

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING  
Minutes (approved 5/18/17)

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

April 27, 2017  
7:00 p.m.

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*Members Present:* Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Kristina Rychlik, Eileen Zhang  
*Members Absent:* Diane Baum, Maya Minkin, Deanne O'Sullivan  
*Others:* Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Glenn Brand, Beth Petr

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1. The ABRSC was called to order by Chairperson Mary Brolin at 7:02 p.m.
2. **Chairman's Introduction – Mary Brolin**
  - 2.1. Annual Spring Town Elections
    - Acton Election Results – Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin and Paul Murphy were reelected
    - Boxborough Election is May 16
  - 2.3 Thank you to Retiring School Committee member Maria Neyland  
Mary Brolin paid tribute to Maria who has been on the School Committee from Boxborough for 11 years, including serving on the Negotiations, Policy, and Budget Subcommittees for many years as a “passionate, informed and caring” member. Many of the Committee members spoke about Maria’s many contributions and how much she helped them be better members. Dr. Brand thanked Maria for all of her efforts and dedication as a volunteer, visibly and invisibly.  
  
Maria thanked the Committee and stated that she loves the work and will miss it and the people. She thanked her family and said that she could not have done it without the support of her husband and children for the past 11 years. She urged the Committee to remember that they do this for the kids that come through the school doors every day.
3. **Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes**
  - 3.1. The minutes of the ABRSC meetings of 4/3/17 (pre Acton Town Meeting), 3/16/17, 2/16/17 and 1/21/17 were approved as written.
  - 3.2. The warrants were reviewed and signed by the Committee members. See attached list.
4. **Public Participation - none**
5. **Elementary Single Tier Busing Analysis – Nicole Rogers of G.P.I. consultants**
  - 5.1. Report and Slides  
Dr. Brand stated that since his arrival, moving to one elementary tier for busing has been something people have expressed interest in doing. The District partnered with Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) for this analysis. Dr. Brand’s intent was to get a sense of the Committee whether the start time effort should include considering single elementary tier busing.  
  
JD Head introduced presenter Nicole Rogers of GPI. (GPI also worked on Acton’s Kelleys Corner traffic study.) The conclusion was that currently the High School/Junior High School tier is overutilized (more buses are needed) and the Elementary tier is underutilized, according to the GPI study. Modifications must be made if single tier elementary is implemented. A number of proposed practices were offered for consideration.  
  
A total increase of \$750,900 to the transportation and personnel budgets in the first year of operation (2018 – 2019) would be incurred, including an increase of 11 buses and 11 drivers. State reimbursement

would start in the second year, resulting in a cost of \$372,446 to the District for that year and beyond. (State reimbursement is one year behind.)

The Committee discussed walk zones and the requirements for Regional Districts to provide transportation to students. Charging a fee for transportation makes a difference. Dr. Brand talked to the state and was told that regional districts are required to transport all students within 2 miles and a fee can be charged for students that live closer. A member thought a transportation fee could not be charged if the District was getting reimbursed for the buses. There is conflicting information on this topic.

The analysis was to help the District understand single tier bussing but the variables used are not necessarily what we would do. JD Head explained that a number of years ago, for students that lived within a mile and a half of their school, they would only be bussed during the winter, but with construction, etc. they started busing them for the full year.

Kristina Rychlik thanked Nicole for the terrific analysis. Kristina urged the Committee to be careful going forward with this information due to the huge increase in costs it called for and because there are a lot of variables involved. Costs will only go up if some of the analysis variables are changed. If the District goes forward, it should be made clear that there will be sacrifices by many to make a change in start times work. Coming up with \$750,000 is not just a question of prioritizing, it would mean cuts, in her opinion. Marie Neyland agreed, especially when the towns are looking for design funds and have buckets of capital projects.

The difficulty in finding a sufficient number of bus drivers at the current level was discussed. It was suggested that a piece of our busing could be contracted out. JD explained that the District has put our entire transportation operation out to bid 3 times and no one bids on it as it's structured. Dee Bus did consider a segment of transporting Boxborough and the cross town Acton students so that could be an opportunity to consider.

Brigid Bieber said that educationally, it makes sense to do this, but from a physical point, she is stuck trying to find the money. She suggested the District consider implementing some of the suggestions (clustering, cul de sac, etc.) and see if it would provide efficiencies in our current system.

Mary Brolin stated that if this proposal only goes out to school parents, they will want it. If the School Committee doesn't think it will work, it is not with integrity that they are asking the public. She agreed that it is a sizable amount of money, and questioned what would be cut out of the budget to cover it.

Eileen Zhang stressed that every minute in High School counts toward stress in the morning. A point was made that there are options to change the school start time without changing the busing tiers.

Paul Murphy asked if any of these options would change the cost of one of the building project options. He asked if the Committee should just focus on the capital needs now and look at this later. Katie Neville wants this to go forward but it has to have costs associated with it, just like when the Committee was publicizing regionalization.

Dr. Brand explained that the intent of the outreach survey is that a few options don't involve additional resources, and a few of them do involve more resources. The question of what is most important is asked. Survey results will be brought to the School Committee for consideration in the Fall to make a decision for the following year.

Mary Brolin stressed that it cannot be a simple survey that says "here are the start times with 3 tier and with 2 tier". It must talk about the cost and put it in context. Otherwise, everyone will want the 2- tier and when they're told we can't afford it, they will be upset. Maria Neyland stated that buy in from the Finance Committees and ALG/BLF is needed to do this properly. If 90% of survey respondents are

parents and they want it, and then the Finance Committees and ALG/BLF are not in support, that is a problem. Mary confirmed if the Superintendent needed additional support regarding input from the School Committee.

6. **ABRSD Budget Update – Glenn Brand**

- 6.1. Acton Town Meeting Update
- 6.2. Boxborough Town Meeting begins May 8
- 6.3. FY17 Q3 Report
  - 6.3.1. ABRSD Financial Reports as of 3/31/17
    - 6.3.1.1. Revenue vs Budget
    - 6.3.1.2. Expenses vs Budget
    - 6.3.1.3. Special Revenue
    - 6.3.1.4. Grants

Dr. Brand gave the update in Clare Jeannotte’s absence.

6.4. Net Metering Agreement Status Update – *JD Head*

JD explained that OMNI was unable to get the public utility to move forward on their respective projects so that makes the District’s agreement with OMNI null and void. He continues to pursue other utility opportunities as much as he can because the District is in a good position to benefit from them, especially with the building projects coming up.

7. **FY18 Kindergarten Registration Update – Marie Altieri**

Marie Altieri reported that the District is over projection in both towns for Kindergarten. Currently we are over by 42 kids with more to come before school starts. There are 340 kindergarteners registered right now based on a projection of 298. Wait lists exist at 3 schools. We are also watching our English Learners to see what school(s) they are ending up in. We will start screening in late May for the first time (compared to the fall) and anticipate an increase in ELE services needed. Our kindergartens have 21 in 2/3 of them and 20 in the rest with 6 more students to place right now. Another kindergarten class may be needed for next year. There is some money in the budget to cover this but there is also potential that more will be needed for ELL services for next year. McCarthy-Towne or Merriam may be the location for the new section because other schools do not have any space options. It was the sense of the Committee that there is no choice but to add a Kindergarten class.

8. **MCAS 2017 Student Questionnaire – Deborah Bookis**

8.1. Discussion / VOTE to decide if AB students will participate in May 2017 – *Mary Brolin*

The District does not have a policy about surveying students and that is why Deborah Bookis is asking School Committee for their thoughts on the ESE’s pilot program to survey MCAS takers regarding school climate in May.

The Committee felt that too much time is being spent on standardized tests and they questioned where the data would be sent, what it would be used for, and even if it would be valid. There was much concern over the students being asked these questions right after finishing their MCAS, particularly for 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Dr. Brand told the Committee that they will be hearing more about culture and climate. The Wellness Committee will present recommendations regarding tools for the Administration to look further into how our culture and climate relate to our teaching. This is not about standardized tests.

Maria Neyland moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,  
**VOTED:** to decline participation in the survey by our students.

Deborah Bookis will do a letter for the state with this decision.

9. **ABRSD Master Plan / School Building Project Update**

9.1. Massachusetts School Business Authority (MSBA) Update – *Glenn Brand*

- 9.1.1. Initial Compliance Certification – ABRSD/C.T. Douglas Elementary School (due 5/3/17) – **VOTE** to authorize the chair and superintendent to sign this document.

Paul Murphy had closely reviewed the document and asked a number of questions that were all answered satisfactorily by Dr. Brand and JD Head.

Paul Murphy moved and Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to authorize Mary Brolin to sign this document as SC Chair and Glenn Brand to sign as Superintendent.

9.1.2. FYI: Final Statements of Interest for Conant and Gates, submitted on 4/6/17

9.1.3. Update on 4/4/17 Call with MSBA re Next Steps

9.1.4. Announcement of Special Town Meetings in Acton and Boxborough on Monday, 12/4/17

9.2. District Master Plan Review Committee (DMPRC) Update –*Mary Brolin, Kristina Rychlik*

9.2.1. Public Forum Flyer and Frequently Asked Questions

Eight public forums have been done so far and lots of feedback has come in. There are two more left happening on Sunday.

9.3. Establishing the ABRSD Building Committee (due 6/2/17)

9.3.1. Composition and Voting/Non-voting Status – First Read (to be voted at 5/18/17 meeting)

This committee must be formed by June 2 and a form submitted to the MSBA. Kristina Rychlik has agreed to chair the School Building Committee.

## 10. Subcommittee Reports

10.1. Budget – *Maria Neyland (oral)*

Dore & Whittier presented on Short and Medium Term Capital Needs.

10.2. Policy

10.2.1. Mission, Vision, Values, File: AD and AD-E – Second Read – **VOTE** – *Brigid Bieber*

Marie Neyland moved, Katie Neville seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED**: to approve the revision as proposed.

10.2.2. Memorials Policy (new), File: FFA – First Read – *Dawn Bentley*

This new policy is a result of events of this past year with much guidance from professionals at Riverside. Dawn Bentley will bring this back to the next policy subcommittee meeting because she wants to add to the draft based on new input she received.

10.2.3. Naming District Facilities (revision), File: FF – First Read – *Dawn Bentley*

10.2.3.1. With revised procedures, File: FF-R

This revision simplified the policy and removes reference to memorials given the new policy being proposed. Kristina Rychlik asked about the Douglas School being named after someone and what if the building is taken down. Should the policy include language about what happens in this case?

Marie Altieri said that the Committee would have the choice of naming a new building and could use Douglas. Maria Neyland asked for a vote on this as soon as possible, noting that it can be changed.

10.2.4. Sustainability Policy (new, including water) – First Read – *Brigid Bieber*

The subcommittee wanted to propose a sustainability policy that is more broad than just addressing water. Much of this policy was due to JD Head and Kate Crosby's work. Kristina Rychlik submitted a "Disclosure of Appearance of Conflict of Interest" form (G.L. c. 268A, section 23(b)(3)) because her daughter was involved in the proposal of this new policy.

10.2.5. Student Activity Accounts, File: JJF – First Read – *Brigid Bieber*

Changes are due to the auditors' comments and cleaning it up per changing statutes.

10.2.6. FYI ONLY: Student Activity Programs, File: JJ (no change) and Procedures (revised)

10.3. Outreach (including PTO Co-chairs) – March 2017 Update - *Kristina Rychlik*

The subcommittee has not met in a couple of months because so much outreach effort was taking place on the Building Project.

#### 11. **School Committee Member Reports**

- 11.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – *Amy Krishnamurthy – have not met*
  - 11.1.1. Minutes of 3/9/17 meeting
- 11.2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – *Mary Brolin* – reviewed warrant and prepared for Town Meeting. All School Committee members are expected to attend, or let Mary know.
- 11.3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT) – *Mary Brolin*  
They met this morning and reviewed financials. Things look strong.
- 11.4. Acton Board of Selectmen – *Eileen Zhang*  
A request was received from BOS asking for a representative for the new West Acton Sewer Action Advisory Committee. JD Head offered to serve on this and the Committee agreed. It is especially helpful that he is on the Building Committee and also lives in West Acton. BOS officials were elected for the new year. Janet Adachi is chair and Katie Green is Vice Chair.
- 11.5. Boxborough Board of Selectmen – *Maria Neyland, Brigid Bieber*  
The monthly Hager Well meeting should include other Boxborough issues like paving.

#### 12. **Annual Superintendent’s Evaluation Process Begins – Mary Brolin**

- 12.1. FY17 Evaluation Timetable
- 12.2. Reference Material
  - 12.2.1. MA Model System for Educator Evaluation Part VI: Implementation Guide for Superintendent Evaluation  
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/model/PartVI.pdf>
  - 12.2.2. Appendix A: Superintendent Rubric  
[http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/model/PartIII\\_AppxA.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/model/PartIII_AppxA.pdf)
  - 12.2.3. Appendix B: End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent (*see link above which will be populated with Dr. Brand’s information*)
- 12.3. Process Overview slides, 10/16/14 SC meeting
- 12.4. Superintendent’s Performance Goal – Midcycle Review Memo, Glenn Brand, 2/10/17
- 12.5. Copy of previous year’s evaluation
- 12.6. General public request for input on Superintendent’s performance by June 1 to Mary and Beth

#### 13. **FY18 ABRSC Summer Workshop and August Business Meeting– Mary Brolin**

- 13.1. FY18 ABRSC Meetings with proposed dates added – First Read (vote at meeting on 5/18/17)  
The Committee hopes to confirm these dates at the next meeting.

#### 14. **Superintendent’s Report/Updates – Glenn Brand**

- 14.1. Challenge Success Update – *Deborah Bookis, Dawn Bentley*  
The District has been accepted as an Official Challenge Success district for 2017 – 2018.
- 14.2. School Committee Liaisons Update  
Amy Krishnamurthy spoke to Joe Gibowicz and the preschool staff is excited about the possible Early Childhood Center and they hope it will be seriously considered. Paul Murphy reported that he is in contact with Ed Kaufman about an update from Merriam.

#### 15. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda, list of warrants