

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) WORKSHOP
MINUTES (approved 9/3/15)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

July 22, 2015
5:30 p.m. Dinner
6:00 p.m. School Committee Workshop
Followed by Executive Session

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Michael Coppolino (6:15 p.m.), Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Mary Brolin, Maya Minkin
Others: Glenn Brand, Beth Petr, Dorothy Presser from MASC

The ABRSC was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Kristina Rychlik, Chairperson.

1. Chairman’s Introduction

Kristina Rychlik reviewed the minutes from the last Workshop. She suggested that the Committee spend the workshop focusing on goals. She read an excerpt from *The Essential School Board Book, Better Governance in the Age of Accountability* by Nancy Walser (page 9). Each member was given a copy of this book and it was suggested that they read it over the summer.

2. Statement of Warrants

Warrant #15-027 dated 6/30/15 in the amount of \$599,243.18, warrant #15-028 dated 6/30/15 in the amount of \$118,729.81, warrant #16-001A dated 7/1/15 in the amount of \$3,054,598.64, warrant #16-001 dated 7/9/15 in the amount of \$1,035,577.11 and warrant #16-002 dated 7/23/15 in the amount of \$1,425,547.53 were reviewed and signed by the Committee.

3. Review of Last Year’s Workshop

3.1. FYI: Minutes of School Committee Workshop on 7/24/14

4. MA Association of School Committees (MASC)’s District Governance Program Kickoff

4.1. Workshop #1 Building the Foundation – Dorothy Presser, MASC

4.1.1. See <http://www.masc.org/field-services-3/district-governance-project>

4.1.2. *Effective Governance Rubric*, Dorothy Presser

4.1.3. *Doing the Right Thing*, Dorothy Presser

4.1.4. ABRSC Policies: School Committee-Superintendent Relationship (BDD), School Committee-Staff Communications (BHC), School Committee Member Authority (BBAA)

School Committee members described how long they have been on the Committee and why they wanted to serve on it. Members were asked to write down their “Hopes, Obstacles and Agreements” for the School Committee.

Kristina noted that work will be done on a new Long Range Strategic Plan this year, so work on School Committee goals will tie into this effort. This will begin when Dr. Brand presents his goals for the year. Dorothy Presser spoke to the Committee about their common hopes, obstacles and agreements and how they could use that information to begin the discussion of goals. She stated that the overarching mission of any school committee is continuous improvement in student achievement. She described Operating Protocols as “the foundation

of effective School Committees because they are critical for avoiding pitfalls, reinforcing roles, facilitating communication, and building and sustaining an effective Committee-Superintendent team focused on student achievement. It was the sense of the Committee that they would create and vote to adopt protocols and then post them on the website.

5. **Discussion of Potential School Committee Areas of Focus for 2015-2016**

Kristina Rychlik and Mike Coppolino suggested that another demographic survey be done. Andrew Shen was involved last time and has some thoughts about how to proceed. He felt there should be a more specific focus to the survey. Mike stated that the professors at Boston College have offered to construct the survey last year, provided that they may use the results, but the Committee declined. Mike will see if they are still interested. Kristina suggested that Mary Brodin might like to be involved. The Committee agreed a clear focus is needed. Brigid asked if one of the questions from the Superintendent's Entry Plan might be valuable. The Committee agreed to do something this year on the topic. The links on the website to the old survey will be fixed.

Dr. Brand intends to continue the Superintendent's Safety Task Force but perhaps with a different focus. This group began out of the tragedy in CT and as a result, it led the group in a certain direction and left some issues incomplete. There should always be a standing committee for Safety. He had several conversations with our school resource officers this year and wants them as part of the planning process. The locked down procedures and alternative methods (ALICE, etc) were left unresolved and the Resource Officers want to ask and engage the community about this. (Blanchard School in Boxborough did the ALICE training and Acton schools did not.) Staff and parents are an important part of this discussion. Another important safety topic that the School Committee will need to consider soon is building access. Kristina Rychlik is not comfortable having different safety programs for the different schools, stating that it is not the same as having different math programs. Mike Coppolino agreed that it should be a very high priority to review ALICE. Waltham has this program. Deanne O'Sullivan stated that these decisions need to be tied to the capital plan because they are investments.

The Committee discussed the Comparable Communities memo. They would like everyone to use the same list of communities. An example was given that in the past, Pupil Services has used one list and the Negotiations subcommittee used another and it was not helpful.

Deborah Bookis' memo regarding All Day Kindergarten for all students outlined why this topic should not be discussed at this time. Her group is expected to work for most of the year, and then issue a recommendation. The School Committee will discuss the subject after a recommendation is given.

The Committee briefly discussed the possibility of new School Committee counsel. At this time, two different firms are used depending on the topic. Kristina asked if the Committee needed to go through a certain process to hire counsel. Maria Neyland felt the Administration should decide because they use this resource most often. Dr. Brand will bring an approach to the Committee at a future meeting.

6. **2015-2016 Subcommittee Structure and Assignments**

6.1. 2014-2015 Subcommittees and Members

6.2. Draft ideas for 2015-2016, *Kristina Rychlik*

The Committee discussed the many options for volunteering. There was a question of whether the OPEB Task Force would remain. New groups for District Governance, Demographic Survey and School Counsel were agreed on. The Committee will finalize and vote on the list at their next meeting.

7. ABRSC Executive Session

At 9:57 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously,

VOTED by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation.

(**YES** – Baum, Bieber, Coppolino, Krishnamurthy, Murphy, Neville, Neyland, O’Sullivan, Rychlik)

Kristina Rychlik stated that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session only to adjourn.

8. ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:12 p.m. the ABRSC was polled to go out of Executive Session and adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

Next Meetings:

ABRSC, Monday, August 10, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library

ABRSC, Thursday, September 3, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library