

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High

November 2, 2006
7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Michael Coppelino, Marie Altieri, Brigid Bieber, Terry Lindgren,
Sharon Smith McManus, Rebecca Neville, John Ryder, Bruce Sabot
Also Present: William Ryan, George Frost, Susan Horn, Elizabeth Huber,
Sharon Summers, citizens and press

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #07-008 in the amount of \$ 1,544,488.34 and warrant #07-009 in the amount of \$1,287,016.99 were signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of October 5, 2006 were approved as read.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- The Superintendent noted the passing of Donald Wheeler, former Boxborough member of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee, this week. He contributed a great deal over many years to the schools and our communities, and will be greatly missed. Our thoughts are with his wife, Barbara, who worked in our central office for many years, and the rest of the family.
- Friends of Leary Field presentation - Stewards Program. Bill Mullin reported on the successful opening of the Woodland Path to Leary Field. The whole investment of the Leary Field project has totaled \$1M. In an effort to maintain the field, FOLF is setting up the Stewards Program, so that the field and surrounding area will be maintained. An annual work day in fall is planned. Bill Mullin asked for School Committee support.

It was moved (Lindgren), seconded (Ryder) and unanimously

VOTED: To approve and support the Friends of Leary Field Stewards Program as proposed.

Committee members thanked FOLF for their continuing dedication and commitment to the project.

EDUCATION REPORT - R.J. Grey Junior High - Principal Craig Hardimon

Craig Hardimon reported on four major topics: 1) where the school is as the year begins, 2) the demographic trends, 3) the self-study process, and 4) the school improvement plan.

The student handbook was updated, and there were home/school communication updates.

Demographic trends appeared to be relatively stable. Craig reviewed class and team sizes by grades for leveled, unleveled and exploratory courses. He mentioned the concern about larger class sizes, and explained several options to ameliorate that situation, one being the addition of a half team. Two students spoke about their experiences at RJGrey this year. Craig highlighted many fall school events. He reported on the results on the opening day survey feedback from parents. Most were positive, other than concerns about back packs being too heavy, and lockers that were difficult to open, and the unavailability of team lists until after school began. Craig reviewed the NEASC and NELMS self-study processes. He felt it would benefit the school more to use their own self-study

process based on the specific areas of concern that need to be addressed. Faculty and staff will focus on enhancing school culture and support, maintaining high expectations for instruction and achievement and parent, and community outreach. Craig also referred to the School Improvement Plan. He ended by thanking the faculty and staff for their input and support.

SC questions: There were several concerns about the proposed Social Integrity Survey and the explicit terminology, which was thought to be offensive to many parents. Craig said he was sending a cover letter of explanation to parents. Bill Ryan added that administrators also had concerns with the language and had a long discussion. Marie Altieri suggested expanding the survey into other areas, i.e. where bullying is happening - in or out of school, or email - and asking about academic integrity - how much do parents help with school work, etc.? Craig responded that maybe they can do other surveys, but they want to keep each one short. Addressing the positives vs. negatives of adding a half-team, teacher Melanie Scalice felt the half-team advantages outweighed the negatives. Several members noted the lack of an academic goal in the School Improvement Plan, and suggested adding it. There was a question about tutoring - how much was done, and who was tutored and the results.

The Committee thanked Craig and his staff for an excellent report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. FY'07 Budget

- Bill Ryan reported that we have some issues. There is a projected deficit in Out-of-District SPED tuition. Bill reported on meeting with DOE folks about plans to meet 990. The meeting went very well. A lot of resources will go to the underserved student population. DOE was very supportive of the kinds of courses we are suggesting. On December 15, we will send a status report to DOE.
- George Frost was not ready to say what precisely ABRHS will do with the additional proposed 2.0 FTEs, (a maximum of \$118K). The current proposal is: .6 FTE will add credit-bearing electives during the school day in the visual and performing arts area, .2 FTE Independent Study, .2 FTE Seminars and workshops during school day, .2 FTE Directed study in underutilized facilities, .3 FTE Evening pilot courses and experiences, and .5 FTE Data management, interaction around scheduling concerns.
- Mike Scanlon, citizen, spoke about his concerns with the wording of the law requiring 990 hours of structured learning time. He recommended, in some context, to throw down the gauntlet with DOE. We are always one of the top performing districts in the state. From a price performance perspective, we are number one. He would approach the 990 mandate on a business model vs a reactive response. School Committee has fiduciary responsibility. He recommended telling the DOE that we are looking at the system at the margins. He was concerned that the recommendations did not address the margins.
- Terry Lindgren noted that the plan has lots of ways to help our underserved population.
- George Frost said that the proposal is within the walls of the school for the second semester. By September, other courses, non-traditional courses, will be offered for underserved students.
- Bill Ryan explained that he made it clear with DOE that we will not change the structure/culture of the high school. But we need to serve these kids who are getting less than 990 hours. The plan is to count the things all kids are already doing for credit, and then add courses on to reach 990.
- Michael Coppelino asked how much time/money would be needed to administer the program going forward. George Frost said the initial period was funded for 9 months. ABRHS will develop a structure to keep track of each student's hours. He hoped this will be a large investment at the beginning, only.
- It was moved, seconded and unanimously
VOTED: To approve the addition of 2.0 FTE at ABRHS.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007 be set at \$32,312,574 and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the Education Reform Law and the terms of the Agreement and amendments thereto as follows: Acton \$21,958,905, Boxborough \$5,827,575, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$3,569,289, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of \$81,197, Medicaid Reimbursement Fund in the amount of \$14,000, Transportation Aid, Chapter 71, Section 16C in the amount of \$505,000, a transfer from E&D in the amount of \$284,950, a transfer from High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$70,964, and a transfer from the Junior High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$694.

Both the total budget and the Chapter 70 numbers were increased by \$118,000, to work towards the 990 requirement at the High School.

2. Health Trust Report

Marie Altieri reported that things are on target. The trust is on track for building back fund balance.

3. CAFY Report

Terry Lindgren reported on several upcoming events, one being the Youth Risky Behavior Student Panel on November 8th.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2007-08 School Calendar - DRAFT

Bill Ryan asked the members to review the draft, and it will be voted at the December School Committee meetings. He presented the idea of moving the staff professional development day from March to the November election day. The administration will check with Town Halls to see if there is an election day scheduled in November 2007. There was a suggestion to not take Veterans Day as a holiday.

2. Recommendation to Approve FY'07 Acton-Boxborough Tuition Rate

It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Neville) and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the administration's recommendation that the 2006-07 Acton-Boxborough tuition rate be set at \$9,733.

3. Recommendation to Accept Donation of New Lighting System

It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Sabot) and unanimously

VOTED: To accept, with gratitude, the generous gift of a new lighting system (valued at \$3,080) for the R.J. Grey Junior High Auditorium from Glenn Herdeg, representing the Open Door Theater.

4. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Field Trips

It was moved (McManus), seconded (Ryder) and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the following ABRHS Field Trips:

- Spanish trip to New York City, December 1, 2006

- **Girls Ice Hockey Team trip to Woodstock, VT, December 29-31, 2006**
- **Literary London (England) trip, April 12-20, 2007**

The Committee will review the Student Travel Policy at the December SC meeting.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- The Superintendent referred to several items.
- George Frost reviewed the October 1, 2006 enrollment data.

ISSUES OF THE COMMITTEE

- Bill Ryan referred to a letter from the Acton Education Association requesting that Professional Status be granted to those nurses who have worked at the local or regional schools for a minimum of three years. He said that we are waiting for an advisory from the DOE about this legislation, and he will report back to the Committee and AEA as soon as possible.
- George Frost reported on plans for the upcoming Acton election at RJGrey Junior High. He will report back to the committee at the next meeting.
- There was a request for the ABRHS College Action report.

At 10:35 pm, the Joint APS/AB session was called to order. (See Joint minutes).

At 10:56 pm, the Joint session concluded.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:57 p.m. it was moved, seconded and

VOTED: To go into joint executive session to discuss strategies relative to collective bargaining or litigation under Chapter 39, Section 23 B, paragraph 3. Each member was polled individually. Seven members voted in the affirmative, and one member abstained (Lindgren), to go into executive session for the stated purpose.

The Committee returned to open session at 11:11 pm and adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: December 7, 7:30 pm, RJ Grey Junior High Library

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah T. Lawton, Secretary