

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
FY17 OPEN BUDGET HEARING and BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes (approved 3/3/16)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

February 11, 2016
7:00 p.m. Open FY17 Budget Hearing
Followed by ABRSC Regular Business Meeting (7:30)

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy (8:35 p.m.), Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: none
Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Clare Jeannotte, Glenn Brand, Beth Petr, members of the public

1. Chairwoman Kristina Rychlik called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Please see material posted for 1/23/16 School Committee meeting at <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/meetings-agendas-packets-and-minutes>

2. **Chairman’s Introduction**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Budget Hearing. Dr. Brand stated that the proposed FY17 School Budget represents a total team effort and all of the information is posted online for review.

3. **ABRSC FY17 Budget– Glenn Brand and Clare Jeannotte**

1. FY17 Final Budget Presentation
2. Revised Recommended Table of Assessments (Table 6)

Dr. Brand and Ms. Jeannotte presented a revised proposed FY17 Budget of \$83,073,204. This is an increase of \$2,776,809 or 3.46%. This breaks down to an Acton Assessment of \$55,547,097 which is an increase of 4.5%, and a Boxborough Assessment of \$11,503,148 which is an increase of 3.4%. The total assessment increase is 4.3%. Use of E&D is \$200,000. Uncertainties and assumptions include: State Aid, CASE Assessment, Circuit Breaker and Regional Transportation.

The budget voted by the Committee on Budget Saturday (1/23/16) totaled \$83,426,767 with an Acton assessment of \$55,839,692 and a Boxborough assessment of \$11,564,116.

The Committee asked about special education transportation. There are two components to the \$298,287 increase (19.5%). \$133,000 is the increase in the CASE assessment, which is increasing 9.5% based on how many of our children attend CASE. For the private transportation, our budget figure for FY16 was too low based on growth in that group of students this year so the increase for FY17 is large compared to the FY16 budget but lower compared to FY16 actual spending. When asked if the District puts this type of transportation out to bid each year, Ms. Jeannotte said that we do not because special education transportation is exempt from that requirement. Mike Coppolino suggested that with such a dramatic increase, the District might consider doing so.

The Committee asked that slide 23 regarding the Pathways Program be clearer regarding the savings it would actually generate. School Committee members understand the total actual cost from previous explanations, but it may not be evident to others.

Brigid Bieber pointed out that although the hearing was a briefer presentation than in the past, the process started a number of months ago. She thanked the Staff and Administration for making this process better every year, and noted that the budget subcommittee has been very valuable to everyone.

4. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Update – Kristina Rychlik

ALG met on 2/9/16 and reviewed the updated spreadsheet and the schools' revised budget. Due to a decrease in the Health Insurance Trust rates estimate (from 8% to 4%), there is a reduction of \$292,000, the Acton portion of the total projected health insurance savings, that can be used to lower the tax levy or reserve use. The Fincom advocated for an overall reduction of \$1.5 million in addition. The group discussed how to handle this but there was no decision. The Schools made it clear that the timing of the request was late and they had already made cuts to the proposed budget.

5. Acton Finance Committee Update

Slides from Dr. Brand and Ms. Jeannotte's presentation of the 2nd quarter report and FY17 Budget at the Fincom meeting on 2/9/16 were in the packet, as well as answers to Finance Committee questions from Budget Saturday. There were questions about class size and the Pathways Program. Feedback was good. A comment was made that there was not much innovation in the proposed budget, although it was not a criticism. Kristina Rychlik stated that while she would like to do more capital projects or add more staff, given the budget constraints, she is satisfied with the proposal and does not feel more cuts should be considered at this time.

6. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) Update

Mary Brolin reported that BLF will meet on March 2. They are preparing for their Special Town Meeting regarding Minuteman Technical School.

7. Boxborough Finance Committee Update

Mary Brolin is hoping that February 29 will work. Mike Coppolino asked if BLF has a similar spreadsheet to what ALG uses. Mary said there is a model but they have not seen it yet for this year. She will share it with School Committee when it is available.

8. Discussion and Deliberation – Kristina Rychlik

Maria Neyland reviewed the Budget subcommittee's work. Budget Saturday was moved up a week earlier this year and they are looking for feedback on how that worked. Next year, answers to questions that come up will be included in the Budget Binder. It was helpful that Dr. Brand copied the whole committee when he responded to questions.

Paul Murphy was very happy with the process. He really appreciated that this budget tries to address the stress and mental health issues that came up with the YRBS. Mike Coppolino suggested that budget questions and answers could be included in the SC meeting packets as they come up. Kristina Rychlik noted that Budget Saturday this year conflicted with the MA Municipal Association (MMA) meeting and we should check on that for next year.

9. Recommendation to Approve Revised FY17 Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Budget and Assessments – VOTE – Glenn Brand

Brigid Bieber moved, Michael Coppolino seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 be set at \$83,073,204, and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the

Education Reform Law and the terms of the Regional Agreement and amendments thereto as follows: Acton \$55,547,097, Boxborough \$11,503,148, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$14,531,276, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of \$27,683, Anticipated Regional Bonus Aid in the amount of \$74,000, Anticipated Chapter 71, Section 16C Transportation Aid, in the amount of \$1,190,000, and a transfer from E&D Reserves in the amount of \$200,000.

The Annual Budget Hearing was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

ABRSC Regular Business Meeting Begins

1. **Chairman's Introduction** – The Chair reviewed the Annual Spring Town Elections' deadlines
2. **Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes**
The Minutes of the meeting on 2/4/16 were approved as amended. Warrant #16-0177 dated 2/11/16 in the amount of \$1,634,423.87 was signed by the Committee.
3. **Public Participation** - none
4. **Superintendent's Mid Cycle Goal Review** – *Glenn Brand*
 - 4.1. DESE Model Evaluation Process for Superintendents, pages 6 & 7
 - 4.2. Superintendent's Memo

Dr. Brand presented a mid-year progress report on his goals for the year, involving Professional Practice, Student Learning and District Improvement. Many of these goals are ongoing. Kristina Rychlik asked if Dr. Brand should consider changing some of his timing because when he created his goals, Phase II of the Capital Study was to take place next year, and now it has been moved up. She noted that in addition to this adding to his workload, it also involves other people's time.

The Committee and Superintendent discussed whether the District has a vision, and whether the mission and vision are the same and if both are needed. The last strategic planning efforts identified a set of values and a mission, but Dr. Brand felt that plans for organizations usually include a vision with their mission and values. He stated that, "Clarity around the work that we do and where we are going, is important." Deborah Bookis felt that there are a few interpretations of what a vision is. She suggested that the District is asking "Why" for the vision and "What" for the mission. Mike Coppolino stated that the vision is what you see in the future and what you hope to obtain.

In response to a question, Dr. Brand said that the student learning goal working group around the teacher assistant team and inclusionary practices had a late start. He felt that he had set too ambitious a schedule initially for that part.

5. **Recommendation to Revise FY17 School Calendar - Possible No School on Tuesday 10/11/16 and Addition of Early Dismissal Days** – Second Reading - **VOTE** – *Glenn*

The Committee discussed whether to make 10/11/16 a no school day due to how the previously voted calendar had no school scheduled for 10/10/16 (Columbus Day) and 10/12/16 (Yom Kippur). Kristina Rychlik reviewed other districts who take the same holidays and they varied - Sharon has school on Oct 11, as does Newton, Needham and Lexington. Brookline does not. If there is no school, it makes

the last day of a school a Monday, which is not ideal. Weather closures would change this. As in the past, the point was made that this would put High School students behind regarding AP tests, etc. Maya Minkin was conflicted but many of her peers said they would be out of town if there was school that day. Maria Neyland asked the Committee to be sensitive to the high schoolers who have plans at the end of the school year. Polling the staff was considered but not done. Union leadership were in favor of having the date off. Deanne O'Sullivan suggested taking a day off of a vacation break to avoid affecting the high school students. The Committee has already agreed to have Kathleen Neville and Maya Minkin look into alternative vacations for future years.

Mary Brolin moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the early release days as proposed.

Maya Minkin moved to make October 11, 2017 a non-school day. Mike Coppolino seconded and it was,

VOTED: YES: Baum, Coppolino, Minkin, Murphy, O'Sullivan, Rychlik
NO: Bieber, Brolin, Neville, Neyland

The motion passed. (Amy Krishnamurthy arrived after the vote.)

6. **Draft ABRSC Letter to Commissioner Chester re Conflict between DESE's Recommendation for March Vacation Week and Standardized Testing Schedules** – *Maya Minkin, Kathleen Neville*
Kathleen Neville explained that a vacation in March cannot be considered given the testing schedules. They proposed asking for guidance on this and will ask other School Committees as well.

Kristina Rychlik suggested that if the State wants districts to consider changing their vacations, the State could plan a testing free week in March and give districts enough notice to include that in their calendar planning. The MASC listserve had information on this recently and Kathleen and Maya will review this. They will come back to the Committee with other districts who are interested before sending the proposed letter out. Mike Coppolino thinks surveying staff about this question would be valuable. Mary Brolin assumes the process would include input from the students and the community. Everyone agreed that it is a complex issue.

7. **Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Search Update** – *Marie Altieri*
Dr. Brand thanked Marie Altieri for leading the entire search process, which has been extensive. Site visits are happening this week for the 3 finalists. The intent is that a recommendation will be made at the 3/3/16 School Committee meeting. Dr. Brand will make a conditional job offer, then the School Committee will vote to appoint the candidate.

8. **ABRSD Capital Study Update** – *Glenn Brand*
JD Head is working on figuring out which of the proposed projects may be done in house. The Working Group met for the first time today. This includes Amy Krishnamurthy and Maya Minkin, as well as John Fallon and Doug Tindal. They will meet every other week for most of the course of this study. The Visioning Group of almost 80 people will come together for 3 all day meetings.

Dr. Brand described the Statement of Interest process regarding the MSBA. He is working on these details and will bring a proposal to the 3/3/16 School Committee meeting. The deadline is April 8, 2016.

9. **Subcommittee Reports**
9.1. Budget – *Maria Neyland* - nothing further to report

10. **School Committee Member Reports**

- 10.1. Minuteman Technical Vocational School (MMT) Update – *Diane Baum*
10.1.1. Boxborough Special Town Meeting – February 24
See warrant: <http://www.boxborough-ma.gov/home/urgent-alerts/special-town-meeting-wednesday-feb-24-2016>
Informational Meeting: Tues, **Feb 9 at 7 p.m.** in Sargent Library, Boxborough

Eight towns have accepted the amended agreement and two have voted to withdraw (Carlisle and Sudbury). Five meetings were snowed out and are being rescheduled.

- 10.2. PTO/PTSO/PTF Co-Chairs will meet in a week or so.

11. Superintendent's Report/Updates – Glenn Brand

Dr. Brand attended the League of Women Voters' meeting last night and updated them on district activities. On February 23, he will hold his second Community Forum at the Acton Memorial Library.

Regarding bad weather, every effort is made to have decisions made by 5:30 a.m. on days when weather is in question. Last Friday's storm was challenging and it took until 5:40 a.m. to make the decision to cancel school. Unfortunately, the District's electronic system had delays of up to an hour notifying families, which was an issue for some of them. The twitter feed worked very well for those who have signed up.

Dr. Brand announced that Mary Emmons, our Director of Special Education, has accepted a position with the Lincoln Public Schools effective July 1, 2016.

The ABRSC adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda

NEXT MEETINGS:

Feb 24 Boxborough Special Town Meeting re Minuteman Tech School
Mar 3 ABRSC Meeting 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library
Mar 17 ABRSC Meeting 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (*School Choice Public Hearing*)