of this week evaluating new staffing & materials requests-and how best to accomplish them

If unfulfilled, these requests should not be considered to be "cuts" from current level of service

16

ABRSD FY'15 Operating Budget

Begun the process of converting all the numbers to the new budget accounts-
solving/proofing/doublechecking

Successfully integrating Blanchard accounts (non-MUNIS) into new Chart continues to be largest challenge

“We anticipate turbulence during the flight....”

17

ABRSD FY'15 Operating Budget

FY'15 Financial Overview:
Main Assumptions

18

Current FY' 15 ABRSD Budget Estimate

- 2.5% average total salary increase estimated for all employees including steps, lanes, longevity and Supermax for teachers
- Health Insurance: HMO 75/25%, Indemnity 50%/50%
- Health Insurance estimate 10% rate increase (still under consideration by Health Insurance Trust)
- Unified Middlesex retirement (for ABRSD non-teacher staff) preliminary annual assessment
- Updated all ABRSD debt service
- Circuit Breaker reimbursement assumed at 72%
- Workers Compensation & Property/Casualty unification from three districts (shift from towns **towards** ABRSD)
- OPEB Trust Contribution \$376k to \$506k (34% increase)
- No FY'14 to FY'15 budget impact from loss of EdJobs

19

FY' 14 ABRSD Budget Items

What will we be monitoring over the next several months?

20

FY' 15 ABRSD Budget Items To Be Closely Monitored In Coming Months

- Chapter 70: Will be a guess based on DESE's estimate from last year; first real number will be part of Governor's proposed FY'15
- Current Assumption: State Aid based on final FY'14 Cherry Sheet
- Another first: Regional Bonus Aid - what should we count on?
- Regional Transportation Revenue **(based on FY'14 expenditures- will be working with DESE throughout spring-500k increase?)**
- Circuit Breaker Reimbursement? (currently estimated at **72%**)
- Health Insurance Trust/Rates for FY'15 (currently at **10%**)?
- "E & D" Reserves Number Used to Support the ABRSD Budget?
- ERI numbers are still evolving (December 15th deadline)
- CASE assessments for Tuition & Transportation (still preliminary)

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Introductory FY' 15 Budget Presentation

Upcoming Schedule

22

Introductory FY'15 Budget Presentation

- 12/5/13 ABRSD Transitional School Committee's introductory budget discussion
- 12/12/13 ABRSD Transitional School Committee budget discussion continues
- 12/31/13 Acton Town Meeting warrant closes**
- 1/7/14 Beginning of budget review by AB Transitional Regional School Committee (overview/issues)
- 1/16/14 Continue discussion of preliminary budget with AB Transitional Regional School Committee
- 2/1/14 [Transitional School Committee Saturday All-Day Session with presentations by school leaders; Selectmen / Finance Committee / public at large all encouraged to attend](#)
- 2/6/14 AB Transitional Regional School Committee budget hearing (required by law) - *Possible Budget Vote & Acton and Boxborough Finance Committees / Review / Comments to School*
- 2/13/14 Possible AB Transitional School Committee meeting if vote needed on Regional budget/assessments

December 9, 2013

To: Stephen Mills

Cc: Donald Aicardi

From: Liza Huber

Subject: 2014-2015 Preschool Tuition Rates

Currently, there are two distinct tuition rates for children enrolled in the Carol P. Huebner Preschool; 1) for those students who are developing typically and serving as role models, and 2) for students with identified special needs, enrolled by other school districts.

In formulating a rationale for setting preschool tuitions, the following options can be considered:

Option #1: To reasonably calculate and predict costs of preschool tuitions by modeling out-of-district (ODD) tuitions which are generally increased by 3.47%.

Option #2: To calculate actual value, i.e., to determine the number of FTEs and benefits, divided by the number of enrolled students and consider the degree of severity of the disability.

Option #3: To combine the above options by using a formula and actual value and adding a range to the formula to compensate for increases (or decreases) in budgeting.

Increasing the tuitions by 3.47% is a good predictor of costs. That said, this percentage yearly increase neither accounts for any economic uptick or for the type or severity of disability. It is the type and severity of the disability that often times influence educational programming.

Predicting costs for "actual value", which includes accountability, assignment of students to programs, and reliability of actual budget expenditures, offers a more accurate description of expenditures but must be done yearly without knowing future student populations in upcoming fiscal years. Both options have their distinct advantages and disadvantages, but option #3 will give us the most robust method for expenditures.

Option #3 would give us range of percentages between 3.47 -6 % built into it. {The range will account for the variability in the disability and severity as mentioned above. For example, we may need to add or subtract an assistant from the program based upon a given population for that year.}

That said, due to regionalization and the merging of two outstanding preschool programs, the recommendation for the upcoming 2014-2015 school year is to "level fund" all three

preschool options available to our Acton and Boxborough families, and provide parents/guardians with a choice to enroll in any of our one of three program options.

For those students who are developing typically and serving as role models, tuition rates would remain as follows:

Acton Public Schools Half Day (11 hours/week) Tuition Rate:	\$3,530
Acton Public Schools Full Day (26 hours/week) Tuition Rate:	\$6,830
Blanchard Public School Full Day (20 hours/week) Tuition Rate:	\$5,000

For students with identified and significant special needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders) enrolled by other school districts, the rate of \$54,000 was previously recommended and accepted for this current 2013-2014 school year. As no openings are anticipated for FY15, a tuition rate is not recommended at this time.

ELEMENTARY CLASS SIZE**(First Reading 12/12/13)**

The School Committee has a commitment to provide the highest quality education for our children. The Committee recognizes that desirable class sizes are a necessary part of the growth and development of the individual student. Therefore, the desirable number of students per class should be as follows, whenever possible:

Grades K-4: 20 students

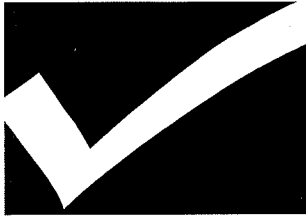
Grades 1, 2, & 3, & 4: 22 students

Grades 4, 5 & 6: 24 students

Attainment of the desirable maximum number of pupils per teacher shall, however, be dependent on the practicalities with which the Committee must deal.

The Superintendent/~~Curriculum Director~~ is delegated the responsibility to develop and promulgate the administrative procedures required to implement this policy.

Approved on:



Acton Leadership Group Meeting

December 12, 2013

5:30 PM

Town Hall, Faulkner Hearing Room 204

Bart Wendell Facilitating

----- Agenda Topics -----

		<u>Comments</u>
1. Approve Minutes of November 7, 2013	General Discussion	
2. Update on FY13 Revenues & Expenditures and FY14 Revenues	Steve Ledoux Steve Mills	
3. Review of Spreadsheet	Steve Barrett/ Don Aicardi	
4. Discussion on APS Retiree Health Cost	Steve Ledoux/ Steve Barrett	Discussion on how to allocate costs for FY15
5. Public Comment		
6. Adjourn		
Next Meeting , January 9, 2014 5:30 PM		

ALG Minutes, November 7, 2013

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Mike Gowing & Janet Adachi, BoS; Steve Noone & Pat Clifford, FC; Dennis Bruce & Kim McOsker, SC; Steve Ledoux, Steve Mills, Steve Barrett & Don Aicardi, Staff.

Audience: Bob Ingram

Extra Information: Multi-year financial model; free cash approval; advance refunding for Parker Damon debt

Minutes accepted

2. Update on FY 13 Revenue and expenditures & FY 14 revenues

Steve M: The ¼ numbers are in and “this is the tightest budget I’ve seen in my years as a superintendent” The unplanned for track project has taken \$150k out of the AB budget and there is an increase in the legal costs. The IMA (Intra Municipal Agreement---between Acton and Boxboro for the regionalization) has cost approximately \$5-\$6 k in legal fees [at \$225/hr]. There will be no money for year-end spending.

Steve L: the FY 14 revenues stabilized but we have had to expand the legal costs for the IMA because we are working with the real estate people to get proper transfer of properties. Steve also noted that the selectmen had voted to file an injunction against W.R. Grace and the EPA for turning off the filtering system that is designed to clean the water of the Acton well. There will be a hearing on Friday. This action will have implications of the FY 15 legal budget.

Pat: What did we budget for the IMA? Ans: nothing

Kim: we used a grant last year---are there any grants available for this year

Steve M: last year we had a \$28k planning grant. There are no grants available.

Pat: “Is the Acton Water District joining us in this injunction?”

Steve L: no

Janet: the AWD’s opinion is opposite from ours.

Steve L; Friday will be key---we are going before Judge Whitlock who is a “tough judge”

3. Final Consensus

A. Revenue projections for FY 15 (using multi-year financial model)

Steve B: the consensus is that we tax to the 2.5% and that assumption is embedded in the data. When we set the tax rate we know there will be changes in the new growth numbers and state aid. New

growth is estimated at a \$100k increase (\$525k-\$625). The audit for the town is now underway but I do not see any substantial changes from the model.

Bart: Do we have a consensus on taxing to the full extent?

Pat: the FC is against we see a need to give relief to the taxpayers. In our POV we have the tax to only 2%

Janet: The BoS did not have a consensus there was just "muted support"

Kim: the SC is discussing it tonight. What is the savings for the taxpayer?

Steve B: about \$350k

Bart: that will be \$40-\$45.00 per parcel

Mike: this will be a reassessment year—the assessments will increase and there will be new requests for abatements. We only need enough to run the town---no more

Pat: the BoS meeting ran beyond my bedtime---there is no tape beyond the CVS meeting—are the minutes ready?

Bart: at this point the BoS started the discussion but has not finished; the SC will discuss it tonight---so for this piece more information is needed before we can have a consensus.

1. State aid numbers

Steve N: did they all go down?

Don: we really don't have good numbers in November. We are getting the new number for the region from Roger Hatch—aspects of Ch.70 are based on population and our population is going down. Some of the numbers remain flat; for the region we will not know the numbers until the state budget at the end of Jan.

Bart: do we have a consensus on present state aid numbers?---yes

2. Local receipts

Steve B: there is an expected increase in MVR (motor vehicle registrations) and the \$100k of new growth—these will be adjusted on the model. There was agreement to accept

B. Split

Steve B: The split is no longer a big deal. At present it is 65.8% and 34.2%

It was agree to let it rest

C. OPEB

Steve B: right now we have a base from last year of \$1.1m

Steve N: the status report essentially says we have \$1.1M for this year and \$1.4M for next. The rationale is in the report (sent by email to committee members)

Janet: the BoS is in agreement with the report and the \$1.1M and are "favorably disposed to the OPEB" committee

Mike: the FC POV has adjustments for the OPEB numbers.

Steve N: the expense will stabilize at some point

Dennis: the SC will have the OPEB discussion tonight

Bart: are the figures different from \$1.1m; \$1.4m and \$1.7 m? So for the third year there is not an agreement from the BoS?

Pat: the OPEB task force is a creature of the ALG. The FC does not have an inside track and we have not adopted or embraced the numbers---the POV was written before the OPEB report. This is still under discussion on the FC and how we will use the reserves to go from the \$900k to the \$1.1m.

Bart: so is there anything else?

D. Overlay Reserve

SB: The Assessors met last night and we will have more on the reserve position before the next ALG. We have to look back at the abatements that are in court. Brian [Mc Mullin—assistant assessor & finance director] will prepare a paper for the next ALG.

Bart: so that will be postponed and added to the next agenda.

E. Use of Reserves

SB: we have a \$2.176 baseline from last year town meeting. It is not settled in the FY 15 budget

SN: we do not have a consensus on taxing to the max so we cannot have a consensus on the use of reserves.

Pat: the number from last year was an accommodation at Town Meeting we were carrying a \$1.5m-\$1.7m during the ALG process. Right now the FC is thinking of a \$2m limit including the costs for OPEB

Kim: I do not think we can decide on this until we have the budget numbers. We need to know the unused levy capacity.

Pat: there will be no unused levy

Bart: when do you think you will be ready to discuss?

Dennis: Jan

Bart: we need to have OPEB on the next agenda and the assessors work paper; the use of reserves held off until the Jan meeting

4. Free cash and E&D---extra info from DOR

SB: free cash is \$7.4m the DOR is suggesting the sewer enterprise fund can be put in free cash....

Bart are there concerns?

Don: the pre audited E&D is "Just a tick" under \$1.5m. We will get the certified numbers in Feb. or March but right now I'm comfortable with the \$1.5m

Pat: the FC see the free cash & E&D "north of \$9m. And we see the need for taxpayer relief when the reserves are approaching \$10m.

5. FC's POV integrated with the LRP

Dennis and Janet said they were still working on this issue and they hoped the ALG will use it for Town Meeting.

This is unfinished at present.

6. Global cash flow summary

Pat: this is a FC project—the idea being to look in various places for revenue in both the town and school budgets. There may be many sources that are outside the ALG plan. We will talk about better use of this money and this will add to the \$10m of reserves.

Kim: where is this money?

Steve N: this is an information exercise. We did find money in unspent warrant articles.

7. Next meeting

After discussion of the various meeting times for the schools and selectmen it was decided that a second meeting in November was not necessary.

It was agreed to meet on December 12th at 5:30. The meetings after that will be Jan. 9th and 23rd.

8. Joint Boards with Boxboro

Steve Mills suggested that the boards of both towns needed to meet for introductions and to become conversant with the financial issues in each town.

Pat: said she thought that this would be a very good idea. And thought the FC would agree.

Janet said she thought her board would agree to such a meeting

9. Public Comment

There was no public comment

Adjourned 8:27

Ann Chang

Next Meeting December 12 at 5:30 pm

**Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC) and Acton
Boxborough Transitional School Committee (ABTSC)
Regionalization Transportation Update
Early December 2013**

The 2013-14 school year continues as what the School Committees in both Acton and Boxborough are calling a “transitional year”, a year in which all the planning related to expanding our school district to include both Acton and Boxborough from Pre-K through grade 12 is underway.

Here, we are providing an interim update on just the regional transportation plans due to what we believe to be strong community interest in this subject. If you have any comments or concerns regarding this update, please contact Kristina Rychlik at krychlik@abschools.org.

Transportation Update

At our October 3rd School Committee meeting, JD Head, our Director of Facilities and Transportation, presented a first look at possible student transportation options as we move into a single PreK-12 school district. A great deal of work has been done by JD and his staff to develop a workable transportation plan that would safely accommodate the needs of our communities while providing a continued high level of service to our students and their families in both Acton and Boxborough.

In summary, as presented at our December 5th School Committee meeting, it is both too complex and too costly to implement a one-tier elementary transportation plan for the upcoming 2014-2015 school year at this time. Our current transportation facility and operational structure will not support the level of additional buses required in a one-tier system. Therefore, a modest investment must be made in additional supports for this to be workable in addition to the time required to develop a thoughtful, safe and cost-effective plan.

As a Committee we believe that getting our district to a one-tier transportation system on the elementary level is of great importance, and should remain a goal for the 2015-2016 school year. Therefore, we have asked for JD and his staff to further develop this in a step-wise fashion. The plan is to have a three-tier transportation system for 2014-2015 (K-12), with all six elementary schools on the early/late schedule currently in place in Acton, keeping our transportation in-house and thus making only a modest investment in new buses and operational support. This is a first step towards our goal of all six elementary schools starting at the same time each day.

We welcome input from the community, parents, teachers and staff on this issue. Please feel free to email us at abrsc@abschools.org.

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOLS
2014-2015 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION SCHEDULE

The following are important dates for parents/guardians of children who will be entering Kindergarten in September, 2014 (5 years old on or before September 1, 2014). See also: <http://ab.mec.edu/sturegister.shtml>

GENERAL MEETING*

Our Superintendent, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Director of Personnel, Director of Pupil Services, Principals, Registrar, Kindergarten staff and School Nurse will be on hand to answer questions.

Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at 7:00 p.m., Parker Damon Building Cafeteria
immediately followed at 8:15 by K-6 Before and After School Programs Overview

SCHOOL TOURS

All schools will be open for tours on the following dates: January 24; January 28, February 3, February 5 (Snowdate February 11). Please call individual schools after January 2, 2014 to reserve tour times. You may reserve more than one tour per day. If school is canceled or delayed on a tour day, parents should call to reschedule.

Tour hours for Conant, McCarthy-Towne & Merriam: 8:45 - 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

Tour hours for Blanchard, Douglas & Gates: 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. and 11:00 - 12:15 p.m.

Please do not bring young children with you on the tour.

EARLY REGISTRATION for SIBLINGS and WALKERS

Families who are eligible, or who believe they may be eligible for priority admission status (siblings of current students, walkers), are urged to register early. Both sessions will be at the Central Office located in the R.J. Grey Junior High School

You must bring a copy of your child's birth certificate/passport, most recent physical examination & immunization record.

Tuesday, January 21: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 22: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

PARENT INFORMATION EVENING MEETINGS*

Tuesday, January 21, 7:00 p.m. @ Douglas - Cafetorium

Tuesday, January 28, 7:00 p.m. @ McCarthy-Towne - Cafetorium

Tuesday, February 4, 7:00 p.m. @ Merriam - Cafetorium

Tuesday, February 11, 7:00 p.m. @ Blanchard - Cafetorium

Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 p.m. @ Gates - Cafetorium

Tuesday, March 4, 7:00 p.m. @ Conant - Cafetorium

** In case of snow, ANY postponed evening meeting will be held the next evening (Wednesday)*

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

You must bring a copy of your child's birth certificate/passport, most recent physical examination & immunization record. Both sessions will be at the Central Office located in the R.J. Grey Junior High School.

Tuesday, March 11: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 12: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

INFORMATION SESSION for K-6 BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

Tuesday, January 14, 2014 at 8:15 p.m., Parker Damon Building Cafeteria

If you are interested in K-6 before and after school childcare programs, representatives from Community Education Extended Day and school-based before and after school programs will be available to describe their programs, enrollment process, fee structure, etc. following the General Meeting that begins at 7:00 (see above).

REGISTRATION PROCESS for COMMUNITY ED EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM, K-6

Registration forms for new families will be accepted February 28 - March 7 by mail or walk-in. Lottery will be held on Monday, March 10, at 10:00 a.m. at the Community Education Office, Administration Building, 15 Charter Rd., Acton

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

Late April - School Placement & All-Day Kindergarten Lotteries held (as necessary). Notification letters sent out.

May 15 - All Day K non-refundable deposit (\$400) due.

May 31 - Parent-released/teacher-completed Pre-K Assessment Form due at Registrar's Office, R.J. Grey Junior High

July 1 - (*Approx. date*) Schools assign students to either AM or PM sessions and notify Transportation Office.

July 31 - Children's medical forms (complete immunization history, physical exam completed after 1/1/14) due at school nurse's office.

August 1 - September tuition for children registered in All-Day K (\$400) due at the Community Ed. Office.

12/10/13