

Acton-Boxborough Regional
School Committee Meeting

November 5, 2020

7:00 p.m. Open Meeting
8:15 p.m. Executive Session

Via zoom webinar:

<https://abschools.zoom.us/j/91780237839>

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)
MEETING AGENDA

Virtual Public Zoom Webinar Meeting

November 5, 2020

To attend open meeting: <https://abschools.zoom.us/j/91780237839>*

7:00 p.m. Open Meeting

To call in: 301 715 8592

8:15 p.m. Executive Session

Live streaming: <http://actontv.org/on-demand/livestream/government>

1. **Call to Order (7:00)**
2. **Chairperson's Welcome - Tessa McKinley**
3. **Public Participation – Please use “Hand Raise” feature to participate (not the “Chat”)**
4. **Superintendent's Update – Peter Light**
5. **ONGOING BUSINESS (7:10)**
 - a. **Approval of Meeting Minutes of 10/15/20 – VOTE – Tessa McKinley**
 - b. **Budget Update - Dave Verdolino**
 - i. FY20 Financial Wrap-up and FY21 First Quarter Financial Report
 - ii. FY22 Budget Guidelines and Timeline - **VOTE** - Tessa McKinley
 - iii. Certified E&D (*addendum*)
 - iv. FYI: FY20 Financial Audit Reports (Financial Statements, Federal Awards, Management Letter) and Regional Fraud Risk Assessment
 - c. **Subcommittee and Member Reports**
 - i. Policy – Diane Baum (*met on 11/04/20*)
 - ii. Budget - Adam Klein (*met on 10/19/20*)
 - iii. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) - John Petersen, Amy Krishnamurthy
 1. Spreadsheet from 10/29/20 and Minutes
 - iv. Building Committee Update - Peter Light
 - d. **MASC Annual Meeting Resolutions for 11/7/20 - Delegate Amy Krishnamurthy**
6. **Statement of Warrants and Recommendation to Approve – VOTE – Tessa McKinley**
7. **FYI**
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** - to be convened under MGL Ch 30A, sec. 21(a) purpose (2): to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or/and to conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel. (8:15)
9. **Return to Open Meeting for the Sole Purpose of Adjourning (9:00)**

**Because this is an added meeting, this is not the usual public link for our School Committee meetings.*

NEXT MEETINGS: November 19 & December 3 at 7:00 p.m. publicly via zoom

Posted on 10/30/20 at 11:30 a.m.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- a. 2020-2021 ABRSC Meetings (moved Sat, 1/23/21 to 1/21/20 & added 3/25/21)
- b. This Month in the Division of Open Government, October 2020
- c. Worried About a Friend or Loved One? Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Online Training teaches how to help save a life – Thursday, November 19th at 10:00 a.m. sponsored by AB CARES, a community-based collaborative effort that seeks to prevent suicide across the life span and support all who are impacted by suicide.

Public Participation

Per policy BEDH, members of the public may speak for up to 3 minutes on items not included on this agenda. Comments regarding items on the agenda should be made during that part of the meeting. Typically, the Committee/Administration will not respond to comments during public participation.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	2
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AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Chairperson's Welcome
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PRESENTER(S)	Tessa McKinley
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SUMMARY OF TOPIC	The Chair welcomes members and the public to the meeting. If it is a virtual remote meeting, that is stated and the remote participation policy BEDJA is mentioned. Voting at remote meetings must be done by roll call. The Chair is also required to state if the meeting is being taped. Acton TV tapes and broadcasts most School Committee meetings.
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WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?		
X	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information	
	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required	
	Request formal action with a specific vote:	
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:	
		for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR
		with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.

SUGGESTED MOTION	
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FOLLOW-UP	
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APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	5 min.
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ATTACHMENTS	none
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Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	3
AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Public Participation		
PRESENTER(S)	Tessa McKinley		
SUMMARY OF TOPIC	Per policy BEDH, members of the public may speak for up to 3 minutes on items not included on this agenda. Comments regarding items on the agenda should be made during that part of the meeting. Typically, the Committee/Administration will not respond to comments during public participation.		

WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request formal action with a specific vote:
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:
	for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR
	with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.

SUGGESTED MOTION	
FOLLOW-UP	
APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	5 min.
ATTACHMENTS	none

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	4
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AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Superintendent's Update
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PRESENTER(S)	Peter Light
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SUMMARY OF TOPIC	Bi-weekly Superintendent's Update. This is brought to the meeting.
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WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?		
X	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information	
	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required	
	Request formal action with a specific vote:	
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:	
		for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR
		with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.

SUGGESTED MOTION	
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FOLLOW-UP	
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APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	10 min.
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ATTACHMENTS	Brought to meeting
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5

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	5.a
AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Approval of Meeting Minutes		
PRESENTER(S)	Tessa McKinley		
SUMMARY OF TOPIC	The Committee reviews and votes to accept the minutes of the previous meeting.		
WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?			
	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information		
	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required		
X	Request formal action with a specific vote:		
		If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:	
		for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR	
X		with the request that the School Committee take action immediately	
<i>If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.</i>			
SUGGESTED MOTION	"Move that the ABRSC approve the minutes of the meeting on October 15, 2020 as written/amended"		
FOLLOW-UP			
APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	5 min.		
ATTACHMENTS	Draft minutes		

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)
MEETING DRAFT MINUTES

Virtual Public Zoom Webinar Meeting

October 15, 2020

To attend open meeting: <https://abschools.zoom.us/j/95248771505>

7:00 p.m.

To call in: 312 626 6799

Live streaming: <http://actontv.org/on-demand/livestream/government>

Members Present: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah, Diane Baum (7:05 p.m.), Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso, Yebin Wang

Members Absent: none

Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. **Call to Order (7:00)**

The ABRSC was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Tessa McKinley. She noted that the meeting was being conducted both in person and remotely via a Zoom webinar and that members Kyra Cook, Amy Krishnamurthy and Yebin Wang would be participating via zoom. The following members were in the auditorium with Tessa: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, John Petersen, Nora Shine and Angie Tso. Diane Baum would be coming momentarily. Per Remote Participation policy, BEDJA, all votes were done by roll call. The meeting was taped by Acton TV.

2. **Chairperson's Welcome – Tessa McKinley**

See attached statement read by the Chairperson regarding the disappointing tone that the discussion of the AB Colonial mascot has taken. Community members were reminded to "be kind".

3. **Public Participation – none (for items not included on the agenda only)**

4. **Superintendent's Update – Peter Light – See the Mascot discussion.**

5. **ONGOING BUSINESS**

a. **Approval of Meeting Minutes of 10/1/20 – VOTE – Tessa McKinley**

John Petersen moved, Evelyn Abayaah-Issah seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED by roll call:** to approve the minutes of October 1, 2020 as written. (YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

b. **Discussion Regarding Request to Retire the AB Colonial Mascot - Possible VOTE - Tessa McKinley**

Tessa reviewed the process that has taken place since the students' request was made to the School Committee in July. She thanked everyone who shared their thoughts and opinions on this question, noting that almost 700 emails were

received by the School Committee over the past month. Two petitions were circulated (one for retiring the mascot, one against) with over 2,000 signatures each, although only one was formally presented to the School Committee. Tessa reported the updated numbers but emphasized that the numbers were not a count of votes, and they do not reflect the depth of so many of the comments.

Two possible motions were provided for the Committee's consideration:

- Move to retire the AB Colonial Mascot, with the understanding that programs and new purchases made by the District will no longer bear the name "Colonials", but changes to existing capital items such uniforms, scoreboards and other items will be undertaken as time and funding permit.
- Move to keep the AB Colonial Mascot.

These were provided to remind members what the purpose of the discussion was, not to restrict what they may ultimately decide. The "Naming District Facilities" policy FF gives the School Committee the responsibility for approving facility and program names. Step 1 is to decide if something should be named or renamed. Step 2 is to form a screening committee to find a new name. Tessa clarified that by saying "retire the mascot", it is meant not just that the figure will be retired, but also the idea that the Colonials represents our schools.

High School Principal Larry Dorey began. Although he has been a "Colonial" for 27 years and has tremendous pride in our traditions and respect for our alumni who graduated as AB Colonials, in his opinion, the mascot should represent the students and staff today and it should be viewed in context of the world we live in today. To be an inclusive learning community, where every individual feels valued, to have a mascot where any student or staff does not feel valued, is unacceptable, in his opinion. See his statement attached.

Superintendent Peter Light followed. He was focusing on trying to hear the voices of those who hold a different perspective, and wondered how these perspectives may change if more education about our local history was provided. He noted the intellectual and emotional connection that people have to the Colonial mascot, and pointed out that 20 years ago our student body was over 95% white, while now we are just over 50% white. See his statement attached.

School Committee members shared their thoughts. Some read prepared statements (attached). Other comments included:

- Initially, I wondered why we should be talking about this now with the pandemic and everything else happening. Listening to the students' presentation and reading all of the emails however, made me very proud and moved by their personal experiences.
- Our students are experiencing their own personal history and we have to honor that. They feel or felt ignored, and not able to be part of the community that they want to be and that is not right.

- Members were struck by the hostility directed at the students who brought up the petition.
- When a marginalized group speaks up and then faces increasing hostility, a member couldn't imagine telling them that the colonial name that brings them such pain, has to stay and they need to wait. We cannot say that we don't value their pain enough to change the name.
- Several members felt it would be better to propose a replacement mascot at the same time. Retiring the Colonial and leaving no mascot until a decision is made on a new one could be detrimental for students.
- I. Kendi's How Not to be an Anti-Racist talks about how people evolve in their thinking. Children should be educated that what they believe as young people can change. Applying labels to groups of people prevents deep and thoughtful discussions. People are all individuals.

Several comments were made suggesting that more time be spent gathering input and discussing the mascot to gain a better understanding of the two sides. It was hoped that this would avoid more conflict. Other members strongly disagreed. The School Committee has done a lot of anti-bias training via SEED. Tessa stated that while the intent of the mascot and its representation of the Colonial to honor those who came before us is valuable, the impact on many of the students and staff is very negative. In her opinion, no more conversation can change that. "As a white privileged person", Tessa does not want to ask them to explain this further.

Members were very concerned about the divisiveness in the community. Evelyn Abayaah-Issah shared how initially she was open to learning more about the Colonial mascot when the ABSEJ request was made. She wanted constructive criticism, but instead she found that many people are not open to understanding others' trials and experiences of trying to be included. People have become very hurtful and she questioned whether continuing the conversation would do any good. Several members thanked Evelyn for her honesty and agreed that it is time to vote on the issue and for the community to heal. It is essential that people listen to each other and understand that they are expressing pain and discomfort. Kyra Cook summed it up saying, "Let's make this decision and do the hard right thing. Honor the choice."

Mr. Light summarized the process that he and Larry Dorey have discussed. The first step is to decide if the colonial should be retired per School Committee policy. The two processes (whether to retire and finding a new mascot) should not be mixed. If it is agreed to retire the Colonial, the next step will be turned over to a group of High School students who could get feedback from students and continue the process. This should generate enthusiasm with the students as they search for agreement on their new mascot. The students that brought forward this request in July did not want it to be about what the mascot should be. They wanted it to just be that this mascot is offensive to many of them.

Members continued the discussion. Comments included:

- More than 50% of the alumni wanted to keep the mascot. As so many people said, the Colonial represents courage and liberty and we should look at it in the spirit of fighting for freedom and protecting the people. This person wanted more input.
- The tally numbers in Tessa's memo were not votes from students, alumni and community members. It was just requested feedback.
- Every inclusion issue is divisive. This is the Committee's chance to be part of the healing process for our community, on both sides. We (the community) all need to be friends again, and recognize each other as human beings. We need to coexist together.
- If we're waiting for this to become more palatable, it won't happen. This is the work. It doesn't get any more real or urgent than this.
- It doesn't matter what someone's background is. As Kendi writes, it is the person we need to see. Asia has no lack of colonial history. It's more of how we come back and look at people to work together with them.
- We have learned that there are people that feel the colonial makes them feel actual pain and disenfranchised. Members should set an example of making students and staff feel loved at school. We have a responsibility to take care of our community.

Comments from the COMMUNITY included:

- I am so proud and hopeful to see how strong the students are. It says a lot about the education AB has given them. I commend the students for framing the narrative.
- It was most impactful when I got out of AB and met others in the country. These are tumultuous times and the kids will be out of High School soon. This is a bit of a stretch regarding the colonial.
- I am a chinese american woman and was educated without anyone that looked like me. I want to change all symbolism that supports that.
- The Colonial mascot represents what some people want to be. Now you must decide whether it's time to include people of color, Asians, Native Americans and all minorities. This will not stop the people's voices at AB.
- The High School students are taking an active role. It is time for adults to listen and respect. It is an opportunity to show our young people that we care.
- As a staff member, parent, and person of color, do we really want to glorify the injustice that is so uncomfortable to so many of us? If even one student is uncomfortable with the mascot, it should be changed. We should make all feel welcomed and included.
- Some of the comments completely erase the narrative. It is so painful to know that people in the community continue to bolster this.
- As an ABSEJ leader our message is that we are changing AB already and look forward to sharing more projects with you in the future.
- The Board of Trustees of First Parish Church of Stow and Acton voted to support the students and the Mascot Initiative and thanked all for the work they have done.

- This would be better served in the community if it was not decided tonight. It only represents half of the students. You need to understand what the full population wants.
- People need to know that the diversity of our community has changed dramatically over the recent years. You are hearing this now because we are hearing the voices now. They are our neighbors and friends.
- Concord Carlisle has the Patriots and Lexington has the Minutemen. We took these names in the same spirit. It was not celebrating their rebelliousness. The public should be able to read the letters.
- This has only divided the town. You should form an exploratory committee with a diversity of views and they could decide. Be open minded about the citizen soldier that sacrificed his life for us.
- As a leader of ABSEJ, we honor the Nipmuc and Indigenous People's Day. We support native arts and cultures. Thank you to all who have made these conversations possible, including the email writers and School Committee members for hearing them out.

MOTIONS:

Kyra Cook moved ***"to retire the AB Colonial Mascot, with the understanding that programs and new purchases made by the District will no longer bear the name "Colonials", but changes to existing capital items such uniforms, scoreboards and other items will be undertaken as time and funding permit."*** Evelyn Abayaah-Issah seconded the motion.

John Petersen stated that there is no question having seen the responses that the Colonial does not represent our diverse student body. While voting will not relieve members of the desire to move forward with the community, it will still be difficult and painful. He asked people to, "Be kind and deeply understand the pain that is a stranger to you."

Angie Tso offered a friendly amendment to the motion, ***"to retire the AB Colonial mascot by recognizing that the old Colonial mascot represents courage and the spirit of fighting for liberty."*** John Petersen seconded.

Kyra Cook accepted the friendly amendment. Evelyn Abayaah-Issah did not accept the amendment. As a result, the friendly amendment failed and members would vote on whether or not to accept Angie's amendment to the motion.

Nora Shine asked if adding "the original spirit intended by the Colonial mascot was to reflect" (not "did reflect") to the beginning of Angie's amendment should be added as a further amendment. Tessa suggested that this would not be acceptable because it does not acknowledge why the Colonials name is being changed. Evelyn strongly agreed and wants to be direct with the vote and not minimize the decision. Adam also disagreed with the suggestion. He suggested that wording could be included that talks about what AB students represent

instead of what the mascot represents. Kyra was very much in favor of this approach adding that “This is the grace that is important.”

Angie withdrew her amendment. John withdrew his second to the amendment. Adam Klein offered a new friendly amendment to Kyra’s original motion, adding ***“recognizing that there are many positive attributes of our town history that we associate with the students of ABRSD”*** after the words, “Move to retire the AB Colonial Mascot...” Nora Shine seconded the friendly amendment. Kyra Cook and Evelyn Abayaah-Issah both accepted the friendly amendment.

Committee members unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: to accept the amendment.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

Committee members unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: on the motion as amended: ***“To retire the AB Colonial Mascot, recognizing that there are many positive attributes of our town history that we associate with the students of ABRSD, and with the understanding that programs and new purchases made by the District will no longer bear the name “Colonials”, but changes to existing capital items such as uniforms, scoreboards and other items will be undertaken as time and funding permit.”***

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

Tessa thanked everyone who had been involved and the Committee for their respectful discussion.

c. **Subcommittee and Member Reports**

i. Policy – Diane Baum (met on 10/7/20)

1. Subcommittees of the School Com (new), File: BDE - Second Read - **VOTE**

2. FYI: School Committee Officers, File: BDB

Although voting by the Committee on subcommittee members has not been our practice for about 3 years, this clause exists in the BDE policy so it should be consistent. It was agreed that the current process has been fine, but it might change in the future.

Adam Klein moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED by roll call:** to approve the new Subcommittees of the School Committee policy BDE.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

ii. Acton Board of Selectmen - Kyra Cook

Acton Annual Town Meeting has been postponed to a date to be determined but no later than June 20, 2021.

- iii. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) - *Tessa McKinley*
The postponement of Acton's Town Meeting was discussed.
- iv. Building Committee Update - *Peter Light*
Foundations are starting to be dug and rebarred soon. Steel is expected early in the new year. We are still on schedule for the maximum guaranteed price in early/mid December. We just completed our last MSBA submittal. Acton is working with us to keep permitting fees low.
- v. Other Reports:
EDCO: Kyra and Nora attended the recent roundtable. There is considerable concern about the budget process for next year. All want greater access to covid testing. Everyone talked about teachers' stress right now with the pandemic.
Acton FINCOM: Amy reported that they are finalizing their Point of View.
ALG: The School Committee and Selectboard were asked to form a committee to investigate cost saving analysis. There was some concern about staff being overburdened with getting back to school so it will wait. The Acton Selectboard took an unprecedented vote regarding the School mascot which was outside their purview. Amy wrote them a letter.

6. **Selection of ABRSC Delegate and Alternate to the 75th Annual MA Association of School Committees Meeting on November 7, 2020 - VOTE** - *Tessa McKinley (9:00)*

John Petersen moved, Ginny Kremer seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: to approve Amy Krishnamurthy as the ABRSC delegate to the Annual MASC meeting on November 7th, and Adam Klein as the alternate.
(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

All members are welcome to attend the virtual conference. Diane described how valuable her experience has been at it. Only the delegate may vote on the resolutions.

7. **Statement of Warrants & Recommendation to Approve – VOTE** – *Tessa McKinley*

John Petersen moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: see motion on warrant memo.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

8. **FYI**

- a. MASC Report of the Resolutions Committee - to be discussed November 5
- b. This Month in the Division of Open Government, September 2020

9. **Adjourn**

Mr. Light shared his appreciation for how the School Committee modeled how to have a difficult conversation for the students and the community.

Adam Klein moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED by roll call: to adjourn the ABRSC at 9:58 p.m.
(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley,
Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

Attachments: Statements read by Larry Dorey, Peter Light and some School Committee
members at this meeting

List of documents used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS:

October 29 Workshop on School Committee "Policy, Procedure and Purview"

November 5 New Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

I wasn't going to say anything at the opening of this meeting because what else could there be to say? But the last 24 hours have been a rollercoaster and I would be remiss if I didn't note my disappointment in some of the adults that are part of our community. It bears repeating that those who sit around this table as school committee members are volunteers. We are elected officials and we stated our desire to be in this position but we are also parents and neighbors. Our kids go to school with yours. We shop in the same grocery stores. We borrow from the same libraries. The tone that some have taken in their disappointment over the last few days is disgraceful. A few weeks ago, the students in our district were reminded by the counseling department to be kind in their remarks to others. Apparently the grownups should have gotten the reminder as well. I hope that those who are tuning in will truly listen to the remarks which I know many have been preparing all week. I'm prepared for this to be a civil discussion about the question that was put before us. I recognize that there are many who don't understand the process and policies by which the school committee is governed. I will lay out again the timeline of events that has brought us to this evening. In early July, the school committee was presented with a petition that at the time had over 1300 signatures requesting that we retire the colonial mascot. In August, I, along with other district leaders, met with the student group that brought forward the petition. As it was closely tied to the anti-racist work we have been doing as a district, the group (ABSEJ) asked to give a presentation to the full committee. That meeting occurred on September 17th when the students put together a presentation and answered questions from the committee. Shortly after, I sent out a request to all members of the community for feedback. This request went to every single junior high and high school student. It was sent to the Beacon. It was sent to alumni groups and sports booster clubs. We received feedback from many constituencies during the nearly three weeks of public comment. There was also a counter petition started which those on the committee are well aware of. This petition has not been formally presented to the committee. So, here we are. We have received nearly 700 emails. In my time on the committee, that far exceeds any other issue we have taken up including the reopening of schools in the midst of a pandemic. I, for one, am incredibly proud of the students and their eagerness to be engaged. It's one thing to sign a petition, it's quite another to write a coherent, thoughtful email to a public body with your perspective and beliefs. Hundreds of students took the time to send us emails. They represented both sides of the issue. They were respectful and thoughtful. Whatever conclusion the committee comes to tonight, I hope that all the members of our community will remember that words matter. Be kind.

Thank you to the School Committee for allowing me to express my own views on the AB mascot.

As a member of the HS I have considered myself an AB Colonial for the past 27 years. I have attended more school events under the banner of an AB Colonial than I can possibly recall. I take pride in past traditions and I have tremendous respect for the Alumni who graduated as AB Colonials.

In my opinion, our mascot should be a symbol that unites and instills pride in every student and staff member at the high school. By reason we are here tonight, it is evident that the Colonial Mascot no longer unites or inspires pride for all of our students and all of our staff.

With all due respect to the community and AB alumni, the mascot should represent the students and staff that reside in the building today and it should be viewed in the context of the world we live in today. Finally, it should symbolize something that all our students and staff can embrace.

If we are going to be an inclusive learning community where every individual feels valued, then allowing symbolism that represents less than that for any number of students and staff is unacceptable.

Thank you

Good evening everyone. We are about to start a discussion of our current mascot, the Colonial. Specifically, you are deliberating about whether or not to discontinue the use of the mascot, or to reaffirm our use of the colonial as our mascot. This topic has drawn quite a few passionate feelings from both people who support retiring the mascot, and people who believe we should keep the mascot. I want to add a few thoughts, but not before a few disclaimers: First and importantly, I am a relative newcomer to Acton Boxborough, and I hope everyone listening understands that this status limits my own ability to speak to this topic. My second disclaimer is that while I feel limited in my ability to speak to the topic in deference to the many community members who have been here for decades or even generations, I also feel somewhat compelled to speak as a leader for our school district, for our staff and most importantly for our students. My final disclaimer is that, as someone who comes from a multi-generational New England family, I relate deeply to the history and traditions of our colonists. Growing up, I lived in a pre-Revolutionary era home, and my brother is just one of multiple generations of our family who lives in another pre-Revolutionary home. I hold our history in deep regard, though admittedly, I am not a historian. When I hear the word "Colonial," I not only know some of the history behind the word, but feel a deep emotional connection to our colonial past because the history of the colonials is also largely the history of me. This is certainly felt and understood by many in our community who have this same connection to those original colonists who fought for freedom from the British and we heard this clearly in the feedback.

Since we received the petition and especially over the last few weeks, I have focused more on trying to hear the voices of those who hold a different perspective on what it means to be colonial. I have asked questions like "what does it mean to be a Colonial if I am from another place or have a life experience other than my own?" For example, People from India may have a different perspective on what it means to be Colonial; People from Vietnam may have a different perspective as well. Similarly, people whose families may be from former Dutch or Spanish Colonies will likely have different perspectives on what it means to be a Colonial. Or what does it mean to be a colonial if you are from Puerto Rico or the Philippines among other places we as Americans have colonized? What does it mean to be a Colonial if you are Native American? What does it mean if you are of African descent, or LatinX? Does being a Colonial hold the same meaning for you? Is being a Colonial a universal feeling?

I also wondered how these perspectives may change if we were to provide more education about our local history so that our students can more deeply understand our local version of colonials. There is probably merit to this and no matter how much we educate students about our community's past, we can always do more. I think many of us with strong ties to New England feel deeply about the American push for independence from Britain and the sacrifices of those who came before us providing us the opportunities we have today.

What occurred to me while thinking about this and listening to the feedback we received is that I, along with many members of our community, not only have an intellectual connection to this history, but an emotional one as well.... Because this history largely represents me and my

experiences. I may have empathy for those who hold an alternate perspective, but I will never truly understand their feelings because I have not *lived* their experience. We have seen emotion run high in many of the responses we received arguing both sides of this issue.

So my focus has been on listening to the voices of others who have different experiences than me. There is no level of education or re-education that will change the emotions associated with being a colonial for some in our community regardless of which perspective you take. Because while being a "Colonial" represents me, it does not appear to be representing us all in the same way.

Over the last few years, I have heard our community speak with pride about our diversity. This diversity is something that sets apart from many communities around us. I have also heard people talk with pride that AB has been a community that has embraced this change. Twenty years ago, our student body was over 95% white and now we are just over 50% white. What we are hearing from many of our students and faculty is that while being a Colonial may represent *me or half* of the community, it does not represent large groups of us the same way. Moreover, we have heard that for those among us for whom the colonial is not representative, it damages their ability to feel truly a part of our community. From what I believe I am hearing, our continued use of the Colonial as a Mascot has created "Us and Them," and "Insiders and Outsiders" based on who a person is within our community. This does not feel consistent with the values we hold. This isn't necessarily done with poor intent, but now we know the impact.

Interestingly, despite our colonial history, Acton and Boxborough schools have not always been "The Colonials." Thanks to one of our school committee members for their outreach to the Acton Historical Society, it appears that the use of the Colonial as a mascot began gradually in Acton during the late 1950's and was possibly linked to the telephone extensions to the area. The Colonial was then gradually adopted by an increasing number of high school athletic teams until it became more widely used. The Junior High School however, was the "Warriors" until the 1990's when a group of students came forward because they felt being represented as "The Warriors" was no longer socially-conscious. At this time, working with their school administrators, they decided to call themselves Colonials to align with the high school. While we have a several hundred year history tied back to colonial America, there were decisions that we can find in our own history when people, usually led by students, made the decision to either adopt or change the mascot based on their social principles.

"Colonials" is on many of our uniforms, courts, scoreboards and in other places throughout our schools and the cost of making these changes is not inexpensive. To replace the athletic uniforms purchased in recent years will cost between \$200-300K. Rather than replacing new uniforms, we would likely need to gradually phase out the use of the Colonials logo on new purchases. On a positive note, the band uniforms can be changed with only a modification to a patch, so this is relatively inexpensive. For items such as scoreboards, sound systems, gym curtains and floors, these are larger capital expenses that will need to be further explored and the cost is not likely insignificant. Our budgets will likely be challenging over the next few years and we will not have many resources available to implement changes quickly. From a

pragmatic standpoint, changes made now will likely need to be phased in over time as budgets allow. This is not a reason to steer a larger decision on the issue, but an important acknowledgement of the reality that even if a change is made, it will take time, possibly several years to make changes in a fiscally responsible manner.

As we have seen from the many emails over the last two weeks, the mascot carries meaning for our students as well as our community. Unfortunately what we have heard is that this meaning is not universally held and agreed upon, because who we are as a community has changed significantly in the last 60 years. We have a deep and rich history as a community and this decision will need to continue to recognize that history as we move forward. However, we also have an opportunity to be a part of a new chapter in that history in recognizing not only the past, but the present and future of our community as well.

In as much I understand and respect that the colonial mascot is a source of pride and holds sentimental value for many, there is no doubt the mascot has excavated MAJOR issues of race in this community by the mere volume of emails received and social media post. What has come to the surface of this discussion is the embarrassing and completely disgusting embodiment of the privilege of the white person, especially the white male, who is afraid to lose his power.

The tension and charge of hostility that this topic has brought upon our community, shows the institutional and systemic power some white person is afraid to lose and the disregard their actions may have on non-white residents in this community, depicts the inequality in Acton Boxborough, and the fact that the white male is by far the beneficiary of this divide.

The racial discomfort many of you who oppose the retirement of the mascot are experiencing is as a result of your deeply internalized sense of superiority and entitlement over BIPOC. The fact that those of you who oppose think you are more deserving and that something as small as changing a mascot presents a change to your racial identity is concerning.

It saddens me that the smallest amount of racial stress is incomprehensible to many of you and the mere thought of retiring the mascot triggers such discomfort and anxiety.

The fact that so many of you are so fired up by this topic is evident to me that AB has a long way to go as a community when it comes to equity, diversity and inclusion. It saddens me to see the fear this has exhibited.

There are so many ways to remember the history of the United States of America, that does not internalize racism and/or glorify colonialism or the colonials.

I take the anger and resistance to mean that many of you view a direct correlation of retiring the colonial mascot as taking down the power of white people in our community. Some of you see yourselves as entitled to and deserving off more than any other person in this community. Why do I say so, let me share a few comments in the emails I received?

- *We should not cater to the less than 2k in a town of 25k*
- *You should have thought about it before moving to Acton*
- *Complete waste of time*
- *radical activist - Instead of applauding the bravery of the students for raising this issue*
- *by allowing a minority to change the mascot, you'd best be prepared to change it every few years, as the community "grows and diversifies"*

That to me is fear coupled with racism!

Irrespective of how we view the colonials, if we can't agree that there is a violent and unacceptable part of the history then we have a huge problem. As a community if we are truly committed to honoring our diversity and making it inclusive, we MUST make a conscious choice to relearn our understanding of the History of America as it relates to race, not the version learned in schools, not the version devoid of black voices, and experiences.

In order to truly understand modern forms of racism and the small steps you all can take to make it inclusive for your neighbors and friends of color, you must be open to learning and understanding the point of views of BIPOC. The incomplete and ahistorical understanding of racism is what has us even having this discussion today and the reason for the comments above.

If we cannot change small things like an image on a school uniform that makes many in our community feel disempowerment and sadness, how are we supposed to change larger issues of racism and equity in our community. We must as well stop deceiving ourselves.

For those who took time to support the retirement of the mascot, thank you.

for those who oppose, I have advice for you, racism has taken a different form from the Jim Crow era. Use the discomfort you are experiencing now to help you understand why you feel so by this topic and why the topic of racial dynamics make you cringe.

We as a community we need to stop seeing ourselves from our individual narrow viewpoints/perspectives and see ourselves as human. If you deny the sentiments some of you have displayed is racist, we can't fix it.

The issue of race is woven in the fiber of our country, and thereby in our community, so for those of you who have tried to justify all the good work of the colonials, let me remind you, Thomas Jefferson turned to science to try to justify the natural differences between blacks and whites. You know the colonials did not fight for people like me. So while you enjoy your spoils from the colonials, take some time to think about how that affects others. Be on the right side of history even if it feels uncomfortable.

My dear SC colleagues, if for nothing, given the tension this discussion has brought to the surface, let's retire the mascot, it is divisive, and we do not need that in our district.

Symbols are easy targets.

Take them down and you don't have better housing, education, health care.

I share concerns voiced by many in our communities that this is taking up too much oxygen.

If my colleagues on SC want to change the trajectory of the lives of minority students, then we should be pairing the DEI initiatives in our District LRSP with stronger advocacy to eliminate the educational practices and policies at AB that hold minority students back –

- a) like disciplinary policies/practices that prioritize suspension and expulsion over restorative models,
- b) like fighting for access to AP English courses in 9th grade for all
- c) and like revisioning how we teach foundational literacy skills. 85% of juvenile offenders are struggling readers. 3 out of 5 people in U.S. prisons can't read. And, as we have all heard, minorities are disproportionately represented in these populations.

We received 700 letters. Very few struck me as particularly inclusive. Symbols have power. They hold historical memory. The petitioners and their supporters see intergenerational pain, land theft, genocide, intolerance, whiteness in its most pejorative sense and the lie of a 'sanitized' history while others see Acton's honorable, courageous, principled-driven social visionaries battling tyranny and dying to secure for future generations the ideals of self-determination and individual liberty that were eventually encoded in our founding documents. (Talk about the constitution as a national policy document that by nature can be adjusted to align with the changes of a changing society- that's part of the brilliance in it – that it outlives time.)

I think the mascot should honor the history in a way that is not controversial. I don't see that happening and the petitioners offers nothing to us on this point which is unfortunate. When the mascot is "dismantled" and replaced with a dolphin or a tiger or nothing, what the petitioners will have won is a new symbol -- that of a perhaps unbridgeable crevasse filled with hate and division for white against brown and brown against white for cancelling each other's single story.

I don't have the answer to this conundrum. I think it is imperative to call out injustice when you see it, and I commend the petitioners for doing so, but to vote tonight--- to "resolve" this with a vote --- is to even further entrench a culture of deafness and indifference on both sides. This conversation offers a unique opportunity for our communities to grapple with each other's single story if our minds are open enough to do so. I would like to see ABSEJ and ECARES come back to us with some choices for a better, more inclusive mascot.

We as SC members have an opportunity tonight to shape the narrative and understanding of our students' identities as members of a community: black and white and brown. A vote either way tonight, in my view, would squander an opportunity to further engage students and our towns in a conversation that could start the process of eroding racism in Acton and Boxborough and offer the promise of a better future which embraces the complexity of our past and envisions a more empathic and equitable future.

On April 19th, 1775, Acton resident Isaac Davis, alongside Abner Hosmer and so many other neighbors (including at least one Black man, the records show) marched into dawn to answer the call of a nation that had only just begun to dream of its own future. They stepped away from their homes and their families to push back—bodily—a government that no longer represented their values, didn't know or care who they were, what they believed in, what they hoped for, or what they lived their daily lives for. In the cold and the dark, in the face of bullet volley, unto death, they sought what we now enjoy, venerate, and uphold 245 years later: The opportunity to articulate our own future. The expectation that we live under institutions that see us, know us, care about us, and protect us. And that we and our neighbors abide by the mutual understanding of our shared values and humanity.

The same spirit of restlessness and desire for recognition, equality, evolution and growth whisper to the young inheritors who walk these ancient streets and tread these ancient fields. We taught them all the right things: that they should speak up in the face of simple wrongs, that they should be brave in the face of significant opposition, and they should give it all they've got, until the end, win or lose.

30 days ago, a group of students came to us with a simple request: to provide them with the opportunity to choose for themselves what best represents them as a student body. They asked us to shed a symbol that no longer represents their collective values, fails to celebrate them as a tapestry of diverse individuals, and declines to recognize the humanity we share with the Nipmuc Nation, who were here long before our town's forebears. Furthermore, the Colonial mascot fails to recognize the shared humanity of the many, *many* different groups of people who came to live here after the events of the Revolution. We should be reminded that many of the groups that have come to settle in this town share their own histories of facing down tyranny and empire.

A mascot is symbol to rally under. A touchstone. A representation of what we value and who we are. By anchoring ourselves in one time with one romanticized caricature, we have denied ourselves the opportunity to represent ourselves to the world as the dynamic community we actually are. These students should be given the same opportunity our venerated forebears were given: to articulate for themselves who they are and how they want to be represented. We should honor their request and then honor their choice. The choice before us is actually that simple: will we honor the spirit of restlessness and desire for recognition, or will we stand in their way?

While I understand that this is a challenging and potentially divisive topic, I am so grateful that we have the opportunity to have this discussion and to deliberate as a committee.

Over the past four weeks I've taken the opportunity to review the comments from the community. I've spent time reflecting on the rich history of our towns and region. I've considered the perspectives of others and looked at this through the lens, of our charge, as school committee members. Most importantly, I've struggled with my decision.

Now this is not the first time this committee has struggled with who we are "serving". Some parts of our roles and responsibilities are clear, we set policy, approve budget, and hire and evaluate the superintendent. But who do we represent? Is it the students of our district? Is it the tax-payers? Is it the voters? Whose perspective do I consider when I make a vote?

At the end of last year, the district and this committee made a conscious decision to engage anti-bias and anti-racist professional learning. We spent the summer learning on our own about the topic and held a workshop as the school year started to share our experiences.

It is through reflecting on this work that I've considered some additional questions.

- How do I take action to be anti-racist? Knowing that there is no such position as non-racist.
- Through my lens as a cis-white-male, how can I work to understand those from vastly different backgrounds?
- How can I work to raise the voices of those who have been systematically silenced?
- How does our work on diversity and inclusion get us to the ultimate goal... Belonging?

It was upon this reflection that I came to my decision. I'm not here to tally votes or pick the majority. In fact, our work should be to do the opposite. If even one person feels marginalized by this mascot, then we all must do the work to understand why. We must all take action to make sure our entire community feels as though they belong.

I encourage this committee to take swift action to retire the mascot, and to take thoughtful action to identify ways to engage our diverse community on an inclusive path that leads to everyone feeling as though they belong.

When the petition to retire the Colonial mascot first surfaced this summer, I was agnostic about it and open to both sides of the argument. I felt the same way a month ago when the students presented the petition at a meeting in September. Then the emails began to arrive, and the responses from both sides was illuminating. At first I was struck about the many emails about Isaac Davis, Captain Brown, Deacon Hunt, and other Acton Colonials—men after whom our streets and neighborhoods are named. But who else was here in Colonial times? Why are the only Colonial era Acton residents who have been memorialized white men?

Like many of you, I have been struck by the thoughtful responses of students, educators, residents, and alums who have widely divergent views on this issue. But I have been even more struck – stunned – by the rank hostility of many responders who are against retiring the Colonial as our mascot. Most stunning of all are the responses that actually attack the character and motives of the AB students who brought this petition forward. These are statements made by adults in our community against sixteen-year-old students who live in our towns and attend our high school. I am so saddened to absorb the example that some adults are setting for our kids, who are watching and listening. We need to do better than this.

We've received so many emails asserting that the Colonial is "our heritage." But is it? Our community is incredibly diverse, with residents and students of many different ethnicities. Both of my parents arrived in this country in the 1940's from Europe as toddlers and war refugees. So the Colonial is not my heritage. But the thing is, no one would know that by looking at my children. What does it feel like to some kids at AB who don't "blend in"?

We've received many emails stating that our vote on this petition – which again was brought forward by our students in July – is "dividing" our community. From my reading of the responses, the division already exists. I appreciate the many thoughtful and well-reasoned responders who feel we should keep the Colonial mascot but who did not stoop to maligning those with a different view. I have read, understood, and considered your views. But as an Acton resident, mother, and School Committee member, I want all of the children in our District to feel valued. I hope it is a goal that you share. Many students and AB grads have sent us heart-breaking emails explaining how and why they don't feel valued, and how the Colonial moniker contributes to their feeling that they are outsiders in their own community. The sheer number of vitriolic responses has led me to believe firmly that in this moment, when long ignored and marginalized groups are facing increased hostility and even violence, we need to stand up and acknowledge their voices. I hope that we can continue having this conversation, but in a civil and respectful manner, knowing that how we express our opinions matters almost as much as what those opinions are.

One thoughtful respondent to the SC survey said "I hope you can hold two ideas in your head at the same time." I will ask you to hold at least four.

First, in the SC discussion in which we designated Indigenous Peoples day as a school holiday, Evelyn asked, "What can we do to make sure that future SCs don't change the name again?" I responded that we cannot bind the action of future committees. However, the likelihood that a future committee would take a different approach is minimized when the SC takes time to thoughtfully consider an issue and documents our process and conclusion. With respect to the AB Colonial name and mascot, I believe we should take the time to assimilate our history and the perspective of our community before we act.

Second, several comments noted that there is a pandemic, we are in a novel and less effective than usual learning mode and wondered why a name had risen to the level of an important item on the SC agenda. I accept the validity of this perspective and fully agree that we have never been more challenged. And it is also true that a capstone of elementary and secondary education is a sense of personal identity and of our roots in the history of mankind. We must do both. We must address myriad operational challenges and support our students as they search for individual and collective identity.

Third, many, many comments spoke to the horrors of colonialism and the urgent need to remove the connotations of colonialism from the "AB Colonial" name and our mascot. I accept that human history is stained by the global actions of colonists and their actions in North America. We know that some colonists engaged in the destruction of cultures, the taking of land and property, slavery, and murder.

Here is my perspective.

The questions we must ask are: who are the "AB Colonials" and what did they do? Is the word "colonial" or "colonialism" so powerfully tainted that its attachment to anything is damning to the combination name? As we review the history of Colonial New England and of Acton and Boxborough there should be no rush to judgment.

I do not accept the facile conflation of "colonialism" and the Acton-Boxborough Colonials. From my view this is an example of the fallacy of ambiguous reference. First, we should consider who the "AB Colonials" have been since the adoption of the "Colonial" team name about 1957. The term "AB Colonials" is most closely aligned with the students, family, faculty and staff who have worn the Colonial uniform or cheered for the Colonials as they competed in sports or the arts or designed graphics for our yearbooks. The positive and negative qualities associated with the "AB Colonial" name most strongly relate to the positive and negative qualities of these modern people. Whether or not we adopt a new name, the Acton-Boxborough Colonials of 1957-2019, will remain Colonials in our videos, in our yearbooks and on our banners and trophies.

While the rationale for ABRSD's adoption of the Colonial name is not known, we can reasonably speculate that the reference was to the qualities and lives of the Colonial men, women and children of Acton and Boxborough in the period focused on the 1700s and, in particular, to the Blanchards, the Conants, the Hosmers, the Wetherbees and others who established and grew the communities.

We should recognize that the Colonials of this era included free black men as well as slaves. These Colonials included indentured servants, Jews and Quakers. We should consider how they treated each other as well as how they treated the Nipmucks. We should understand what they built along with what they destroyed. We should recognize that the stone walls that still run through our communities reflect the primary occupation of most of these colonials – farming.

And we should reflect on the fact that in 1642, the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed the first law in the New World requiring that children be taught to read and write. The strong school system in the Commonwealth was born in the Colonial era.

Then we can weigh the historical actions of Acton and Boxborough Colonials both good and bad recognizing that they, like us, are human beings. No name will separate them, or us, from human history.

Kwai Chang Caine: *Is it good to seek the past, Master Po? Does it not rob the present?*

Master Po: *If a man dwells on the past, then he robs the present. But if a man ignores the past, he may rob the future. The seeds of our destiny are nurtured by the roots of our past.*

I believe that that the community will benefit from further discussion of our history and our name before the School Committee acts. The immediate effect of acting this evening will be to create division in our community, not to move us forward.

My hope is that this question of the high school mascot will be the beginning of a learning process for members of our community, as it has been for me.

My first reaction when I heard this question raised was:
What could be wrong with the word Colonial???

My idea of Colonial went to our family's love for Little House on the Prairie, Fifer's Day, the Revolutionary War. My family is not from here. Our family ancestry is Spanish, Norwegian and German, I grew up in Texas, we have been in Boxboro for only 4 years. But we have embraced and come to love our local celebrations that make our towns special.

Then I began to see emails flooding in, with anxiety and anger at the thought of changing the school mascot. Why is this so important, I wondered. And then I realized, this has to do with our country's current reckoning with our past and current racism.

I found myself staying up late, reading historical accounts of Acton and Boxboro's history. One interesting thing I learned is that school building projects in the 1800s were as complicated as they are today! I also learned that Acton High School was one of the first high schools to allow girls to take upper level math classes. I also learned that yes, **here** in Acton and Boxboro, there was enslavement, imprisonment and genocide of the native Americans who at first befriended and helped the colonials. I have been learning about the multiple viewpoints, and that those first colonials did not always see the people who were living here first, as fully human.

It has been 350 years since first colonists came to "settle" in this area: (1660s)
It has been 245 years since colonials fought in the revolutionary wars: (1775+)

It has been 70 years since ABRHS began as the AB Colonials. The 1950s were a very different time culturally, with much less awareness than young people have today of women's right, and the rights of persons of color.

In all of these 350 years, there has been a LOT of history, and a lot has changed.

I believe as a community we should continue to celebrate aspects of our local history that are a true source of pride: Fifer's Day. Patriots Day. our Revolutionary heroes. I disagree with vilifying our heroes, though we must look fully at the history, including that which we do not want to repeat. As we are connected to where we live, we also must realize that OUR history, connected to this place, began well before the colonials arrived, and includes nonwhites. The people who lived here prior to the arrival of the colonials have an important history, and a different experience of colonials that I hope will be better understood by our students and community.

As for the question of a mascot, the intent of a school mascot is to bring together, inspire and celebrate our school community. It should not be a source of pain, embarrassment, or damage to any school community member. We can do better than that. We must move to change the mascot, and hope that our community will begin to work together as we begin to explore the possibilities of a new mascot.

Compassion benefits not only the receiver, but also the giver.

I want to start by acknowledging that Acton-Boxborough Students for Equity and Justice (ABSEJ) brought up this topic, because many students do not feel comfortable being represented by the Colonial. As stated in the petition, the students see that we use A White Male Colonist as a Mascot; it's glorifying Colonialism. At the same time, with the same Colonial Mascot, there is a very different view for others. Instead of seeing the Mascot as a white male colonist, many people correlate it with pride and are inspired by the courage and spirit of the 37 Actonians who fought for liberty so that we can have this beautiful place to live now. I don't know about you, but I was very surprised to see the response of getting an email at almost one email per minute rate yesterday from both sides and 2300+ votes on retaining the Mascot vs. 2100+ votes to change the Mascot on Change.org petitions. To me, it shows that our community is divided at this point. I have a couple questions that I would like to invite you to think about before you make tonight's decision.

- What are we trying to build with all of these efforts?
- Will a simple retain or not result help us build a better community?
- Can we achieve our diversity and inclusiveness goals?
- If we just focus on a vote to retire or keep without further conversation and understanding, how much will our students learn from this process?
- What values do we want our students to learn or character do we want our students to build?

I feel by pushing a vote tonight without a broader and deeper understanding of those issues in the community and engaging conversation from both perspectives, we are not setting a good example on how we can learn from each other and work together as a community. I do not think we should vote with the current suggested motions tonight. By not voting as stated tonight, it is not equivalent to the case being closed. It means we want to establish a community with engaged conversation, and listen to different perspectives. It means we are taking the time to learn more about the issues so when we come back to revisit, we have a better understanding of each other. For example, schools can have activities in Social Studies or in extracurricular activities (like Speech and Debate) that can foster deeper conversation. Have students discuss and engage in finding AB's identity and spirit together. At the same time, form a study group in the community consisting of both the retire and retain points of view. This study group would work on summarizing the retire and retain arguments for the AB Colonial name and the AB Colonial mascot. A report to the SC could summarize the arguments for each point of view with no recommendation, and the arguments could be submitted to the Committee by January or February 2021. This pause provides an opportunity to unite the different perspectives and move this topic forward so it lines up with our district goal on inclusiveness and diversity. As the first generation of immigrants, racism is not foreign to me. Actually three weeks ago, my daughter, who was born and raised here, had someone drive by her, pull down their window and yell "Chinese virus" at her.. It's clear that we have a lot of work to do. Because of that, should we retire the Mascot? The answer may be yes or no by the end, but I urge that we take time to work this out in a united way.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	5.b
AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Budget Update		
PRESENTER(S)	Dave Verdolino		
SUMMARY OF TOPIC	First quarter FY21 report will be presented, along with updates on E&D reserves and federal relief to our community. The FY22 budget guidelines were introduced at the School Committee meeting on Oct 1st. The guidelines and timeline have been reviewed by the budget subcommittee. E&D certification has not been received yet so that will be at your next meeting.		

WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?			
	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information		
	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required		
X	Request formal action with a specific vote:		
		If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:	
			for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR
		X	with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.

SUGGESTED MOTION	"Move to approve the FY22 Budget Guidelines and Timeline as presented"
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APPROX. TIME ON AGENDA	30 min.
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ATTACHMENTS	FY21 - Q1 Financial update memo from D Verdolino, Letter to both towns requesting CARES Act Funding, Recommended FY22 Budget Guidelines & Timeline, FY20 Audit Reports, Presentation slides
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To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

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Our **vision** is to provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

Our **mission** is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships

School Committee Financial Update 1st Quarter FY21, and Other Issues

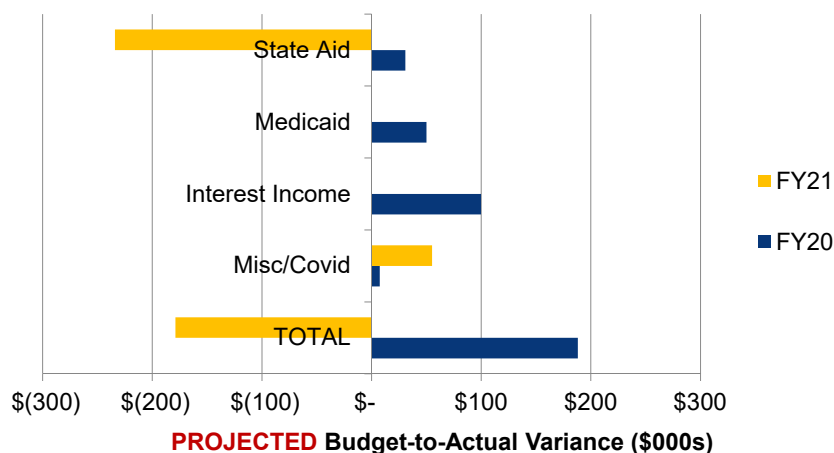
Accompaniment to Memo to School Committee,
November 5, 2020

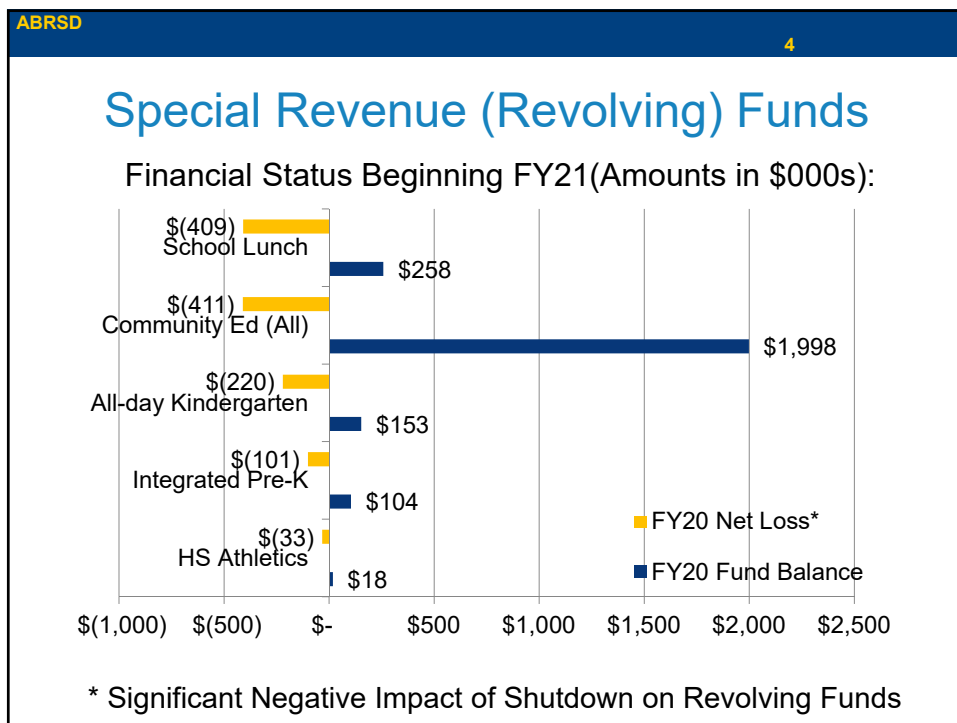
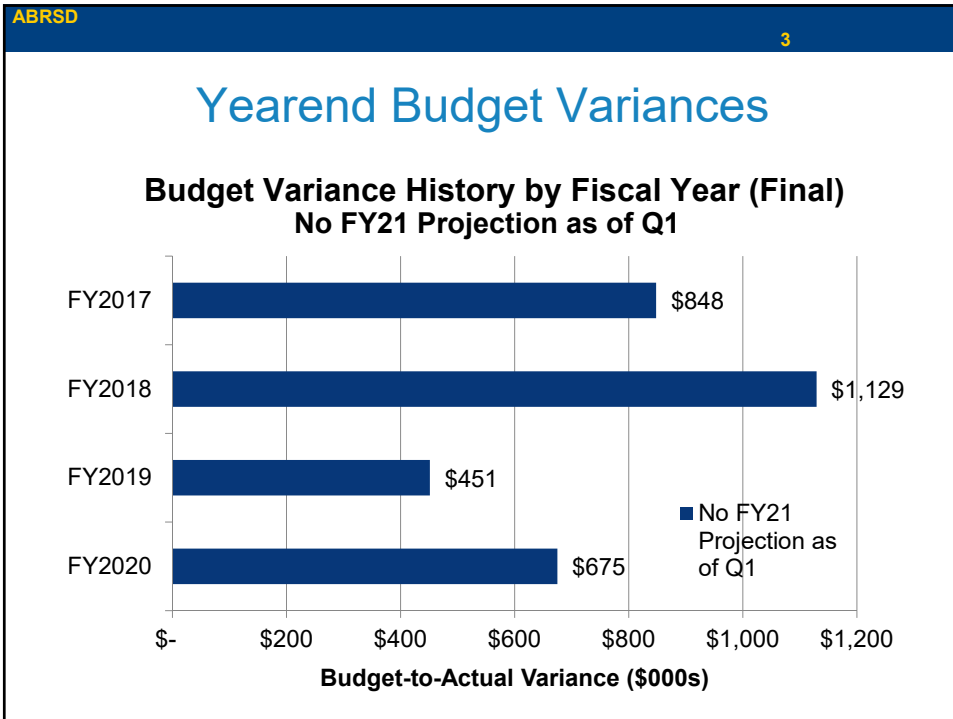
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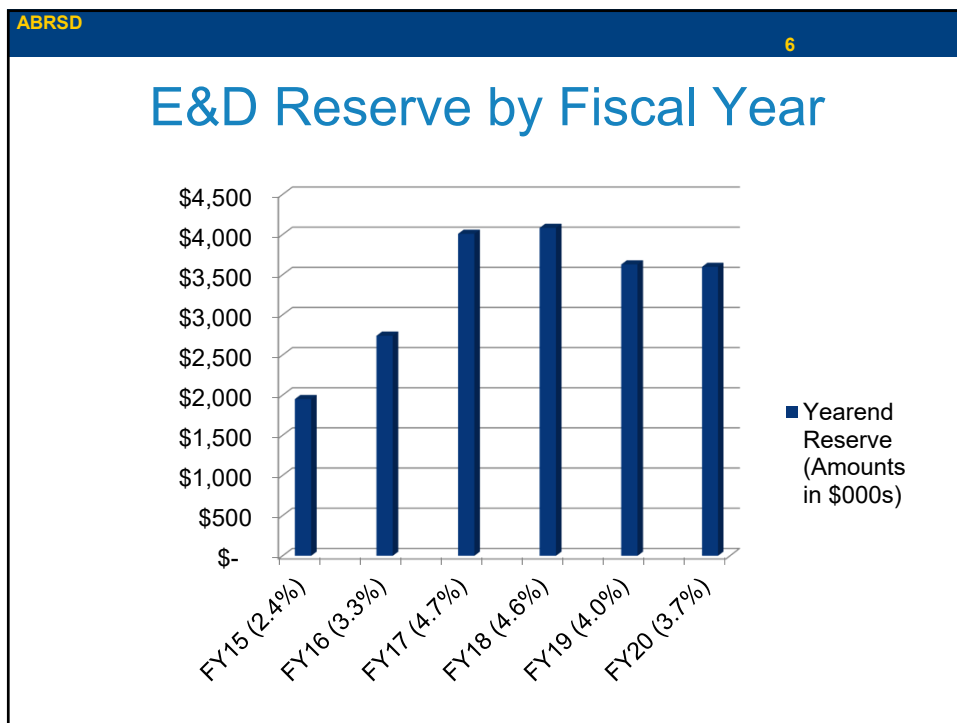
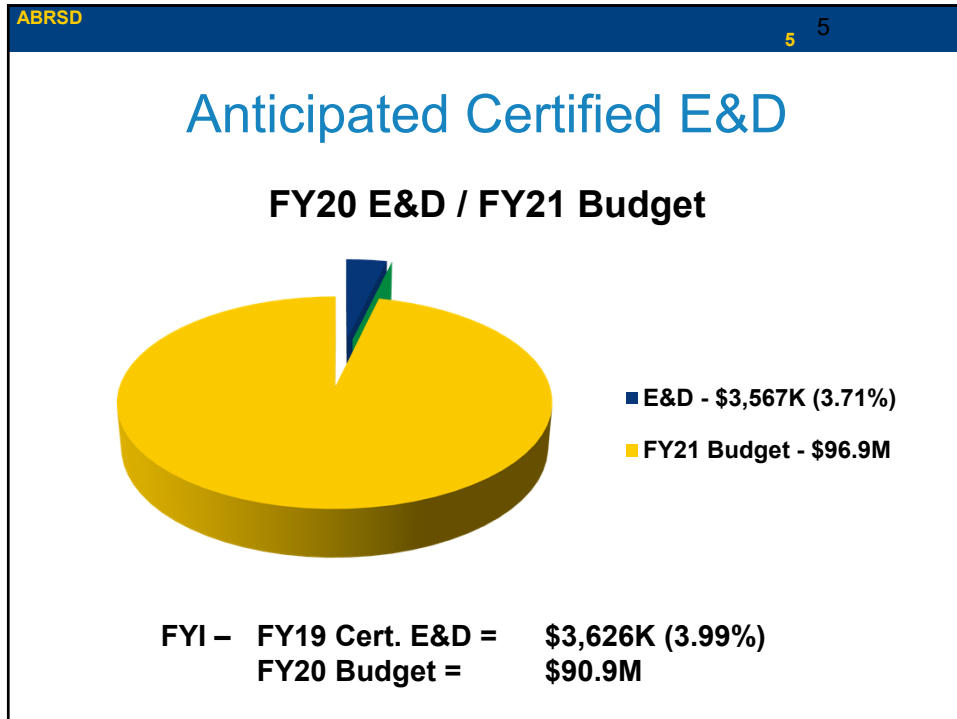
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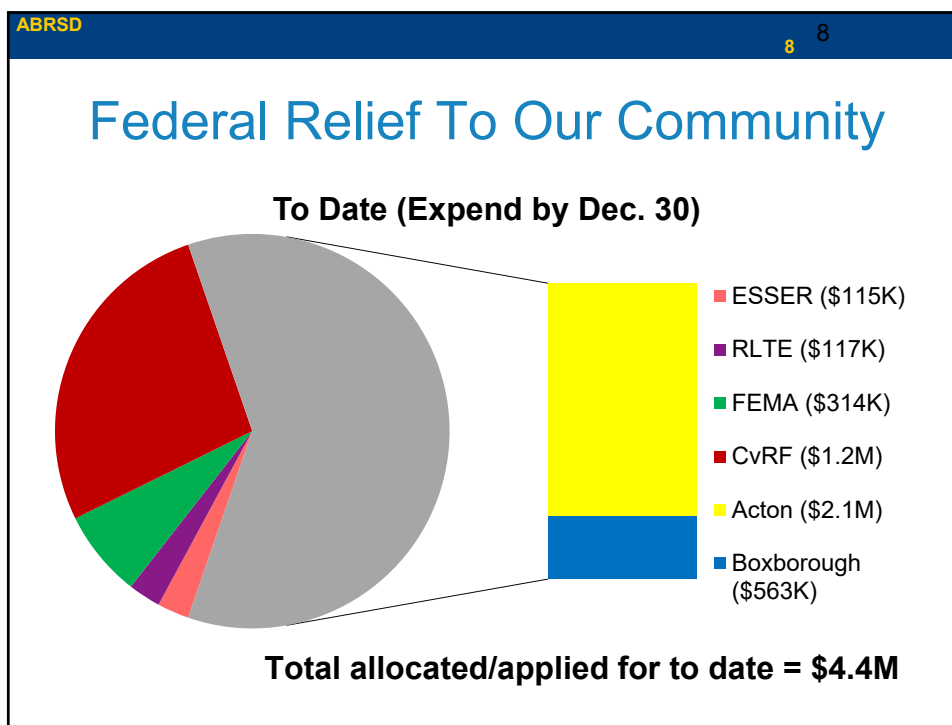
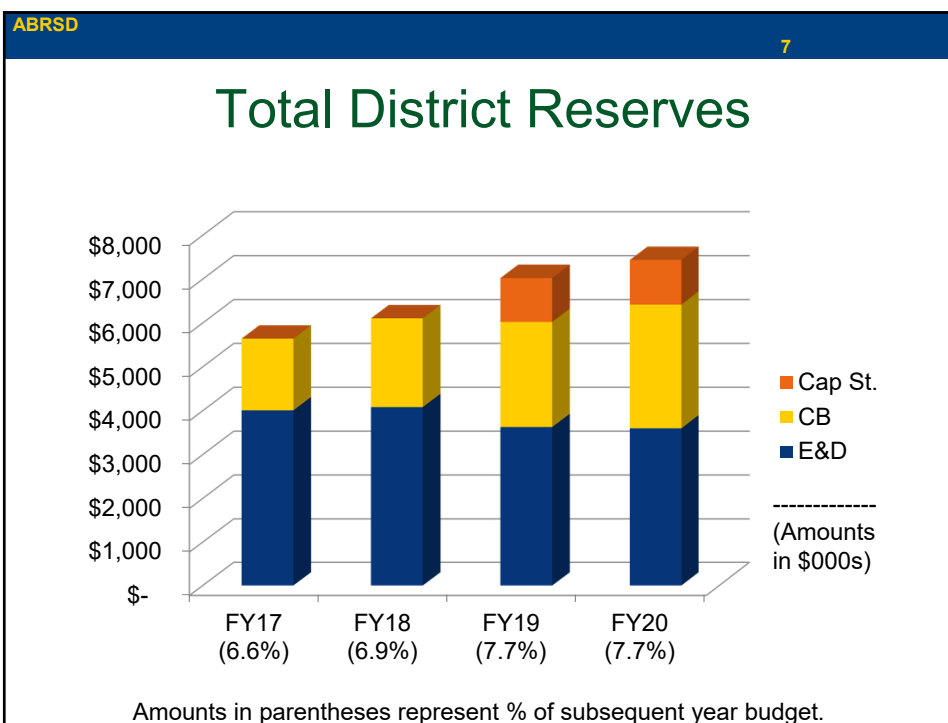
Q1 Quarter Revenues – Comparative

Variances PROJECTED AT YEAREND through Q1by FY:









FY22 Budget Process Begins

1. What will the rest of FY21 look like?
2. Continued financial impact of Covid?
3. Changes to Budget Calendar
4. Changes to Budget Presentations
5. Significant Budget Drivers -
 - > Fixed costs (known); *e.g., debt, pension, OPEB*
 - > Cost escalators (known); *COLAs, insurance*
 - > Staffing changes (variable); *enrollment-based*
 - > Program budgets (variable); *likeliest for cuts*
 - > Effect of added SPED staff (TBD); *hard to assess*
 - > State Aid; Fed. Relief; Fee/Tuition-based Programs
 - > Use District/Town reserves to ↓ assessments (TBD)

A Year of Uncertainty Continues...

Dave can't even find
an appropriate meme



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road - Acton, MA 01720
www.abschools.org

Finance Department
David A. Verdolino, Director
(978) 264-4700
dverdolino@abschools.org

Date: November 5, 2020
To: Superintendent, School Committee
Re: FY2021 – Q1 Financial Update

This memo outlines items of significance relating to the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), based on year-to-date financial transactions posted in Munis and other relevant information.

FY21 Revenues

Revenue projections can be made more authoritatively this early in the year than expenditures, as the basis for a year's worth of transactions is clearer. A summary of FY20 projected revenue through Q1 (with comparable variances from FY19) is as follows:

	FY21 Budget	-----Through 1 st Quarter----- FY21 Projected Variance at Y/E	FY20 Projected Variance at Y/E
STATE AID –			
Foundation Aid (Chapter 70)	\$ 15,345,811	\$(160,500)	\$ (2,130)
Regional Transportation Aid	2,097,225	(65,000)	-
Charter School Reimbursement	50,000	(8,575)	32,885
REGIONAL ASSESSMENT –			
Acton	\$ 65,584,049 (84.40%)	-	-
Boxborough	12,123,116 (15.60%)	-	-
OTHER REVENUES –			
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$ 250,000	\$ -	\$ 50,000
Earnings on Investments	300,000	-	99,860
Rental Income	7,500	-	7,500
Miscellaneous (Recurring)	10,000	-	-
Miscellaneous (Covid) – to date	-	55,248	n/a
APPROPRIATED FROM E&D	\$ 1,145,000	-	-
TOTALS (FYI)	\$ 96,912,701	\$(178,827)	\$ 188,115

FY21 State Aid underruns reflect more aggressive budget estimates (even though set at modest increases from the prior year) versus essentially level-funding per the latest Cherry Sheet updates provided by the legislature. Nevertheless, that we are seeing level-funding (versus pre-emptive cuts as happened during the Great Recession era) reflects the state's view of the importance of local aid funding in general and public education funding in particular.

There remains the possibility of increased FY21 aid (for A-B, that would represent all or part of the \$30 per student Minimum Aid prescribed in the Student Opportunity Act, or SOA).

Congress has passed several partisan-based attempts at additional Covid relief measures, but no successful vote is likely before the upcoming elections. Post-election, especially in light of reported increases of Covid incidence, it would seem obvious that additional relief funding could materialize; to the extent our state is able to fund its reported budget deficit with any additional federal funds, it could turn to addressing commitments set forth in the SOA.

With respect to federal relief grant allocations to date, the one which has so far impacted the District's FY21 budget is receipt of our FY20 FEMA application, submitted to recover Covid-related PPE costs expended and accounted for last fiscal year. There will likely be further, presumably positive, impact from federal relief opportunities, to the extent they free up expended funds that otherwise would have been accounted for in the FY21 budget. A summary of federal Covid relief funds and their impact on FY21 finances appears later in this memo.

For all other revenue items, we are too early in the year to reliably project any variances.

FY21 Expenditures

We have just begun the process of analyzing expenditure categories.

Because of the massive undertaking of resource re-alignment anticipating the re-opening of school – in its various forms – we do not yet have a bead on expenditure variances.

Additionally, the extent to which federal relief funding impacts (positively, it is assumed) our appropriated budget, those circumstances will affect projected variances for the year.

We intend to present budget updates on a monthly basis this year, in conjunction with the analysis of major, traditionally more volatile budget categories (personnel, health insurance, special education tuitions) and as federal grant fund administration proceeds.

Revolving Funds

Similar to Expenditures, there is not yet sufficient information to project revenue/tuition-based programs such as School Lunch, Community Education, All-day Kindergarten (not offered in FY21), Pre-Kindergarten and Athletics, which all operate on the precipice of another district-wide activity shutdown. The good news is that all these special revenue funds finished FY20 with positive fund balances, as shown below (*amounts in \$000s*):

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>FY2020 Net (Loss)</u>	<u>Fund Balance June 30, 2020</u>
3201	School Lunch	\$ (409)	\$ 258
3402-7	Community Ed (All)	(411)	1,998
3406	All-day Kindergarten	(220)	153
3429	Integrated Pre-K	(101)	104
3301-5	HS Athletics	(33)	18

We are working with all program administrators to re-imagine and recalibrate FY21 projections, in light of the less-than-complete return to normal student participation levels, to strive for – at a minimum – break-even financial operation during FY2021. As time passes, and in-person activity remains viable to some degree, that goal is increasingly likely to be achieved.

Food Services is probably best positioned to maintain financial viability during FY21. It recently received word that the USDA has waived its program requirements, allowing the District to provide meals (breakfast and lunch) to ALL students (regardless of income level) free of charge through June, 2021. This includes students learning remotely, as the program is providing weekly food (consisting of ten meals per person) for pickup by families.

All-day Kindergarten will experience a one-year moratorium on activities, including the previously-envisioned plan to systematically reduce tuitions. That plan will need to be re-evaluated during the upcoming budget process for FY2022.

FY20 Wrap-up Matters

For your information, the following required District submissions and undertakings have been completed:

- End-of-Year Financial Report for comparing costs by district (filed with DESE)
- Balance Sheet and related materials for E&D Certification (filed with DOR)
- Annual independent financial audit (draft reports received; see below)

The annual independent financial audit work has been completed no audit adjustments were required (once again, a testament to the exemplary diligence and attention to detail provided by District Accountant, Tom Blondin). Therefore, the DOR submission anticipates Certified E&D at the same amount (\$3,596,773, representing 3.71% of FY21 operating budget) as reported in my yearend closing memo dated August 27, 2020, subject to any adjustments made by DOR during its review, which is expected to take place during October.

We are in the process of arranging the annual meeting of the OPEB Board of Trustees, and will report on the OPEB Trust Fund's (improved) status as of June 30, 2020 following that meeting.

A comparative summary of District reserves as of June 30, 2020 and 2019 is presented below (*amounts in \$000s*):

	<u>Balance at Yearend -</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Expendable –			
Excess & Deficiency		\$3,596	\$3,626
Circuit Breaker		2,821	2,396
Capital Stabilization		1,019	1,002
Non-Expendable –			
OPEB Trust		\$6,180	\$5,175

FY22 Budget Process; Impact of Federal Covid Relief Grants

As has been presented, the FY2022 budget process will be pushed back, in an attempt to minimize – to the extent that is possible – the many aspects of uncertainty attributable to the Covid pandemic. The Town of Acton has publicly voted to delay its town meeting until after that of Boxborough, currently scheduled for May 10, 2021. A revised draft budget calendar will have been reviewed by Administration and the Budget Subcommittee by the date of this report; as of this writing it calls for (among other dates): school administrators to begin working on FY22 budget requests by November 20, 2020; presentation of the Superintendent's Preliminary Budget on January 21, 2021; and the Budget Public Hearing on March 18, 2021 – all appropriately back-dated from the tentative earlier town meeting date of May 10 noted above.

One of the major financial uncertainties being presented this year is the extent to which Covid-relief funding is (a) appropriated by the federal government, (b) allocated to Massachusetts and passed through to cities & towns and/or districts, and (c) available for use by the District in a manner that impacts its operation budgets – either this year or next.

As of this writing, the status of the District's participation in these relief grant programs is as follows (*dollar amounts in \$000s*):

<u>Program Name (Description)</u>	<u>District Allocation</u>	<u>Status/Comment/FYI</u>
1. ESSER (Education Stabilization)	\$115	Grant approved; 90% (\$103K) received To be expended on Chromebooks for Gr. 9 students; FY21 budget cut by this amount
2. Remote Learning technology	\$150	Grant application pending To be expended on Chromebooks to defray cost of acquisition for other HS students
3. FEMA (Health/Safety assistance)	(ad hoc)	FY20 application approved; \$55K received FY21 initial application submitted (\$345K)
4. CARES Act (Municipal relief)	\$2,093 (Acton) 563 (Boxborough) – see below	
5. CvRF (\$225 per student)	\$1,185	Grant approved; 10% (\$118.5K) received To be expended on student/ staff technology, and other costs relating to re-opening of school, including Remote Learning Program

Under current guidance, all funds associated with the above programs must be spent by December 30, 2020. We will be including budget-to-actual reports for all programs with our monthly reporting presentations, beginning with October's closing. As of this writing, it is not possible to ascertain the impact of these funds on the District's FY21 appropriated budget; their provisions generally prohibit funding costs that were budgeted as of March, 2020 (i.e., FY2020).

With respect to CARES Act funding allocated to Acton and Boxborough, municipalities are permitted to pass through their awards to regional districts; advice from DOR suggests that districts should have committed their related Covid grant funds first. A-B has done this; and we are communicating with Acton and Boxborough with respect to their consideration of funding, at a minimum at this point in time, the following initial requests (*amounts in \$000s*):

- a. Remaining costs to provide technology devices to students and staff (\$435)
- b. Community adult (i.e., non-student) food outreach not covered by USDA (\$100) – est.
- c. (Acton only) - Covid-related medical costs of the Health Insurance Trust (\$ 91) – est.

As of this writing, we are seeking to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding among the two towns and District, including with respect to (a) basic approval of the District's eligibility and acceptance as a subgrantee, and (b) allocation of approved.

In summary, these significant federal funds are providing the means by which A-B's combined education program in FY21 can take place with adequate technology, robust planning, and appropriate PPE. Over \$2 million of funding benefitting the District and its students are represented in the above summary; clearly, without this relief, the ability of our District to offer the multi-faceted programs we are providing this year (among all the inherent uncertainty) would have either required use of over half of our E&D reserve, or been – at least in substantial part – abandoned.

Last Word

This unique calendar year, whose impact spans – at least – two school years, requires greater attention than any with which I have ever been associated. Financial information will be provided with greater regularity and less focus on milestones (e.g., quarterly bases). With the preparation of applications for grants available to date, and the postponement of the dates on the traditional budget calendar, Finance will have greater flexibility to report on circumstances, their impact on the District's financial resources, and providing the tools for decision-making in what looms as a difficult upcoming budget year, postponed or not.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720

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www.abschools.org

Peter J. Light

Superintendent of Schools

To: John Mangiaratti, Town Manager - Town of Acton, MA
Ryan Ferarra, Town Administrator - Town of Boxborough, MA
From: Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools - Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Date: October 16, 2020
RE: Request for consideration of CARES Act Funding

The purpose of this letter is to (1) summarize the status of federal Covid relief funding made available to the District to date, and (2) to request consideration that a portion of CARES Act funding made available to the Towns of Acton and Boxborough be passed through to the District as a subgrantee.

1. Covid Relief Funding - District

To date, the District has received approval for three sources of Covid relief funding (excluding FEMA, which reimburses 75% of eligible PPE expenditures by the District and both towns), as follows:

a. ESSER – Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief – Fund

This was made available for award during the spring, allocated to MA school districts on a Title One proportionate basis; A-B's allocation amounted to \$114,566.

As we became aware of this available funding, we reduced our final FY2021 budget request by a similar amount; so these funds were committed to backfill the reduced budget in order to acquire Chromebooks for grade 9 students at ABRSD (as had been budgeted).

Our grant application categorized the intended use of funds as instructional technology, consistent with the actions discussed above, and we established a separate grant fund to account for related transactions. On October 6, we received 90% of the grant amount; the final 10% will be applied for, received, and then this grant's activities will be concluded.

b. RLTE – Remote Learning Technology Essentials – Fund

Unlike ESSER (above), CARES and CvRF (below), the RLTE grant was not an allocation set aside for the District. Ed Tech Director Amy Bisiewicz applied for this grant in the amount of \$116,929, with the aim of defraying the cost of acquiring additional Chromebooks (see below) to support the reopening of school via the Remote Learning Program (RLP). It should be noted that, by securing this supplemental funding source, Director Bisiewicz's effort effectively reduced the extent to which the District might otherwise be requesting relief funds CARES Act funds allocated to Acton and Boxborough.

c. CvRF – Coronavirus Relief Fund

This was made available through the initial round of federal CARES Act stimulus, with each school district in MA allocated \$225 per student, which represents \$1,185,300 to the District.

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Our grant application was approved and on October 6, we received the initial 10% of that amount. Subsequent receipts will be made as the District files reimbursement claims, similar to a typical DESE grant.

The grant application covers a variety of initiatives and other costs, all designed to provide for a safe and successful re-opening of school and robust education program for students, whether being taught remotely or in the hybrid model.

Following is a summary of the grant application budget:

- \$10,000 Administrators overseeing return-to-school
- \$180,000 Assistants assigned to the RLP
- \$36,500 Staff supporting the summer learning program and supplemental afterschool
- \$46,000 Stipends to administrators and certified staff for planning return-to-school
- \$106,000 Stipends and additional payments to staff for curriculum and teaching support
- \$10,000 Additional training and professional development
- \$100,000 Assessment of learning gaps and strategic remediation measures
- \$41,000 Family Success Partnership contract services to assist vulnerable families
- \$270,000 FM devices to improve sound quality and teacher effectiveness in live settings
- \$105,000 Chromebooks for teacher assistants assigned to the RLP
- \$92,650 Curriculum and student materials to support remote instruction
- \$108,150 Estimated local (25%) share of FEMA claimed costs for PPE
- \$80,000 Equipment – tents for outdoor instruction, plexiglass partitions, material storage
- \$1,185,300 TOTAL grant budget per application

2. Covid Relief Funding – Towns

Both towns have been allocated significant CARES Act resources through the Secretary of A&F. Guidance from the state indicates that municipalities may permit funds to be passed-through to school districts (including as members of regional districts), who are treated as subgrantees. It is advised that such pass-through funding be considered only after districts have committed all available Covid Relief funds at their disposal. As reported above, A-B has done so, and all relief allocations are earmarked for services, supplies and equipment.

The comprehensive Chromebook acquisition that the District undertook consisted of the following:

Grade 9 – 12 Students	1,840 devices	\$599,370
Grade 1 Students	375 devices	<u>\$101,000</u>
Totals	2,225 devices	\$700,370

The District is respectfully requesting funding of the above costs – to the extent they are not included in any of the funding sources outlined on the previous page, as follows:

Total Outlay for Chromebooks	\$700,370
Funded by ESSER grant (1a. above)	-114,566
Funded by RLTE grant (1b. above)	<u>-116,929</u>
Balance requested from CARES Act	\$468,875

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Tentative split between Acton & Boxborough (based on FY21 assessment) –

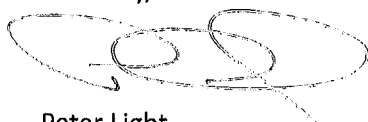
Acton (84.4%)	\$395,730
Boxborough (15.6%)	\$ 73,145

We have prepared a draft Memorandum of Agreement, which would memorialize the consensus, should both towns consent to this request. We anticipate favorable action on this request, based on past conversations among the groups' leadership.

As we continue to account for additional expenses due to COVID-19, we anticipate some additional costs. Thereafter, we would anticipate making ongoing, additional requests for items already identified such as community (non-student) food outreach (current estimate \$100,000). Additionally, we suggest that Acton consider reimbursing the Health Insurance Trust for Covid-related expenditures of the trust (estimate to date \$91,000, as determined by the trust's consultant).

Thank you for your consideration; we are happy to provide any additional information requested.

Sincerely,



Peter Light,
Superintendent of Schools

Attachment (Draft MOA)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING as of _____

This agreement is by and between the Towns of Acton (Acton) and Boxborough (Boxborough) and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (A-B).

Through this date, Acton and Boxborough have been allocated federal "CARES Act Funds" through the Massachusetts Department of Administration and Finance in the following amounts:

Acton \$ _____

Boxborough \$ _____

It is hereby agreed that a portion of the above CARES Act Funds shall be passed through to A-B as a subgrantee, in accordance with related grant regulations, in order to fund costs incurred by A-B as a result of the Covid pandemic through December 30, 2020 which are not being funded by other sources available to A-B.

The proportionate share of these passed-through funds shall be based on the FY21 regional assessment shares - Acton 84.40%, Boxborough 15.60%.

Through this date, A-B has been allocated federal Covid relief funds through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in the following amounts:

ESSER \$ _____

(Technology Assistance) \$ _____

Covid Relief Fund (CvRF) \$ _____

A-B hereby acknowledges that it has committed to spending all of these DESE-provided resources; a report detailing the uses of these funds will be made public.

A-B will provide a summary of the items for which pass-through funding from Acton and Boxborough CARES Act Funding is requested, including a description of each item, its purpose within A-B's educational program, its relationship to the impact of Covid restrictions and pandemic avoidance, and its cost.

The first summary is provided as Attachment #1 to this memorandum; subsequent requests may be submitted as additional, numbered attachments.

[signatures]

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

**FY22 Budget Guidelines
Administrative Suggestions/ Recommendations**

- Develop a flexible budget that is responsive to uncertainty caused by the pandemic and allows for a variety of educational models for FY22.
- Assume uncertainty with regard to state and federal funding for schools.
- Adequately fund education programs designed to expedite recovery from the pandemic, and ensure effective services and supports are in place for all students' social-emotional and academic needs.
- Evaluate opportunities to use existing resources to align services and supports across the district in a fiscally sustainable manner that balances student needs with the economic interests of the communities.
- Consider funding directly allocated to programs that support students with IEPs, English Learners, students whose families may be income insecure, students of color, or other groups who may have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and school closures.
- Prioritize anti-bias, anti-racist strategic initiatives.
- Evaluate Kindergarten Enrollment Projections carefully in light of fluctuations in K enrollment due to the Pandemic.
- Evaluate All Day Kindergarten tuition in light of assumed resumption of All Day Kindergarten during FY22.
- Maximize opportunities to leverage alternative revenue sources, including, but not limited to state and federal grants.
- Monitor strategic use of reserves in light of economic uncertainty.
- Evaluate strategies to replenish revolving accounts that have been negatively impacted by pandemic-related costs and reduced revenues.
- Resume funding of Capital Improvement Plan in order to fully implement planned improvements.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road - Acton, MA 01720
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Finance Department
David A. Verdolino, Director
(978) 264-4700
dverdolino@abschools.org

REVISED DRAFT – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

Based on Boxborough's Town Meeting (scheduled on May 10) being the earlier of the two towns.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District – FY2022 Budget Development Schedule

11/19/20	<u>School Committee:</u>	Budget schedule and guidelines adopted (SC vote)
11/20/20 (last year 10/03)		FY2022 budget workbooks, forms and instructions transmitted to administrators Administrators prepare FY22 budget requests (personnel; non-personnel; capital)
12/03/20	<u>School Committee:</u>	(TBD whether any FY22 budget-related agenda)
12/17/20 (last year 11/05)	<u>School Committee:</u>	Enrollment and class size update; Full-day K update Federal relief program grant update (grants expire Dec. 30)
12/18/20 Thereafter:		Completed Budget Request Forms submitted to Finance > Input department budget requests (Munis); review with CO administrators > Staffing and salary budget review/update & updated enrollment projections > Capital Committee review CIP status and any recommendations
1/07/21	<u>School Committee:</u>	FY2021 CIP update; Full-day K decision (SC vote)
1/21/21 (last year 12/05)	<u>School Committee:</u>	Budget Presentation #1 ("Supt. Preliminary Budget") Preliminary Assessment projection
Wednesday, 1/27/21		Expected release of Governor's proposed FY22 Budget; Cherry Sheet estimates
2/04/21 (FYI, last year the first February meeting was the budget public hearing)	<u>School Committee:</u>	(TBD whether any FY22 budget-related agenda)
2/11/21 (last year 1/09)	<u>School Committee:</u>	Budget Presentation #2: ("Supt. Recommended Budget") Line item detail and projected Assessment update
Friday, 2/26/21 (last year 1/17)		Budget Binders Distributed
3/04/21 (last year Saturday, 1/25)	<u>School Committee:</u>	Comprehensive budget and program presentation <i>(in lieu of traditional Budget Saturday)</i> Preliminary vote on FY22 Budget (21 days before final budget vote)
3/18/21 (last year 2/06)	<u>School Committee:</u>	Budget Public Hearing; Superintendent's Final FY2022 Budget Recommendation
3/25/21 (last year 2/13)	<u>School Committee:</u>	Final vote on FY2022 Budget (46 days before earlier Town Meeting)

DRAFT

Fyi- Posted separately
after packet

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

***REPORT ON EXAMINATION OF
BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS***

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

DRAFT

Fyi - Posted separately
after the packet

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

REPORTS ON FEDERAL AWARD PROGRAMS

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2020

DRAFT

Fyi - Posted separately
after the packet

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MANAGEMENT LETTER

JUNE 30, 2020

Fyi - Posted separately
after the packet



ERIC A KINSHERE, CPA

The grade of the state is not confirmed

116 State Road #8, P.O. Box 791
Sagamore Beach, MA 02562
Phone: (508) 833-8508 Fax: (877) 262-0416

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

FRAUD RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT

Prepared by:
Eric A. Kinshere, CPA

June 1, 2020



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	5.c.i
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AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Policy Subcommittee Update
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PRESENTER(S)	Diane Baum
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SUMMARY OF TOPIC	The subcommittee met on 11/4/20. Members continue to discuss reviewing policies through a Diversity/Equity/Inclusion lens, and specifically the new policy "Commitment to an Inclusive and Representative District Workforce", which has not been approved yet.
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WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?		
	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information	
	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required for Subcommittees policy	
	Request formal action with a specific vote:	
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:	
		for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting or
		with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

SUGGESTED MOTION	
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FOLLOW-UP	
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APPROX. AGENDA TIME	2 min.
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ATTACHMENTS	none
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Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	5.c.ii
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AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Budget Subcommittee Update
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PRESENTER(S)	Adam Klein
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SUMMARY OF TOPIC	This is an update on the meeting held on 10/29/20
------------------	---

WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request formal action with a specific vote:	
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR
	<input type="checkbox"/>	with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.

SUGGESTED MOTION	
------------------	--

FOLLOW-UP	
-----------	--

APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	2 min.
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ATTACHMENTS	none
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Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	5.c.iii
AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Update		
PRESENTER(S)	Amy Krishnamurthy, John Petersen		
SUMMARY OF TOPIC			
WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?			
X	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information		
	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required		
	Request formal action with a specific vote:		
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:		
		for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR	
		with the request that the School Committee take action immediately	
If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.			
SUGGESTED MOTION			
FOLLOW-UP			
APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	2 minutes		
ATTACHMENTS	Spreadsheet from meeting on 10/29/20, approved minutes		

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Town of Acton Multi-Year Financial Model

Prepared by the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, and Finance Committee
Town Meeting Recommendation for FY22

Estimates for FY23 and FY24 are for planning purposes only and are subject to change

29-Oct-20

<u>Summary</u>	<u>Approved FY21</u>	<u>Projection FY22</u>	<u>Projection FY23</u>	<u>Projection FY24</u>
Municipal Funding Sources:				
Tax Levy (excluding debt exclusion)	\$ 89,417,953	\$ 92,370,902	\$ 95,397,674	\$ 98,500,116
State Aid	\$ 1,398,000	\$ 1,398,000	\$ 1,398,000	\$ 1,398,000
Local Receipts	\$ 5,562,000	\$ 5,562,000	\$ 5,562,000	\$ 5,562,000
Debt Exclusion	\$ 2,475,848	\$ 2,410,612	\$ 2,336,107	\$ 1,627,000
Estimate of North Acton Fire Station Debt	\$ 75,000	\$ 469,000	\$ 469,000	\$ 469,000
Estimate of ABRSD Elementary School Debt	\$ 2,906,270	\$ 3,051,000	\$ 3,036,000	\$ 3,057,000
Estimate of Minuteman Building Project Debt	\$ 335,426	\$ 531,404	\$ 570,572	\$ 550,000
SBAB Reimbursement	\$ 923,000	\$ 923,000	\$ 923,000	\$ 923,000
Add: Town Reserves (for capital)	\$ 1,163,738	\$ 1,150,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Acton Total Funding Sources	\$ 104,257,235	\$ 107,865,917	\$ 110,692,353	\$ 113,086,116
 <u>Allocation to Budgets</u>				
Municipal Budget	\$ 36,865,202	\$ 38,246,460	\$ 39,680,702	\$ 41,168,729
Municipal Budget % Change	2.80%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%
Estimate of North Acton Fire Station Debt	\$ 75,000	\$ 469,000	\$ 469,000	\$ 469,000
Total Municipal Budget	\$ 36,940,202	\$ 38,715,460	\$ 40,149,702	\$ 41,637,729
Municipal Budget % Change - With New Debt	3.01%	4.81%	3.70%	3.71%
ABRSD Assessment	\$ 62,677,779	\$ 65,478,000	\$ 68,436,000	\$ 71,740,000
ABRSD Assessment % Change	2.36%	4.47%	4.52%	4.83%
Estimate of ABRSD Elementary School Debt	\$ 2,906,270	\$ 3,051,000	\$ 3,036,000	\$ 3,057,000
Total ABRSD Assessment	\$ 65,584,049	\$ 68,529,000	\$ 71,472,000	\$ 74,797,000
ABRSD Assessment % Change - With New Debt	7.10%	4.49%	4.29%	4.65%
Minuteman Assessment	\$ 1,397,557	\$ 1,742,635	\$ 2,225,726	\$ 2,325,726
Minuteman Assessment % Change	20.07%	24.69%	27.72%	4.49%
Estimate of Minuteman Building Project Debt	\$ 335,426	\$ 531,404	\$ 570,572	\$ 550,000
Total Minuteman Assessment	\$ 1,732,983	\$ 2,274,039	\$ 2,796,298	\$ 2,875,726
Minuteman Assessment % Change - With New Debt	19.05%	31.22%	22.97%	2.84%
Total Acton Budgets	\$ 104,257,234	\$ 109,518,499	\$ 114,418,000	\$ 119,310,455
Net Position	\$ 0	\$ (1,652,582)	\$ (3,725,648)	\$ (6,224,339)

<u>Table 6 Data</u>	<u>FY21 ABRSD Revenues</u>	<u>FY22 ABRSD Revenues</u>	<u>FY23 ABRSD Revenues</u>	<u>FY24 ABRSD Revenues</u>
ABRSD Funding Sources:				
State Aid Ch.70	\$ 15,345,811	\$ 15,345,811	\$ 15,496,000	\$ 15,280,000
Transportation	\$ 2,097,225	\$ 2,097,225	\$ 2,097,225	\$ 2,097,225
Regional Bonus Aid & Misc Revenue	\$ 567,500	\$ 567,500	\$ 617,500	\$ 275,000
Charter School Aid	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 35,000
Excess & Deficiency (Acton share est. @ 84.8%)	\$ 966,000	\$ 995,000	\$ 845,000	\$ 432,480
Total	\$ 19,026,536	\$ 19,055,536	\$ 19,105,725	\$ 18,119,705

Additional OPEB Contribution	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000
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<u>Town of Acton - Tax Impact</u>	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>
Total Valuation ('000s)	\$ 4,789,129	\$ 4,930,282	\$ 5,076,863	\$ 5,229,169
Tax Rate	\$ 20.03	\$ 20.19	\$ 20.19	\$ 20.08
SF Value	\$ 631,171	\$ 650,106	\$ 669,609	\$ 689,697
% Change in SF Value	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	-
SF Tax Bill	\$ 12,640	\$ 13,124	\$ 13,520	\$ 13,847
% Change in SF Tax Bill	7.21%	3.83%	3.02%	2.41%
\$ Change in SF Tax Bill	\$ 850	\$ 484	\$ 396	\$ 326

ALG Minutes, September 24, 2020, 8:30 AM, Via Zoom

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Jon Benson and Dean Charter, BoS; John Petersen and Amy Krishnamurthy, SC; Christi Andersen and Christine Russell, FC; John Mangiaratti, Peter Light, Steve Barrett and Marie Altieri, staff.

Extra documents: Minutes, Agenda, ALG Ground Rules and Charter (revised 6.12), Town of Acton Multi-year plan

Regular Business

1. Review of ALG Charter and Ground Rules

Bart explained that the current ALG was not tied to the agreements of past ALG's ; each year started afresh.

However, there were rules governing the process principally the idea of consensus and what that means. Bart explained that all needed to agree and once such agreement was reached, ALG members took these agreements back to their boards for approval. If approval was not granted, the iterative process continues. Bart stressed that members needed to be "champions in good faith" for the agreements before their individual boards.

It was noted that the ground rules were done pre-regionalization and that several instances that change was not reflected. There was a general discussion on needed tweaks; the finance committee was concerned that they had no staff. Members realized that this version of the Charter and Ground Rules had been tweaked last session and the document before the committee did not reflect those changes.

Marie said she had a copy of from last session with the added tweaks; it was taking up too much time trying to gather in all the changes. She said she'd email her copy to the ALG so at the next meeting the members could review the document and make changes. It was agreed to work on the changes at the next meeting.

2. Minutes were accepted with some edits.

I. Special Business

3. FY 21 update

JM: last week did an update on FY 21. First quarter tax collections are at 97.8%. We haven't heard from the state as yet so we don't know the intended level of reimbursement and when it will come. As for expenses we are looking at them on a case by case level. Winter is coming and we need to get the DPW in position for the snow. We are being careful on spending and hiring. The Town and consultants are working on CARES and FEMA reimbursements to get as much as we can.

Bart: Any Questions

Christi: won't the CARES make up for the revenue loss?

JM: we don't know as yet. We are expecting directives from the Lt. Governor about the second round of payments.

CR: won't the Town be made whole again? Aren't there more things to submit?

JM: We are adding up everything. We will try to get those things covered by FEMA first and then do a package for CARES. We know that both Minuteman and ABRSD have costs that should be covered by CARES.

Jon: It can take up to 18 months to get money from FEMA. Will CARES money come faster?

SB: Some federal disaster funds can take anywhere from one – 15 years—we just have to hope in this case it won't take so long.

Peter: We are open for business. This is our second week of in person and remote. More parents at Gates have opted to do remote. Staffing has been constrained by the number of students allowed per room---10 -11 students per room. We want to make the remote classes as small as possible; on average 20 but some have 25. For in-person we've had to add 14.5 FTE at the elementary level.

It's early in the year for FY21 expenses. We have seen a small reduction in Ch. 70 aid. We level funded it at \$30/pupil. We have an application to the Fed allocation for \$115K under ESSER money for Chrome books for Grade 9. There is \$1.2 in COVID relief for the Town we have spoken with the state and had some productive conversations about CARES. We need to use all the money that's available. Right now we are projecting about \$500K beyond federal grants. We will have many more expenses and we need to maximize the use of federal money and not leave any on the table.

Jon: noted that there were other town areas that should be reimbursed through CARES. John P. noted that the Health Insurance Trust also had approximately \$150K in COVID expenses.

It was agreed that all the entities needed to work together to make sure that there was the maximum federal reimbursement possible.

5. Multi-year plan (which morphed into a discussion of CARES)

SB: the plan shows the expenses incurred from the September STM for the land purchase and the small business grants.

There is a mistake in FY 22 numbers which will be corrected by the next meeting. The model has \$0 untaxed levy; state and local aid at FY 20 levels; \$1.150K in reserves.

Marie, Brian and Dave Verdolino will work on the model for next meeting to get the school numbers in place and bring the town's up to date.

There were questions about the bonding for not only the schools but also for the North Acton fire station. The NAFS bonding will happen next spring---perhaps by March.

Christi asked that the debt numbers that are changing, like those of Minutemen be kept clearly visible on the model.

There was a general discussion on the timing for the ATM. All agreed that numbers would not be known by the first week in April nor could there be an outside section for the town meeting. After discussion the various needs for more exact budget numbers for the towns (Boxboro included) and schools to proceed, it was agreed that the ATM should be postponed to sometime in late May-early June before the 30th; most

probably on a Wednesday as that is the weekday for the least school activity. This change will also change the dates for the Finance committee/BoS hearings on the municipal budget and that of the ABRSC. It will help the schools get firmer numbers for state aid before they have to vote on their budget.

There was a pause of the meeting where people talked---off the record about town elections. Acton still needs to hold elections on the last Tuesday in March by charter which the selectmen cannot just change. The selectmen are capable of changing the ATM date which can be coordinated with Boxboro, if necessary.

Christi said that the position of the FC was to have no tax increase for this year. The FC also wanted to start as "cost-savings Committee" made up of school, town and FC members to look at how other towns were running various services and see what changes Acton could make to save money.

Bart: taking these suggestions one at a time. I am supposing that the no tax increase is a suggestion that will be discussed fully at subsequent meetings.

Christi: we are putting it out there as a suggestion

CR: for the committee, Steve Noone noted that there have been turn backs on the order of \$2.5 M and he thinks we can "sharpen our pencils" and make some budgetary cuts. It was noted that these suggestions were not FC votes but are still in discussion on the FC.

Christi: there was a cost savings committee before and the idea has strong support on the FC.

Dean: I was on town staff during the last cost savings committee and found that it did not do a lot of good. The services that could be shared between the town and schools are now shared. The committee members were well-intentioned but lacked an understanding of municipal finance; most were from the private sector; look at the last report; it took significant effort on the part of the administration and right now they just do not have the time.

AMY: I appreciate the idea but I'm not willing at this time to put pressure on the administration that's already over-taxed. They are already "moving mountains" just to get us through the days.

CR: with the history of turn-backs and the excess of reserves, we think that we should not have any tax increase.

Jon: I want to echo Amy; town staff is over-worked right now trying to get all the COVID expenses straight and get the most money back from the Feds.

SB: the turn-backs in recent years have not been from the budget but from actual revenues exceeding projected budgets. The budgeted turn-back for this year come from the hiring freeze put on in March. We have not filled vacant positions which we will have to get filled.

JP: we expect the use of reserves. The SC policy has been that the E&D is an estimated target. We can suspend that target and use more to minimize the downside. Taxes

reflect the whole economic situation; some bad things are happening. However we do not know what Acton will look in the next few months. If both state and federal revenues take a big drop and the bottom drops out---it's not a great idea at this time to tie us into a no tax position.

Christi: I will bring these comments to the FC and look forward to more discussion. It's difficult for everyone—0-and we need to work together to make it happen. The FC is in the early process of discussion and especially with the schools we need to recognize that 74% of town residents don't have kids in the schools.

Bart: This is just the start of this conversation and should be put on the next agenda.

6. School building update

Peter: On the good side the permitting is going in the right direction. We have settled with the CosCom and the bid packages are out.

We found that the soils were not suitable for the placement of the septic system which has had to be moved and redesigned. The costs will come from the contingency fund. Ninety % of the construction is before the state for review. By early December we should have a guaranteed price and start pouring cement.

Bart: questions?

Christi: will these changes be covered by the MSBA

Ans: largely not.

JP: In this kind of project, uncertainty is a sign of change and we realize that we will go through some challenges with the construction of the building.

7. North Acton Fire Station

JM: we intend to go to the market for long term bonds in the spring (March, perhaps). There is a wrecking crew now taking down the Fish and Wildlife building. We have all the permits in hand. We expect it to be a 12-month project.

8. Public---none

9. Scheduling

Next meeting: Oct 29, 8:30 AM via Zoom

Agenda items: Finish up ALG Charter and Ground Rules; Schedule for Annual Town Meeting; FC process; enact time line for due date of budget meetings, warrant printing etc.

Adjourned 10 AM

Ann Chang



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	5.c.iv
AGENDA ITEM TITLE	School Building Committee Update		
PRESENTER(S)	Peter Light		
SUMMARY OF TOPIC	Update on progress		

WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request formal action with a specific vote:
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:
	for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR
	with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.

SUGGESTED MOTION	
FOLLOW-UP	
APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	2 min.
ATTACHMENTS	Minutes from the Building Committee meeting

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ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Building Committee (SBC) Approved Minutes

Virtual Public Webinar Meeting

October 14, 2020

To attend: <https://abschools.zoom.us/j/97676739190>

7:00 p.m

Members Present: Mary Brolin; Adam Klein (*arr 7:45pm*); Amy Krishnamurthy; Peter Light (*left 7:40pm*); Peter Berry; Dennis Bruce; Bob Evans; Bill Hart; JD Head; Gary Kushner; David Martin; Lynne Newman (*arr 8:00pm*); Maria Neyland; Katie Raymond; Mac Reid Chris Whitbeck.

Members Absent: Marie Altieri; Jason Cole.

Other: Karen Coll; Representatives from Skanska: Chuck Adam, Sovathya Sar, Vincent Vadeboncoeur; Representative from Arrowstreet: Emily Grandstaff-Rice; Representatives from Consigli: Jody Staruk, Jeremiah Driscoll; members of the public.

1. Mary Brolin called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

2. Review of Detailed Design -- Chuck Adam/Emily Grandstaff-Rice/Jody Staruk

The construction documents are complete and have been shared with Consigli and Skanska. They will be uploaded to Project Dog on October 20th to be made available to bidders.

At the previous SBC meeting, the committee discussed a potential list of alternate items to be included in the bidding process. Based on those conversations, the working group compiled a list. Mary described the decision-making process in a memo that she shared with the committee. Of nine potential alternate items, five were not related to trade bids and could be considered later, and three were low-cost items that could be covered by the owner's contingency budget as part of the regular project. Funds have been freed up in that contingency budget as we have learned that some permit fees will be lower than expected. Peter Light and Acton Town Manager John Mangiaratti are hoping to finalize the permitting fees by mid-November.

The only remaining item left as an alternate was Item #EL04, the substitution of aluminum for copper in the distribution feeder conductors. Bill Hart had some concerns and would like to see this remain in the project.

3. Permits/Meetings with Acton Town Depts – Mary Brolin/Emily Grandstaff-Rice/Chuck Adam

The MBTA has issued a Memorandum of Understanding (MOA), which was required for construction on an abutting property. The MOA documents their requirements for working near the MBTA lines; it doesn't have much impact on our project as we will not actually interface with the lines, just abut them. Chuck has the insurance certificate required by the MBTA.

a. Board of Health

Two permits are not yet final, for the septic and the aquifer. The team is hoping to have final approval for the septic by October 16th. The geothermal wells are still under review. The town has decided that it is not necessary to review each well individually and will adjust their fees accordingly; they will only charge fees for the initial two test wells rather than charging a fee for each well.

b. Building Department

The Acton building department has asked for approvals of the rebar used in foundation footings, which is not typical of these projects. They have been very cooperative, and Chuck described this as 'equivalent to showing your work in math class.'

4. Schedule Updates – Chuck Adam

a. Overall Schedule

The project is still on schedule, and the team is ready to get started with construction in earnest.

b. MSBA

The MSBA is currently reviewing our 90% CD submission. The next submission will be the 100%-complete documents, which are to be submitted by the time we submit the GMP in early December. After the GMP has been awarded, we will set a final contract with MSBA. After that, MSBA involvement will be reduced, and will shift to construction oversight; a group will come out to walk the site every two months to understand the status of the project.

c. Bid Packages

All contractor bids will be determined before the GMP is finalized in early December.

5. Modular Update – Chuck Adam

The larger modular is completed and furniture can be moved into that space, although the building inspector is still waiting for final confirmation from the fire department. The HVAC for the smaller unit was damaged in transit and installation of a replacement is still four weeks out. In the meantime, Triumph will start providing electric heat at their cost by the end of next week, allowing us to have the building inspected. The walkways, canopies and ramps are complete.

6. Construction Updates – Consigli

Jeremiah Driscoll said that the export of 10,000 tons of soil has been completed. A rock crushing operation is underway, allowing rock found onsite to be used for structural fill. They are prepping the footings and foundations for the first two sections of the building that will be constructed. Rebar is being delivered and prepped for the early footings. They have had to pump out some water that had flooded into the site during recent rainstorms. They are also prepping for concrete to be poured for the foundations next week.

David Martin asked about periodic site visits. Mary can arrange visits but asked if members wanted to start those now or wait until some of the foundations are in. David would like to see the site now, and then again every couple of months. Mary will schedule visits in small groups to avoid quorum issues, and will work with Chuck, Jeremiah and Jay to set those up. Visitors will need to observe Covid protocols and to use hard hats.

7. Budget Update – Chuck Adam

Following the latest round of VE and finalization of the alternate list, Chuck projects that the project will be on budget; we will have additional information as more trade bids come in over the next several weeks. There have been a number of change orders, primarily to address site related issues. Committee members reviewed the construction contingency log. Changes totaling approximately \$1.25MM have already been

approved for items such as the septic relocation and redesign and the removal of arsenic-contaminated soil. There are approximately \$1.66MM in pending and potential charge requests; many of these items are under review for final cost or other information but are not considered optional. All change orders are referred to the design team and their consultants for review and signoff.

Chuck noted a few specific items on the list. One of the larger items (#25), for structural steel revisions, occurred because bids for this early package were sent out before the design was fully complete; the revisions were requested by the structural engineer. Another item (#23) may have some partial cost offset by the solar system vendor Nexamp; they had originally planned to install the PV system themselves but a decision was made not to bring them in as an additional onsite contractor so they helped to draw up plans for the construction team to install the system. One item (#26) is for the reduction in the number of geothermal wells required, and will result in a reduction in cost. Consigli is asking the SBC for \$10K for advance drilling in specific areas to identify issues such as ledge that may arise in the future.

Bill noted that item #23 is very expensive and asked why this wasn't included in the base plans. Chuck said the original estimates were based on drawings done at the time; now that the final drawings and engineering plans are complete, some details have been further defined. In addition, because the building will have power coming in from both Spruce St and Arlington St, Eversource is requiring underground power lines at our cost. Bill asked if Eversource should share the cost of this requirement, or if we could reduce the amount of undergrounding required. Chuck said that Eversource requires the lines to be underground from the street to the building; typically the utility covers the cost to bring utilities to the road, but the building owner pays to bring it to the building. Bill asked if this cost should have been factored into the budget at the outset. Some of the costs are not yet final and the total may be lower than \$389K; we have \$100K in the budget to cover this item.

8. Invoice Approval – Mary Brolin/ Chuck Adam

Chuck said that this month's invoice package is large. It includes three of the four anticipated modular construction invoices from Triumph; after this they will send monthly lease invoices in the amount of approximately \$12K/month for the next two years. The Arrowstreet construction documents are nearing completion. One invoice from Hartford Structural Inspections was for the abutters' review, required in case of damage to their properties caused by construction.

Peter Berry asked whether any of the subcontractors were minority firms. We are required to provide that information to the MSBA. Consigli will provide that information on a monthly basis and we will keep a record. Arrowstreet's contract also requires them to track that information and they are doing an evaluation to see where they are with this issue. Peter also asked whether there was any concern that the early actual cash flow had been much higher than projected. Chuck said that the projections were based on very early estimates, which will be revised with Consigli input. He noted that Consigli charges a flat monthly fee, which makes ongoing projections easier.

Bob Evans moved, David Martin seconded and, by a roll call vote, the invoice package in the amount of \$1,610,581.93 was unanimously approved for payment. (Yes: Berry, Brolin, Bruce, Evans, Hart, Head, Klein, Krishnamurthy, Kushner, Martin, Newman, Neyland, Raymond, Reid, Whitbeck. Absent: Altieri, Cole, Light.)

9. Minutes – Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting(s) – Mary Brolin

Members reviewed the draft minutes of the September 23rd SBC meeting. Peter Berry moved, Adam Klein seconded and, by a roll call vote, the minutes were unanimously approved as written. *(Yes: Berry, Brolin, Bruce, Evans, Hart, Head, Klein, Krishnamurthy, Kushner, Martin, Newman, Neyland, Raymond, Reid, Whitbeck. Absent: Altieri, Cole, Light.)*

10. Adjourn

There are conflicts with our usual November meeting dates due to Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. Mary proposed holding just one meeting that month, on November 18th. She has also asked members to hold three dates open in December as the GMP and final Project Funding Agreement are finalized, although two of the dates are tentative. The SBC will be required to vote to award the building contract based on the GMP. The hope is to vote on December 9th, with the December 2nd date held in case there are issues with the bids that require review; December 16th is held just in case the SBC isn't ready to vote earlier. After that, two meetings are scheduled in January, then one meeting per month starting in February.

Bill Hart moved, Adam Klein seconded and, by a roll call vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:14pm. *(Yes: Berry, Brolin, Bruce, Evans, Hart, Head, Klein, Krishnamurthy, Kushner, Martin, Newman, Neyland, Raymond, Reid, Whitbeck. Absent: Altieri, Cole, Light.)*

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Coll

Documents Used:

Memo – Alternates List
Construction and Site Update
Construction Contingency Log
2020-10-14 Budget Tracker and Invoice Package
Draft Minutes of the September 23, 2020 SBC Meeting

Next Building Committee Meetings (all meetings virtual until further notice):

October 28, 2020
November 18, 2020
December 2, 2020 -- Tentative
December 9, 2020
December 16, 2020 – Tentative
January 13, 2021
January 27, 2021
February 10, 2021
March 10, 2021



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	5.d
AGENDA ITEM TITLE	MASC Annual Meeting Resolutions for November 7, 2020		
PRESENTER(S)	Tessa McKinley		
SUMMARY OF TOPIC	The Committee choose Amy Krishnamurthy and alternate Adam Klein to represent the ABRSC and vote on the 10 resolutions presented by the Resolutions Committee. These resolutions were proposed by member districts and the MASC Board of Directors. ABRSC members were asked to let Tessa know if they wanted to specifically discuss any of the resolutions at this meeting.		

WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?	
	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information
X	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required
	Request formal action with a specific vote:
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:
	for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR
	with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.

SUGGESTED MOTION	
FOLLOW-UP	
APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	10 min.
ATTACHMENTS	Report of the MASC Resolutions Committee

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

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report of the resolutions committee

The members of the Resolutions Committee met virtually on June 25, 2020 to consider resolutions proposed by member districts and the MASC Board of Directors for consideration at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Association. Members present were: Ellen Holmes, Chair, Ex-Officio, Ashburnham-Westminster Regional; Deborah Davis, Northeast Metropolitan Voc. Tech.; Barbara Davis, Holbrook; Margaret Hughes, Narragansett Regional; Laura Fallon, Northampton; Irene Feliciano-Sims, Holyoke; William Fonseca, East Longmeadow; Jason Fraser, Silver Lake Regional; Beverly Hugo, Framingham; Mildred Lefebvre, Holyoke; Stacey Rizzo, Revere; Wendy Rua, Agawam; Lynn Ryan Assabet Voc. Tech.; Paul Schlichtman, Arlington; and Robert Swartz, Gardner.

The following resolutions were moved forward by the Resolutions Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

RESOLUTION 1: MCAS AND HIGH STAKES TESTING

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS the MASC Membership and MASC Board of Directors have previously and repeatedly taken the position of opposing high stakes testing including the MCAS; and

WHEREAS the COVID-19 Remote Learning Model has negatively and disproportionately affected students with learning disabilities, students of lower socioeconomic status, ELL students and students who identify as minorities; and

WHEREAS the social and emotional trauma both individually and collectively has yet to be truly realized in the students who have experienced the shutdown of their local school buildings and separations from their peers and supportive adults; and

WHEREAS the students of the Commonwealth have already missed valuable face to face instructional opportunities with their teachers and would benefit from focusing on those important instructional opportunities and social emotional supports;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC rejects the calls for the students of 2022 who missed their tenth grade MCAS testing to be required to make it up during the 2020-2021 school year or ever. We demand those students be held harmless for not taking the MCAS and that their graduation requirements shall be determined by locally controlled voices of the School Committee and School Administration within the remaining graduation requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Additionally, we reiterate our call for a moratorium on all high stakes testing for the 2020-2021 school year so all students can benefit from their time being focused on direct instruction and we urge the legislature to enact a moratorium on high stakes testing of three years.

RESOLUTION 2: COVID-19 STATE FUNDING

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS if schools are to re-open this fall in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the responsibility of each school district to do so safely and responsibly; and

WHEREAS it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that each school district is able to pay for the enormous additional staffing, transportation and material expenses required to do this; and

WHEREAS the state cannot expect mandatory COVID-19 safety guidelines to be followed without also ensuring that each school district has the funds required to implement these guidelines;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the state must guarantee every school district full reimbursement for whatever COVID-19 expenses are required to follow state mandates. We must ensure a statewide school re-opening that is safe, responsible and equitable. There can be no unfunded mandates for COVID-19.

RESOLUTION 3: SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS as schools have the responsibility to equip students with their civil right of obtaining a free and appropriate public education, it is the responsibility of each school to ensure we create a welcoming community for ALL students; and

WHEREAS it is the responsibility that every district provide to all district staff, including School Committee members, annual professional development on diversity, equity and inclusion; and

WHEREAS every district will commit to recruiting and retaining a diverse and culturally responsive teaching workforce; and

WHEREAS every district will examine their policies for institutional and systemic racialized practices and implement change with sustainable policies that are evidence based; and

WHEREAS every district will incorporate into their curriculum the history of racial oppression and works by black authors and works from diverse perspectives; and

WHEREAS we as school district leaders can no longer remain silent to the issues of racism and hate that continue to plague our public and private institutions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all the school districts in the Commonwealth should guarantee that racist practices are eradicated, and diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded and practiced for our students, families, faculty and staff.

School Committee members should ensure our that school culture and that of every district in the Commonwealth is anti-racist, and that acknowledges that all lives cannot matter until black lives matter.

RESOLUTION 4: LOWERING THE VOTING AGE FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS the right to vote is elemental to democracy and that right should be protected and guaranteed to all qualified citizen; and

WHEREAS sixteen and seventeen-year-olds possess the same critical analytic intelligence as eighteen-year-olds; and

WHEREAS in Massachusetts, sixteen-year-olds have been deemed able to consent to sexual intercourse, obtain a learner's permit and driver's license, get married with parental consent, work a full-time job and pay taxes, and be tried as an adult in a court of law; and

WHEREAS the 2018 Act to Promote Civics Engagement mandated an increased emphasis on civics education in Massachusetts Public Schools; and

WHEREAS studies conducted in places with a voting age of 16 have demonstrated that, when partnered with a strong civics education, a lowered voting age results in higher overall civic engagement and voter turnout and higher propensity to develop a lifelong voting habit; and

WHEREAS early voter engagement increases civic participation later in life, which is vital to a democracy; and

WHEREAS turnout among all voters in the United States is decreasing, and a push to vote is much needed for younger citizens; and

WHEREAS 16-year-olds may now pre-register to vote in Massachusetts, which may provide a logistical framework for their local participation; and

WHEREAS the rules of local voting should be a local issue; and

WHEREAS Representative Andy Vargas and Senator Harriet Chandler have introduced the EMPOWER Act (H.720/S.389), which would give municipalities the ability to lower their municipal voting age on local authority;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the sponsors call upon the Massachusetts Legislature to pass the EMPOWER Act and take other means necessary to allow cities and towns to establish a minimum voting age of sixteen years for all municipal elections.

RESOLUTION 5: SUPPORTING INCREASED FEDERAL SUPPORT AND STIMULUS FUNDING FOR PUBLIC K-12 EDUCATION

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic is a monumental and unprecedented challenge, emerging quickly and demanding an immediate overhaul of the instructional plans and strategies of school systems across the country; and

WHEREAS the nation's public schools remain committed to delivering high-quality instruction while ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff; and

WHEREAS to date, the employees of the Massachusetts Public Schools have worked around the clock to continue to provide our students and families with access to educational needs such as Chromebooks; and

WHEREAS the Massachusetts Public Schools has maintained payroll for full and part-time district employees, providing stability to our community during economic uncertainty; and

WHEREAS Massachusetts Public Schools have continued to provide daily lunches to students despite a projected shortfall of revenue from the Federal Meals Program; and

WHEREAS these challenges will persist and likely grow as COVID-19 affects our economy and destabilizes funding for public school; and

WHEREAS revenue shortfalls may result in budget cuts and personnel reductions; and

WHEREAS federal legislation has been approved to provide urgently needed funding to underwrite the recovery of the American economy and to support critical public programs, including public education with such examples as American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, additional funding for the Education Jobs Fund to help school districts retain existing employees, recall former employees, and hire new ones, and the recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) and other measures to stabilize public education and other public programs; and

WHEREAS public education is one of the largest employment bases of any field or industry; and

WHEREAS research has repeatedly found a strong causal relationship between levels of schooling and wages that individuals earn over a lifetime; and

WHEREAS for public schools to thrive and for our students to realize a bright and productive future, the federal government needs to make a substantial new investment in our well-being; and

WHEREAS it is likely that further emergency legislation will be required to underwrite the cost of public safety supplies, technology, and personnel to maintain the status of public schools; and

WHEREAS this level of funding is the minimum needed by the nation's public schools to sustain and accelerate their academic achievement trends over the past decade, including gains in reading and math achievement that outpace the national average; and

WHEREAS the governor and General Court may be able to access additional state revenues through use of accumulated reserves or through the implementation of progressive tax legislation;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC align with state superintendents of schools and urge the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation and state legislators to advocate for and approve additional education funding for our nation's public schools through the enactment of progressive tax legislation.

RESOLUTION 6: RETENTION OF MEDICAID REVENUE (Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS the Affordable Care Act expanded access for health care to millions of Americans, including thousands of Massachusetts families who have been without health insurance; and

WHEREAS through the expansion of the Medicaid program, more families in economic distress gained access to health insurance and, subsequently, affordable health care; and

WHEREAS the Medicaid program reimburses public school districts for certain clinical services provided to students who may be clients of special education or who experience disabilities, and this revenue provides critical support to the districts and municipalities where they are based; and

WHEREAS the restriction of Medicaid eligibility and reduction of funding would require the Commonwealth to choose between extraordinary state budget increases to fill the gap or absorb the cost of caring for families who could lose health insurance;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC urges the General Court to require that 100% of Medicaid reimbursements to cities and towns be provided in full amount to the public schools of each municipality, through a school district revolving account, to underwrite the cost of providing an adequate education.

RESOLUTION 7: ATTEMPTS BY US DOE TO DIRECT FUNDING TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS (Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS a recent "advisory" issued by the United States Secretary of Education has inappropriately interpreted language in the recently enacted COVID-19 relief legislation to benefit private schools disproportionately in the distribution of federal funding for economically disadvantaged students; and

WHEREAS in recognition of this executive branch attempt to overreach in the interpretation of a federal statute in devising a formula for the distribution of funds under Title I and other provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as revised and reauthorized; and

WHEREAS the commissioner of Education in Connecticut, in citing the Secretary for such a misrepresentation of the law, has advised officials of that state to follow the language of the law rather than the interpretation issued in the "advisory," and thus save thousands of dollars for economically disadvantaged students in the public schools of that state

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC petition the Attorney General of Massachusetts to review and recommend to the Executive Office of Education and the MA Department of Elementary Education to review the formal language of such statutes that determine the distribution of federal funds to benefit economically disadvantaged students and, further that the Attorney General provide legal guidance to state agencies in Massachusetts to implement such formulas based on the actual language and legislative intent of the statute should that be in variance with any "advisory" issued by the United States Secretary of Education.

RESOLUTION 8: MEMBERSHIP OF A SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ON THE BOARD OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION (Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) is established to oversee and implement policy related to public education; and

WHEREAS most boards and commissions in Massachusetts appropriately include representatives of constituent groups subject to the jurisdiction of those boards and commission; and

WHEREAS a glaring omission among members of the BESE is a representative of the people elected to oversee public policy making among the many city, town and regional school district school committees;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC submit to the General Court proposed legislation that MGL Chapter 15, Section 1E be revised as follows:

Section 1E. There shall be in the department a board of elementary and secondary education, in this chapter called the board, which shall consist of the chairman of the student advisory council established under this section, the secretary of education, in this chapter called the secretary, or her designee, and 9 members appointed by the governor. The 9 members appointed by the governor shall consist of 1 representative of a labor organization selected by the governor from a list of 3 nominees provided by the Massachusetts State Labor Council, AFL-CIO; 1 representative of business or industry selected by the governor with a demonstrated

commitment to education; 1 representative of parents of school children selected by the governor from a list of 3 nominees provided by the Massachusetts Parent Teachers Association; 1 representative from a school committee from a list of three nominees provided by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and 5 additional members.

RESOLUTION 9: PROVIDING EQUITY FOR SEXUAL ORIENTATION - LGBTQ+ STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND STAFF

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS gender identity is not listed as a protected class in federal laws; and

WHEREAS LGBTQ+ students, teachers and staff are victims of discrimination, harassment, and at-risk behaviors at rates alarmingly higher than non-LGBTQ+ persons;

WHEREAS the social and emotional wellness of our students has a direct relationship with their academic and future success and that schools have the moral and ethical responsibility to address the whole child so that they may experience success in school and in society; and

WHEREAS school districts that respect and support their teachers and staff by providing an inclusive culture where all can thrive, irrespective of gender identity, are more successful and in turn, are supporting a thriving school climate; and

WHEREAS the Commonwealth of Massachusetts currently recognizes in state law LGBTQ+ as a protected class;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC file legislation and petition our federal legislative delegation to also file legislation which would have the effect of adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes in order to provide equity and support to our LGBTQ+ students, teachers and staff and petition our legislative delegation.

RESOLUTION 10: RELATIVE TO THE MONITORING OF ATTENDANCE OF STUDENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

(Submitted by the MASC Board of Directors)

WHEREAS districts are required to have special but comprehensive plans for educating students during the pandemic crisis; and

WHEREAS student attendance is an important element of a district plan for returning-to-school, and school committees apply local policies for student attendance; and

WHEREAS the emergency nature of the pandemic requires that students may need to be educated in such venues as schools, home, institutions or other remote locations; and

WHEREAS circumstances may require that students be absent from school for reasons that may include extended illness, exposure to illness including COVID-19, or the judgment of parents or guardians determining that it is not safe for their children to return to a school building or other learning venue;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC advocate for legislation and regulation that protect the rights of parents to withhold their children from school for reasons of their health status or health risk and, further,

- That MASC advocate for regulations that hold districts accountable for the attendance of students provide appropriate exemptions for students who experience or require extended absences from school due to health-related issues or concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and further,
- That MASC petition the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to waive all accountability requirements regarding attendance for the 2020-2021 school year, and
- That such regulations exempt districts from sanction status on the basis of attendance when such absences are related to a public health crisis, including COVID-19.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	6
AGENDA ITEM TITLE	Statement of Warrants and Recommendation to Approve		
PRESENTER(S)	Tessa McKinley		
SUMMARY OF TOPIC	Warrants are the listing of all payments made by the school district for the period, including payroll, vendors and others. The School Committee approves these at every meeting.		

WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?	
	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information
	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required
X	Request formal action with a specific vote:
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:
	for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR
X	with the request that the School Committee take action immediately

If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.

SUGGESTED MOTION	See motion in memo in the packet from D. Verdolino
FOLLOW-UP	
APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)	2 min
ATTACHMENTS	Summary memo from D. Verdolino in the addendum and posted folder of individual warrants

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road - Acton, MA 01720
www.abschools.org

Finance Department
David A. Verdolino, Director
(978) 264-4700
dverdolino@abschools.org

October 30, 2020

To: School Committee Chair
From: Dave Verdolino /dav/
Re: School Committee Agenda - Warrants

Members –

Below please find a summary of warrants for which I am respectfully requesting your consideration and approval at tonight's regular meeting.

The Warrant Subcommittee has previously reviewed these warrants, for the purpose of check distribution. A majority of the Subcommittee conveyed their approval electronically and the related disbursements have been made. The full School Committee should vote its authorization of these expenditures of budgeted and other funds in its custody. All members have received for each warrant the information provided as shown below, namely:

1. (for vendor warrants, including payroll withholding remittances)
 - Declining balance register of payments ("Declining Dollar report")
 - Warrant detail (payments by vendor)
2. (payroll)
 - Payroll Warrant summary

As you know, these Warrants are customarily provided to you in hard copy format for your review and manual signature. Obtaining your approval in this manner will eliminate the future need to produce what could be many paper reports, all requiring your signatures.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation with this request.

<u>Warrant Type</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Warrant #</u>		<u>Amount</u>
PAYROLL	10/22/2020	P2109	\$	2,700,065.41
VENDOR	10/8/2020	21-008 (regular vendors)	\$	1,037,273.08
	10/15/2020	21-009PR (PR deductions)	\$	1,110,620.33



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Recommended Motion Wording

I move that the School Committee vote to approve:

Payroll warrant(s) as follows –

Number P2109 dated 10/22/2020 in the amount of \$2,700,065.41;

Payroll deduction warrant(s) as follows –

Number 21-009PR dated 10/22/2020 in the amount of \$1,110,620.33;

Vendor warrant(s) as follows –

Number 21-008 dated 10/15/2020 in the amount of \$1,037,273.08.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE	11-05-20	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	7
AGENDA ITEM TITLE	For Your Information (FYI)		
PRESENTER(S)	The Chairperson and/or Superintendent may highlight individual items		
SUMMARY OF TOPIC	A variety of items may be found in the FYI: announcements, awards, publicity, reference materials, etc. that do not need discussion.		
WHAT ACTION (if any) DO YOU WISH SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO TAKE?			
X	No action requested - this is a short update or presentation of information		
	Request input and questions from the School Committee, but no vote required		
	Request formal action with a specific vote:		
	If formal action is requested, is this item being presented:		
		for the first time, with a request that the School Committee vote at a subsequent meeting OR	
		with the request that the School Committee take action immediately	
<i>If formal action is requested, include a suggested motion or contact Beth Petr.</i>			
SUGGESTED MOTION			
FOLLOW-UP			
APPROX. TIME FOR THE AGENDA ITEM (MIN.)			
ATTACHMENTS	various		

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ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
2020-2021

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee meetings are usually held on the first and third Thursdays of the month, at 7:00 p.m. in the Administration Building Auditorium. Materials are posted at https://www.abschools.org/school_committee/meetings_agendas_packets_minutes usually on the Friday night prior to each meeting. Meeting agendas are posted at least 48 hours prior on the calendar at www.abschools.org per the Open Meeting Law.

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Summer Business Meetings: July 1, August 13, August 27 (if needed)
Annual Training and Workshop: July 30

September 3
September 17

October 1
October 15

October 29 Workshop
November 5
November 19

December 3
December 17

January 7
January ~~21~~²³ **School Committee Budget Saturday**
~~(Preliminary Budget must be prepared at least 20 days prior to final Budget Adoption.)~~

February 4 **Open Budget Hearing** - required by law
(Final Budget must be adopted not later than 45 days prior to start of Acton Town Meeting, 4/ /2021 . 45 days =)

February 11

March 4 Comprehensive FY22 Budget & Program Presentations
March 18
March 25 Final VOTE on FY22 Budget

April 1
April 15

May 6
May 20

June 10
June 17

Note: Acton Town Meeting begins ? , 2021. Boxborough Town Meeting begins May , 2021. 10/30/20

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This Month in the Division of Open Government October 2020

Good afternoon,

We are writing to share updates from the Attorney General's Division of Open Government.

Included in this month's edition:

- [Training Opportunities](#)
- [Guidance Spotlight: Change of Meeting Access Information](#)
- [Recent OML Determination Highlights](#)

Please pass along the information below to your constituencies and to anyone else who might be interested.

As always, you are welcome to contact us at [\(617\) 963-2540](tel:6179632540) or OpenMeeting@mass.gov with any Open Meeting Law questions.

The Division of Open Government is currently working remotely. We request that all correspondence, including Open Meeting Law complaints, public body responses, and requests for review, be sent by email whenever possible.

In partnership,

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Training Opportunities

Tuesday, November 10, 2020, 9:30am EST

Click here to register:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3988269932417672715>

Unable to participate in a live training?

Training videos, which feature similar content as live trainings, are available on our website.

Visit: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/open-meeting-law-training-videos>.

Guidance Spotlight: Change of Meeting Access Information

This month, we discuss what to do if remote access information for a meeting must change from what was included on the original meeting notice.

We begin with a little background. On March 12, the Governor issued an executive order temporarily suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and the Attorney General's Open Meeting Law regulations, including the requirement to hold meetings in locations that are physically accessible to the public. Instead, a public body may provide the public with real time access to its meeting through "adequate, alternative means," such as though telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing technology.

A public body's meeting notice must include the "location" of the meeting. If public access will be provided via remote means, rather than through physical attendance, the notice must include clear instructions for accessing the meeting in lieu of a physical location. The notice must either include meeting access information (e.g. Zoom link, teleconference line, streaming location, television channel, etc.) or clear instructions for obtaining the access information.

For a variety of reasons, the "location" of a meeting, whether in-person or remote, may need to change after the meeting notice is posted. Just as with a change in physical meeting location, when a situation arises that necessitates changing the remote access information for a meeting, the public body must provide reasonable notice of the "location" change to the public. The public body should post an amended meeting notice if that would provide meaningful notice to the public (for example, posting an updated notice an hour before the meeting, likely would not be fruitful, but if it is more than 48 hours before the meeting, posting an updated notice would likely be sufficient). Additionally, any member of the public who attempts to access the meeting using the original access information should be redirected if possible. The public body should also publicize the new access information through whatever channels it uses to communicate with the public and distribute its meeting notices, such as list serves, automated email notifications, social media platforms and online messaging boards, as well as provide rapid response to any email or phone inquiries from the public regarding access to the meeting. Whenever a meeting location must change, whether in-person or remote, a public body must provide meaningful and timely notice to the public of the change in meeting location. If a public body is unable to provide such notice, it may need to reschedule its meeting, allowing for 48 hours' notice to the public.

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- **OML 2020-102** New Marlborough Cable Advisory Committee
- **OML 2020-95** Richmond School Committee
- **OML 2017-152** Charlton Water & Sewer Commission

Our recent determinations about meeting minutes, along with all of our other determinations, can be found on our website at <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>.

Recent OML Determination Highlights

OML 2020-138 – Violation found where a public body held a meeting by Zoom and failed to announce the names of the public body members participating remotely, as required by the Open Meeting Law regulations. We acknowledge that the display of a sign/notation containing the required information may satisfy this requirement (as in the case of a sign notifying the public that a meeting is being recorded, in lieu of an announcement), but here, where each participant's name was displayed on screen in their individual Zoom tile but there were many other Zoom participants and there was no indication of who was a public body member, the requirement was not satisfied.

OML 2020-132 – Violation found where a meeting notice stated "LOCATION: Virtual Zoom Meeting," and did not include any information that would allow a member of the public to access the meeting, such as a link to the Zoom meeting, nor clear instructions for how to obtain such information.

OML 2020-139 – No violation found where a member of a public body responded to a post by a member of the public in a town-wide Facebook group with nearly 3,000 members, including a quorum of the public body. The Open Meeting Law prohibits deliberation outside of a meeting, but does not prohibit members of public bodies from communicating with the public.

Open Meeting Law determinations may be found at the Attorney General's website, <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>



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teaches three simple steps anyone can
learn to help save a life.

As a QPR-trained Gatekeeper you will learn to:

- Recognize the warning signs of suicide
- Know how to offer hope
- Know how to get help and save a life



We are unable to record QPR training sessions.
To sign up for one of the QPR sessions listed below,
scan the QR code or click here: bit.ly/ABQPR.



ONLINE Training Dates and Times:

Thursday, November 19, 2020.....	10:00-11:30am
Tuesday, January 5, 2021.....	7:00-8:30pm
Wednesday, February 24, 2021.....	1:00-2:30pm
Thursday, March 25, 2021.....	7:00-8:30pm
Monday, April 26, 2021.....	10:00-11:30am
Wednesday, June 2, 2021.....	7:00-8:30pm

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SUICIDE ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN AND SUPPORT ALL WHO ARE IMPACTED BY SUICIDE.