

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)  
Approved Minutes

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

August 6, 2019  
7:00 p.m. Executive Session  
7:15 p.m. Open Business Meeting

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Members Present: Diane Baum, Michael Bo, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin (7:30 p.m.), Paul Murphy, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso  
Members Absent: none  
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

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1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Tessa McKinley, ABRSC Chair.
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Adam Klein moved that an executive session be convened under MGL Ch30A, sec. 21(a) purpose 3: to discuss strategy with respect to litigation. The Chair stated that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Committee. Paul Murphy seconded and the Committee unanimously,

**VOTED** by roll call in favor of the motion.  
(Yes: Baum, Bo, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Murphy, Petersen, Shine, Tso)

Tessa stated that the Committee would return to open meeting at approximately 7:15 p.m. The Committee returned to the open meeting at 7:30 p.m.
3. **OPEN MEETING: Welcome! Routine Business**
  - 3.1. Chairperson's Opening Remarks

Tessa welcomed everyone to the meeting. Diane Baum was thanked for chairing the Committee for the past year. The Superintendent and members expressed their appreciation for Diane's thoughtful, inspiring and deliberate leadership. She was thanked for taking on a number of new projects and being so thorough with them. One member said, "what she brought to the table was lots of research and thinking through ideas with profound insights." Peter Light also appreciated Diane's dedication and commitment, especially during his first year.
  - 3.2. Public Participation - *none*
  - 3.3. Superintendent's Update

Mr. Light recognized that because it was only the start of August, it was hard to imagine school starting soon. He highlighted his first ABRSD Annual Report which will be in all Acton and Boxborough residents' mailboxes shortly. This will also be posted on the website, including a link to sign up to receive future quarterly updates. He encouraged families to check out the new "Here Comes the Bus" application found on the transportation section of the website. He thanked the Acton TV Board of Directors for recently voting to fully fund new broadcast technology for the Administration Building Auditorium where School Committee meetings will soon be held. Lastly, the Building

Project section of the website has been revamped and everyone was encouraged to review it often as there are many important decisions being made and it is the best source of current information.

**4. GUESTS & PRESENTATIONS:**

**4.1. Operations Updates – JD Head**

**4.1.1. Transportation**

**4.1.2. Capital Projects**

JD Head gave an update on all of the Facilities and Transportation work being done this summer. He introduced Charles Flagg who is the new Capital Project Manager for the District. A question was asked about what projects might be needed in future years for the Blanchard School. There are a several projects in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). JD noted that many communities would look to debt exclusion to fund some of this, but we plan to address them in our capital plan, which is a real advantage. Assuming completion of the CIP projects, JD felt the Blanchard building still has 20 years of service left. Peter is working to create a new section of the website for updates to the CIP.

**4.2. ABRSD Budget Update – Dave Verdolino**

**4.2.1. FY19 Financial Status as of June 30, 2019 – Preliminary & Unaudited**

**4.2.2. FY20 Budget Update**

Dave Verdolino began by saying good news continues regarding the budget. As of July 1, 2019, the FY19 Budget to Actual next revenue variance is \$771,631. The Q3 report projected \$491,000. The net expenditure variance is \$451,427 and that S3 report projected \$848,000. Partly as a result, in Q4, we prepaid the Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) liability. A full analysis for FY19 will be done in September. Dave was complimented on his memo and presentation. This will all be advantageous when the bonds are sold for the new school building. This includes the new stabilization fund (see policy ET for details). Dave concluded that the E&D percentage is within the 4.0% - 4.5% guideline established by the recent school committee policy.

Diane Baum asked Dave if he thinks members should consider contacting the State about an offset of anticipated losses that districts like ours due to change in the foundation budget. Dave agreed that the legislature should be made aware of these concerns.

**5. NEW BUSINESS:**

**5.1. School Committee Business**

**5.1.1. Operating Protocols - Tessa McKinley**

Referring to the protocols voted on 9/20/18, Diane Baum asked if members were concerned about the second bullet under the second heading, “Base our decisions on available facts, vote our convictions, avoid bias.”. She asked if anyone felt the reference to “bias” might be inappropriate now.

It was agreed that if the protocols were being revisited that wording should be changed. It was also suggested that they include in the beginning that the Committee is here for the community, not just the schools. John Petersen specifically would like to revisit the protocols to be sure they embrace the broader vision because they “are elected by the community and should represent them”. Michael Bo asked if the Committee’s responsibility to search for and hire the Superintendent should be included.

Regarding maintaining effective communication, there had been some confusion about submitting questions. The Superintendent used to collect questions prior to the meeting

and then a document with all of the answers would be shared with everyone ahead of time. Some people, however, did not want their questions shared with everyone. Because this is one of the protocols and is mentioned in the School Committee Member Guidebook, they will look at this language in the future. It was agreed that a workshop is the best place to discuss the protocols and how they might be revised.

#### 5.1.2. New School Committee Member Guidebook – *Diane Baum*

Diane was thanked for revising and updating the Guidebook, including incorporating many links to reference documents and videos. She wanted to break down the budget process, and share information on the advocacy groups that bring it to the higher level with the legislature. She hoped that the Guidebook will help new members feel more comfortable more quickly as a part of the Committee. Members enthusiastically agreed that it was much more user friendly.

Diane asked members to email her with questions or feedback. Angie Tso thought the motion process was still not clear and asked for more clarification on that. Regarding the laws being explained, Michael Bo suggested that a reference to the law be provided, instead of members' own explanations. John Petersen agreed that members need to have general broad knowledge, but they also need different specific areas of interest or of their special expertise. John hopes that when new members are welcomed, we encourage them to bring their own work to the Committee as well.

### 5.2. Subcommittee Reports

#### 5.2.1. FY20 Subcommittee Assignments – *Tessa McKinley (brought to meeting)*

##### 5.2.1.1. ABRSC Policy BDB: School Committee Officers (Duties of the Chairperson)

Tessa explained that she took many things into account when making assignments. Everyone is on one of the two major subcommittees (budget and policy), except for one person. Larger committees are now a maximum of five people and there is a Chair. Members should contact Tessa if they are interested in doing anything that is open (with a question mark), or if they have a question.

##### 5.2.1.2. **VOTE** of approval for EDCO Board Member, Advisory Member and SC Leadership Liaison/Round Table

Diane Baum moved, Paul Murphy seconded, and it was unanimously **VOTED**: to approve the new EDCO Board Member (Peter Light), Advisory Member (Tessa McKinley) and SC Leadership Liaison/Round Table members (Diane Baum, Angie Tso, Nora Shine) as proposed.

The OPEB Board of Advisors members decision will be considered at the next School Committee meeting. Although our Trust Agreement states that the Superintendent appoints the School Director of Finance, a member of the Acton Finance Committee, a member of the Boxborough Finance Committee and the Chair of the ABRSC, ex officio, counsel has advised that the School Committee must vote these members now.

### 6. ONGOING BUSINESS:

#### 6.1. School Building Committee Update – *Adam Klein*

##### 6.1.1. Building Design Update

##### 6.1.2. Building Committee Minutes of Meetings on June 12 and 26, July 10 and 24

Adam Klein reported that the MSBA approved our Preferred Schematic Report on June 26th so we are now in the Schematic Design Phase. During Schematic Design, we will

continue to collaborate with the MSBA to develop a robust schematic design of sufficient detail to establish the scope, budget, and schedule for the proposed project. We will use this to secure approval from the MSBA for the project, receive Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approval of the Proposed Project for delivery of the District's special educational program, and obtain local authorization and financial support.

The MSBA has confirmed our enrollment figures at 990 students for K-6th grade.

As part of the schematic design work, the SBC has refined the designs with Arrowstreet who then released specifications to the cost estimators. The SBC will review the cost estimates at our August 14th meeting. We will then begin the process of value engineering where we look for opportunities to reduce the cost through modifications while maintaining all that is necessary to achieve our educational plan. We expect to vote the costs at our August 28th meeting.

We will then submit the Schematic Design, with costs, to MSBA on September 11th and expect them to vote on our project on October 30th. The cost and reimbursement rate will be confirmed at the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **6.2. School Committee Member Reports**

### **6.2.1. MASC Summer Workshop Report – Diane Baum**

The July 12/13 workshop was called an "Equity Summit" because almost every district is doing this kind of work. Diane reported that the presentations were excellent with one similar to SEED training. Everyone seems to be providing professional development similar to SEED for all teachers, and doing an equity audit. It's all about engaging stakeholders. Diane shared a document written by the Superintendent of Lexington that was very informative. Restorative Justice is being introduced in many schools.

6.2.2. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) - Minutes of June 20, May 16 & April 2, 2019  
Diane reported on the July 31 meeting. The Town is also in a favorable financial state. Pam Norse reported that Minute Man Tech's enrollment is excellent - they are full with a wait list. The North Acton Fire Station will also be on the docket in December.

## **7. Statement of Warrants & Vote of Approval of Minutes**

The Chairperson read the warrants and Committee members signed the documents. Paul Murphy moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and the minutes of the July 16, 2019 workshop were approved as written unanimously with Adam Klein abstaining.

## **8. FYI**

8.1. FY20 Schools Open, Back to School/Open House Dates, FY20 School Calendar

8.2. FY20 Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting Dates

8.3. Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund (ABSASF) Support Memo FY20

8.4. ~~Change of Members of the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund Board of Advisors~~

8.5. This Month in the Division of Open Government – July 2019

8.6. Acton & Boxborough Special Town Meetings on December 10, 2019

At 8:56 p.m. Diane Baum moved, Paul Murphy seconded and the ABRSC was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents used: See agenda with list of documents and list of warrants

**Next Meetings:**

ABRSC, September 5, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library (packet posted Aug 29)

ABRSC Executive Session re Negotiations, September 9, 7:00 pm in Superintendent's  
Conference Room 13 in the Administration Building

ABRSC, September 19, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library (packet posted Sept 12)