

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

September 7, 2006
7:37 p.m.

Members Present: Michael Coppolino, Marie Altieri, Brigid Bieber, Jonathan Chinitz, 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 7:37 pm.

CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

- Bill Ryan introduced and welcomed the new ABRHS student reps: Doug Breuer, Evan Feng, Jyoti Jasrasaria, Lauren Levine and Aneil Tripathy.
- Bill Ryan reported on the first day in all the Acton/Acton-Boxborough Schools. He also reported on the two-day orientation for new professional staff.
- Glenn Koocher, Executive Director of MASC, gave a presentation about the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. He summarized what it can offer to the schools and committee members. He noted that they take phone calls from School Committee members across the state all the time. They also provide professional development workshops, orientation for new members, lobbying for public education, policy reviews, and superintendent searches. Becky Neville and Marie Altieri, who worked on our School Committee policies revision, were critical of MASC's performance and follow-through. It was a frustrating experience Mr. Koocher said he was sorry that the policy review had not been done to our satisfaction. He said that MASC would respond to our concerns even if we did not join, and he appreciated our feedback. Terry Lindgren said he had supported joining MASC, but now our members have been disappointed.

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #2007-004 in the amount of \$563,580.23 and warrant #2007-005 in the amount of \$414,782.33, were signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of August 3, 2006 were approved as written.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. BLF Report

- Becky Neville reported that there will be a special Boxborough town meeting on Oct. 23 to fine tune the budget. She noted that there will be changes in health insurance percentages, school/employee. The first year, the ratio will be 85/15, the 2nd year it will be 80/20. Town of Boxborough ratios agreed to are: first year 85/15, 2nd year 80/20, third year 75/25.

2. ALG Report

John Ryder reported that the last meeting focused on reengineering, capital planning and the

budget calendar. They also discussed health insurance and will review present practices and how to move forward.

3. Final FY'06 Budget Report

Bill Ryan referred to the final report in the packet. Approximately \$74,000 will be closed out back into E&D. We also closed out \$63,000 from the previous year in carryover and encumbrances into E&D. Our auditor is now working on the final report. John Ryder asked what we are planning for legal expenses, and suggesting reviewing current contracts.

4. FY'07 Budget Report

Bill Ryan reported that the FY'07 budget is on track.

5. Leary Field - Woodland Path/Terracing Project Updates

- Bill Ryan reported that the terracing project has just been completed and looks wonderful. AB Community Ed. funded the replacement of wooden bleachers with aluminum on the home-side. The Woodland Path will be finished in about a week. Bill thanked the Friends of Leary Field, led by Bill Mullin and Dave Wilson, for funding the terracing and path projects, and the efforts our JH Head and our facilities staff.

6. Danny's Place Update

- Susan Horn reported that during July, several bands performed. Danny's Place was closed in August. There will be an event this Saturday welcoming everyone back. Fall hours are posted. Talent shows, classes, tournaments are among the events planned throughout the year.

7. Health Trust Report

- Marie Altieri reported that the annual audit is being completed. Three months of claims have been reported already, and the news is good. The trust is \$200K to the good this year so far. At the next meeting, they will hear from the vendors.

8. CAFY Report

- Terry Lindgren reported that CAFY will be at OctoberFest. They will facilitate the annual ABRHS student panel, where students share honestly and frankly their experiences at the ABRHS. He encouraged everyone's attendance.

9. Coordinated Program Review Update

- Bill Ryan reported that we have just received the Review report. Overall, we did very well. Two areas of concern are 990 hours of instruction at ABRHS and the ELL program.
- Liza Huber commented that we will be able to respond to all the areas of concern by the timeline, February '07. There are no significant budgetary concerns in the pupil services area. Limited English proficient students was a concern and we have hired a new ELL staff person. We will also do more teacher training, and how we evaluate our programs overall. More teacher training will also be done in SPED, as well as developing teamwork with parents in evaluating our programs.
- Bill Ryan noted that achieving 990 hours of instruction at ABRHS will have a significant budgetary impact. By December 15, we must submit a plan for 990 hours, which must be fully operational in September 2007. Susan Horn reported that Karin Drowne, ABRHS teacher, is gathering information to make plans to meet the 990 hours. Bill Ryan hopes to work with DOE in a cooperative spirit, meeting the 990 requirement in a way that is really good for kids. That is what ABRHS is focusing on. It is a complicated issue. Freshman are closest to meeting the goal, seniors the farthest.

- Marie Altieri asked the administration/committee to keep an eye on class size, as we could make class sizes worse with the 990 hour requirement.
- Michael Coppolino asked if distance learning was being considered. Susan Horn said this was one of many options on the table, and Bill Ryan mentioned others.
- The student reps gave their opinions on how 990 could be implemented. The school day could be extended by 40 minutes. Maybe SAT courses, driver ed, academic teams, extracurricular activities, life skills classes should be approved. The students felt it will be difficult and would increase the stress.
- Jonathan Chinitz said the 990 hours would result in 30 kids per class. If we had to make up the difference, we would have to have an extra 26 days of school or add 15% to the budget.
- John Ryder noted that state aid can be cut off if we don't comply. Adding a 40 minute class to the day would mean impact the budget significantly.
- Marie Altieri clarified that the 990 is an average number. It will be a change of culture for seniors especially.
- Becky Neville commented that community service hours should help - so many kids give many hours.
- Bill Ryan referred to a DOE advisory - the decision (how to reach 990) is made by school committee and Superintendent within the criteria established by DOE. Bill will circulate this advisory to the Committee.

10. ABRHS Building Project Update

- George Frost reported on Turner Construction Company's detail report of the project. A Turner employee went around ABRHS with our maintenance/custodial staff, and fixed things as needed.
- Bill Ryan read the high school audit report. Of the original estimated cost of the project - \$52,460,000, the MSBA audit determined that \$51,697,447 (98.6%) is eligible for reimbursement. In summary, the audit indicates a total grant to the district of \$34,026,526. He thanked Tess Summers and her staff for their excellent work.

NEW BUSINESS

1. FY'07 Staffing Update

George Frost reported on the new professional staff figures. There are 17 new ABRHS staff and one new staff member at the JH.

2. Recommendation to Accept Gift from the Soccer Boosters

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

VOTED: To accept, with gratitude, the generous gift of \$4,000 from the Soccer Boosters.

The gift will be used to fund the following positions: Varsity Girls Assistant Coach, Varsity Boys Assistant Coach, Goalie Coach.

3. Recommendation to Approve Continued Operation of The Victor School

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

VOTED: To approve the continued operation of The Victor School.

4. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Trip to Italy, April 2007

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

VOTED: To approve the ABRHS Trip to Italy, April 14 - 24, 2007.

5. Recommendation to Approve the School District Goals, 2006-07

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

VOTED: To approve the School District Goals for 2006-07 as modified.

(Goal 1, #5, add 'addressing class size').

Goal 1: Continue to enhance curriculum, instruction and assessment for all students.

Goal 2: Develop a plan to address major facility needs in those buildings outside of the building projects.

Goal 3: Continue to review and refine our multiyear financial plan.

Goal 4: Solicit input and information to define the challenges created by the changing demographics of the community, student body and staff.

- Becky Neville asked for the difference between the NEASC and NELMS evaluations. Craig Hardimon, JH principal, will report on the JH evaluation plan in his November presentation.

6. Recommendation to Accept Gift from Danny's Place

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the generous gift of \$1,500 from Danny's Place.

The gift will be used to begin an Improvisation Troupe at ABRHS.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- The Superintendent referred to several items.
- Liza Huber referred to the Pupil Services mailing.

ISSUES OF THE COMMITTEE

- Bill Ryan mentioned a Community Preservation Act proposal for lighting at the ABRHS tennis courts and baseball field. It would be great for the community. Marie suggested talking to the town recreation committee about the idea.

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

VOTED: To support the proposal for lighting at the ABRHS tennis courts/baseball field areas to the Community Preservation Committee.

Bill Ryan said a community group would come with a presentation at a future meeting. Bill will also talk with the principals and PTOs about other proposals.

- Marie Altieri cannot serve as the EDCO Board Rep this year. Sharon McManus will serve instead.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:45 p.m. it was moved, seconded and

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

The Committee returned to open session at 10:50 pm and adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: October 5 at 7:00 pm, Joint Session; 7:30 pm, AB Meeting, at ABRHS, Room, #115N

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah T. Lawton, Secretary