

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
and WORKSHOP MINUTES (approved 1/14/16)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

January 6, 2016
7:00 p.m. Executive Session
7:10 p.m. Open Workshop Meeting

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Michael Coppolino, Maya Minkin, Deanne O’Sullivan
Others: Glenn Brand, Beth Petr, Dorothy Presser (7:10 p.m.)

The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairwoman Kristina Rychlik.

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:02 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously,

VOTED by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into Executive Session, pursuant to MGL chapter 30A, section 21 (a)(7), to comply with any general or special law requirements (i.e., c. 30A, § 22(f) and(g)) for the approval and possible release of executive session minutes for: 10/17/13, 3/6/14 and 5/14/14.

(YES – Baum, Bieber, Brolin, Krishnamurthy, Murphy, Neville, Neyland, Rychlik)

Kristina Rychlik stated that the Committee would return to open session at approximately 7:10 p.m.

At 7:10 p.m. the ABRSC was polled to go out of Executive Session and returned to their open meeting.

2. OPEN WORKSHOP MEETING (7:10 p.m.)

3. **Chairman’s Introduction** – Kristina Rychlik welcomed Dorothy Presser from MA Association of School Committees (MASC) for the final Governance Workshop. The discussion would focus on making effective use of meeting time and sustaining progress toward School Committee goals.

4. MASC District Governance Program – Workshop #3 Monitoring and Sustaining Progress

Toward our Goals – *Kristina Rychlik, Dorothy Presser*

- 4.1. ABRSC 2015 - 2016 Goals and Operating Protocols
- 4.2. School Committee Member Guide 2014
- 4.3. 2015 ABRSC Meeting Agendas

Dorothy recommended establishing a year long agenda for meetings. This helps to monitor progress toward goals, keeps meetings efficient, and keeps the focus on students. Committee members reviewed a year’s worth of meeting agendas in pairs to see which quadrant items fell into. Ideally, they would be in upper right quadrant, meaning a high impact on student achievement and a high level of governance (vs. operations).

Dorothy asked, “Given the goals for the coming year, what presentations would help monitor progress toward the goals?”

Mary Brolin commented that the School Improvement Plans are long and varied and a challenge to thoroughly read and understand to see if they align with the goals. She asked if it would be more

helpful if the Plans were structured to show how they aligned with the goals of the district and the School Committee. She noted that Andrew Shen's Plan for the Junior High was particularly good in that regard.

Amy Krishnamurthy stated that the Committee does not need all of the details to make a decision generally. Maria Neyland used the solar panel discussion as one that too much time was spent on. Another member said the first net metering discussion had too much explicit detail, followed up by the next meeting with no detail. Everyone agreed that School Committee meeting time is valuable and needs to be well spent. A balance must be found between enough detail, at an understandable level, for all members. Background on a topic can be detailed, but a presentation must be focused due to meeting time. A few members can meet for more detail outside of a meeting, like Paul and Maya are doing for the net metering issue, and bring some insight back to the Committee at a later meeting.

Presenters need to be told what specific information the School Committee would like or needs to hear about, to make an effective presentation. The presentation of athletic fees at the budget subcommittee was an example of this. Feedback from the subcommittee helped the Athletic Director give a very effective presentation to the School Committee. Communicating expectations to presenters ahead of time is important. When discussing what happens when a presenter goes off track, Dr. Brand offered to play a more strategic role in this situation.

The Superintendent Evaluation process was an example of a topic that used a lot of School Committee meeting time. Dorothy suggested that the MASC has a webinar that members can watch on this topic. Mary recommends keeping a list as the year goes on of examples to use when members have to write their evaluation.

Dorothy suggested planning out the agendas for the year and fitting the presentations to the goals. The Committee liked the idea of sharing this annual School Committee agenda list with the whole Committee as a summer workshop discussion and/or maintaining it as a google doc. This helps members understand the "big picture".

The Committee agreed that if the background information is included in the slides, the Committee needs the slides earlier (Friday night posting). If the slides are just for speaking, they are not needed prior to the meeting (if a memo is in the posted packet that explains the topic).

Sustaining Progress:

The Committee discussed, "How to keep the good practices and culture that we have?" Dorothy shared handbooks from other districts and members reviewed them, as well as our New Committee Member Guide. It was suggested that our Guide be posted on the website. Good ideas to consider included: listing acronyms used, subcommittees, what is the oath used when a member is sworn in, include our organizational chart, including selected policies presents a bigger picture that can be helpful. Making communication skills and a path more prominent could be helpful. The book could have a new member section followed by an experienced member section. Some members thought it should be a reference book for all members, not just new ones. It was noted that information about BLF should be included with ALG. This would be a project, maybe summer workshop or sooner.

5. The Committee thanked Ms. Presser for the excellent workshops, and adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda