



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720

978-264-4700

www.abschools.org

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting

June 8, 2023 Executive Session 6:30 p.m./ Open Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Administration Building Auditorium To view only: <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Ben Bloomenthal, Tori Campbell, Liz Fowlks, Lakshmi Kaja, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer (7:00 p.m.), Vikram Parikh, Leela Ramachandran, Yanxin Schmidt, Andrew Schwartz, Rebecca Wilson

Members Absent: none

Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis (7:30 p.m.), Peter Light, Beth Petr

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The ABRSC was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Adam Klein.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairperson stated the need to meet in Executive Session for two reasons.

Ben Bloomenthal moved, Liz Fowlks seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: to enter into executive session pursuant to MGL Ch 30A, sec.21(a) Purpose 3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Acton-Boxborough Office Support Association (ABOSA) and American Federal of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee.

(YES: Bloomenthal, Campbell, Fowlks, Kaja, Klein, Parikh, Ramachandran, Schmidt, Schwartz, Wilson)

Ben Bloomenthal moved, Rebecca Wilson seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by roll call: to also enter into executive session pursuant to MGL Ch 30A section 21 (a) purpose (2): to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Superintendent).

(YES: Bloomenthal, Campbell, Fowlks, Kaja, Klein, Parikh, Ramachandran, Schmidt, Schwartz, Wilson)

The Chairperson announced that the Committee would return to Open Meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN MEETING at 7:30 p.m.

Members of the public were invited to watch the meeting online using Acton tv's youtube channel. The Chairperson noted that the meeting was being recorded and would be posted on Acton TV's website at actontv.org.

2. **CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME** - *Adam Klein*

- a. Presentation of John F. Conway Distinguished Service Award to David Verdolino - *Margaret Driscoll, Exec. Dir., Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) and Ken Pedicini of KenMark/Visual Edge IT*
Dave Verdolino was presented with this distinguished award after being nominated by the Superintendent for his work moving the district forward, and in particular his leadership of the important bond work that saved the community significant money. Dave thanked his team and everyone he has worked with in the District.
- b. ABRHS Student Representative Update - *Molly Norris, Diksha Mhatre, Julia Zhou*
Rohan Ravindran and Harshini Magesh graduated last week and were thanked for their service to the Committee. Molly, Diksha and Julia were also thanked and have been a wonderful addition to this year's meetings. Good luck to all!
- c. Public Participation
A citizen shared his neighborhood's concern about the battery boxes that are found near the schools and wooded areas around Acton. He advocated for separating solar panel arrays from ESS boxes because in his opinion, they can be dangerous because they contain lithium batteries and can explode.
- d. Superintendent's Update - *Peter Light*
Marie Altieri and David Verdolino were thanked for their many years of service. Marie retires at the end of June and David retires at the end of July.
Mr. Light updated everyone on: Recent Achievements, Pride Month, AB Schools Featured in National Education Publication for Sustainability Effort and the STEAM/Makerspace activities at all of our schools.
- e. Approval of Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund (ABSAF) Donation -
VOTE - *Marie Altieri*
The Chairperson took the ABSAF Donation out of order at the start of the meeting due to the number of students in the audience. Marie Altieri introduced the ABSAF members and thanked them for their years of dedicated support of the District. Marie was presented with flowers for her many years of serving as the Administration's liaison to ABSAF.

Vikram Parikh moved, Ben Bloomenthal seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the ABSAF Donation of \$48,000 with thanks.

3. **GUESTS AND PRESENTATIONS (8:00)**

- a. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Report - *Amanda Bailey, Abraham Gutierrez, and Kara Lafferty*

The Co-Chairs presented on SEPAC's Mission: To ensure understanding, respect, support, and the appropriate education of all children in our community. They reviewed their role regarding policies, programs, practices and services. Their focus on outreach and community building has been significant this year and includes: the ABRHS Accessibility Alliance, Autism Listening Sessions, and Community Education, among other accomplishments. Members were invited to SEPAC's Annual Meeting on June 14th. SEPAC's leadership was thanked for all of their hard work. Their input is very much appreciated at the Committee meetings.

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Approval of ABRHS Handbook Changes - First Read - *Joanie Dean*

Principal Dean reviewed the substantive changes being proposed. A summary of the School Committee's role in developing and approving the High School Students' Handbook was shared, including review of policy CHCA - Approval of Handbooks and Directives. Mr. Light added that he always reminds School Committee members not to wordsmith the Handbook. He encouraged members to let the School Council work on the tone as changes are made. The FY24 Handbook will be voted at the next meeting.

Members asked questions about how absences are handled, and the tight schedule and the challenge some kids have getting to class on time. Given the Open Campus, the Administration needs to be sure they are providing enough structure and guidance for students. More practices are being included in the handbook now. The restorative justice model being used interested the Committee. Even when someone goes through a restorative process it doesn't mean there are no consequences. It is important to understand the why. A member appreciated the shift in tone. Restorative justice also requires preventative practices and interventions must be appropriate. Principal Dean stressed the importance of prevention, although it "may not be obvious in the handbook".

- b. Building Project Borrow Update - *David Verdolino*

Dave Verdolino explained the need to borrow \$5M to have the cash on hand to pay the bills for the Boardwalk Campus Project completion. This would avoid having to borrow on an emergency basis. See slides. Next steps include:

- July 11 – Competitive sale; receive bids on Note
- July 14-17 – Bond Counsel delivers documents to District
- July 18 – School Committee votes to approve sale & sign
- July 24 – Executed Note docs returned to Bond Counsel
- July 27 – District receives Note proceeds (one-year term)

Dave will ask the Committee to vote on this at their meeting on July 19. He will find out if the Committee will need to vote every year on this, although it would be perfunctory.

- c. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Field Trip to Costa Rica, February 16-23, 2024 - **VOTE** - *Adam Klein*

George Arsenault, Director of Performing Arts described the trip which would bring kids to an amazing place for a special arts experience. The trip has been made before covid. Trip insurance will be purchased. Funding is through families and fundraising, with financial support if students need it.

Vikram Parikh moved, Leela Ramachandran seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve the ABRHS Field Trip to Costa Rica.

- d. Thrive Act Resolution - **VOTE** - *Liz Fowlks*

Because additional information has been received, Liz requested that this be considered at another time. Members agreed.

- e. Site Host Agreement and License for Massachusetts Commercial Electric Vehicle Charging Program Eversource Energy - **VOTE** - *Adam Klein*

Peter gave a brief summary of the need for this Agreement. An experienced contract attorney assisted the District with this document. It is not related to the battery arrays mentioned by the public speaker. Eversource has been a partner on this project from the beginning. The District owns the actual vehicle chargers, and Eversource will install them. This is part of the building project, not the operating budget.

Andrew Schwartz moved, Vikram Parikh seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to authorize the Superintendent to sign the Site Host Agreement and License for the Massachusetts Commercial Electric Vehicle Charging Program with Eversource Energy as found on page 55 of the packet.

- f. Superintendent's Annual Summative Review - *Adam Klein*

- i. Motion: Move to Accept the Annual Summative Review for Superintendent Peter Light dated 6/8/23 as presented - **VOTE** - *Adam Klein*
Adam Klein read the Summative Review.

Ben Bloomenthal moved, Tori Campbell seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to accept the Annual Summative Review for Superintendent Peter Light dated 6/8/23 as presented.

Mr. Light thanked the staff and the Committee for all of their hard work.

- ii. Discussion of Superintendent's FY24 Salary

The Committee met in Executive Session earlier that night to discuss salary and then met with Mr. Light. Other staff received a 2.25% increase for next year and members felt it was reasonable for the Superintendent to be given that as well.

The Committee plans to review and evaluate his contract in the fall. They will meet with the Superintendent early next year.

- iii. Motion: Move to set the Superintendent's salary at \$240,124 for FY24 (2.25% increase) and record the FY24 salary in Addendum I of Mr. Light's contract - **VOTE** - *Adam Klein*

Ben Bloomenthal moved, Yanxin Schmidt seconded and it was unanimously **VOTED**: to set the Superintendent's salary at \$240,124 for FY24 (2.25% increase) and record the FY24 salary in Addendum I of Mr. Light's contract.

4. **ONGOING BUSINESS**

a. Subcommittee and Members' Report

- i. **Community Engagement Sub** - *Andrew Schwartz - no meeting*
Policy Sub - *Ginny Kremer - no meeting*
School Resource Officer (SRO) Sub - *Adam Klein*

A website will be created for the community to share the sub's work and plans. A community survey was done recently. Subgroups are forming that will research specific areas. Membership will be reviewed in the fall and will focus on the identified tasks leading to a recommendation to the School Committee. It is hoped that the required Acton Police MOU will be done by December of next year. Final minutes are to be voted. Mr. Light noted that the School Committee needs to reserve ample time for this discussion next year because if the SRO program doesn't continue, an alternative would be needed and that would take significant time to develop. Schools are required by law to have an SRO program so this process needs to be completed. Counsel was consulted when the District decided to proceed as they have.

Negotiations Update (ABOSA and AFSCME) - *Marie Altieri*

The teachers' contract was settled earlier this year. Negotiations have been taking place with the other two unions. A tentative agreement has been reached with ABOSA (AB Office Support Association) and agreement is close with the AFSCME (Custodians). Both contracts expire June 30. Marie expects to bring new contracts back to the Committee at a short meeting on June 22 at 7pm.

b. Consent Agenda/Action Items - **VOTE** - *Adam Klein*

- i. Approval of ABRSC Meeting Minutes of 5/18/23
Ben Bloomenthal moved, Vikram Parikh seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve the minutes of 5/18/23.
- ii. Approval of all remaining FY23 subcommittee minutes
Ginny Kremer moved, Ben Bloomenthal seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the remaining FY23 subcommittee minutes including the School Resource Officer subcommittee minutes brought to the meeting and the addition of the List of Documents Used for the Capital Improvements Subcommittee meeting of 2/13/23.

- c. Statement of Warrants and Recommendation to Approve - **VOTE** - *Adam Klein*
Rebecca Wilson moved, Ben Bloomenthal seconded and it was unanimously
VOTED: to approve the warrants (see memo for wording).

5. **FYI**

- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Revised Plan -
Mr. Light noted that this is a significant document. It was done under the guidance of Jen Faber, and included SEPAC's Amanda Bailey. These procedures are always heavily reviewed by the attorneys.
- ABRSC Meetings for 2023-2024
- FY24 ABRSC Members
- Monthly Student Enrollment - 6/1/23

NEXT MEETINGS: June 22nd to ratify contracts and July 19th for the ABRSC Workshop

6. **ADJOURN** (9:00)

Leela Ramachandran moved, Ben Bloomenthal seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED to adjourn the ABRSC at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: Agenda, Agenda item summary pages, High School Handbook Approval Memo from P. Light 6/2/23, Proposed ABRHS Handbook Changes 23-24 memo and slides from J. Dean 6/2/23, Building Project Debt Status Update memo and slides from D. Verdolino 6/2/23, ABRHS Costa Rica Field Trip Form and Tour Schedule from G. Arsenault 6/2/23, ABRSC Student Field Trip policy IJOA and procedures IJOA-R, Thrive Act Resolution Proposal Request for support from L. Fowlks 6/8/23, MTA (MA Teachers Association) Memo re MA Bill H.495 Thrive Act, Site Host Agreement and License MA Commercial Electric Vehicle Charging Program Eversource Energy (Execution Version) including Exhibits A, B and C, Summative Review of Superintendent Peter Light from K. Cook and A. Klein 6/8/23, ABRSC Draft Meeting Minutes of 5/18/23 from B. Petr, Budget Subcommittee Draft Minutes of Apr 24, 2023, Capital Improvement Subcommittee Draft Minutes of Apr 26, 2022 and Feb 13, 2023, School Resource Officer Subcommittee Draft Minutes of Jun 6, 2023, Warrant Memo from D. Verdolino 6/2/23, Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (File: JICFB-R) Review from J. Faber 5/31/23, ABRSC 2023-2024 Meetings and Members, Monthly Student Enrollment 6/1/23