



Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF)
Comprising meetings of the: Select Board, Finance Committee,
Library Board of Trustees, Planning Board and the AB Regional School
Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 10, 2020

APPROVED: December 8, 2020

At 7:02 PM Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Member Adam Klein called the virtual meeting to order via ZOOM. This meeting was conducted via Remote Participation, pursuant to the Current Executive Order.

Attendance

(Parties identified herein may not have been in attendance for the entire duration of this meeting)

ABR School Committee: Adam Klein, Nora Shine and Tessa McKinley,

Select Board: Wes Fowlks, Les Fox and Maria Neyland

Finance Committee: Gary Kushner and Becky Neville

Library Board of Trustees: Mary Brolin (also member of the School Building Comm.)

Planning Board: Cindy Markowitz and Robin Lazarow

Other Attendees: Ryan Ferrara, Town Administrator; Jennifer Barrett, Finance Dir./Town Accountant; Peishan Bartley, Library Director, John Fallon, Moderator and Cheryl Mahoney, Administrative Assistant

Minutes

Neville moved to accept the minutes of October 6, 2020. Seconded by Neyland. **Approved by Roll Call vote:10-0-1**, Shine "aye," Fowlks "aye," Kushner aye," Neville "aye," Brolin "aye," Lazarow "aye," Markowitz "aye," Neyland "aye," Markiewicz "aye," and Klein "aye," Fox abstained.

COVID-19 Updates - Ferrara

There are three active cases so there have been 35 households that have tested positive overall. Concerns were raised at today's bi weekly joint Boxborough, Acton and District meeting. 70 people are quarantining in Acton due to either testing positive or possible exposure. In the last 48 hours the District has been notified of nine positive cases at three different schools, however they believe that transmission is coming from outside sources not from student to student. These are not just concerning but are a reminder that we need to be careful in our planning. Boxborough residents seems to be going well; adhering to the updated mask mandates.

17 Laptops are being delivered so Town staff can work from home if necessary; taking this long-term perspective allows for the continuity of operations when facing the potential worsening circumstances.

Select Board updates – Fowlks

Town Hall is in the process of filling five staff positions.

The Select Board has appointed members to the new Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

The Select Board and Planning Board held a joint Master Plan review meeting last night.

AB Regional School Committee and School Building Project Committee updates - Klein

The ABRSC is working towards a final budget schedule, working backwards from the Town Meeting dates. They are hoping for the extended lead-time to allow them to work through all of the unknowns and variables due to COVID-19, including that the State's education numbers will not be coming out until January It was noted that

many of the tentative benchmarks in the draft ABRSC budget schedule do not work with the Town's standing timeline, including the joint BSB/FinCom respective Operating Budget and Capital Budget Saturday workshops. Boxborough closes its warrant in February and is finalized/signed at the end of March. Stakeholders will work together on these concerns and the means to have working numbers available to placeholder budget numbers. Acct./Fin.Dir. Barrett is working with the ABRSD to develop a workable budget schedule for all. There was a general discussion as to the budget factors. The Towns' percentages are determined by a three-year averaging and enrollment fluctuations.

There was discussion as to the possible impact of the continuing pandemic on Town Meeting. The Town will remain focused on the May 10th date while continuing to consider scenarios and plan for best practices measures. The Town still needs to put together a budget regardless of the pandemic.

ABRSC Chair McKinley expanded on the COVID exposure information provided by TA Ferrara. These were mostly family exposures; that occurred outside of school. They are spending significant resources on contact tracing. District families continue to have divergent opinions on in-school learning. The District has plans in place in case there is a need for closures. Supt. Light's position is that closures will only be determined by data, not opinions. The only other factor that might lead to closures was if they do not have enough live, in-school teachers available, as the District does not have a sufficient sub pool if teachers have to remove themselves from the school. There was discussion about keeping schools open for the holiday week to discourage travel.

Brolin reported that the bid packet is out on the school building project and there is already significant interest. She provided an overview as to how the bid process works. Due to unanticipated issues such as finding ledge, they are having to commit significant funds to site preparations. They may need to consider blasting. They have also started digging for the geo thermal wells.

Library updates – Bartley

The contractor was working on the Veterans Tribute project today.

Painting project bid advertisement was published in late October, and there has been a lot of interest from contractors. Due to the season they would not start until the spring.

They are continuing to offer browsing appointments and curbside pickups for now, however they are tracking the upswing in local cases and might need to suspend browsing.

The curbside process is labor intensive that takes a lot of management however, CWMARS is working to develop a software that would be able to manage the logistics/scheduling functions.

Planning Board updates - Markowitz

The Planning Board and Select Board held a joint meeting last night to review the status of the Boxborough 2030 Master Plan. They hope to get the updates up on the website.

The consultant they retained to conduct an audit review the Town's Zoning Bylaws has delivered their findings, they will now be discussing next steps, including considering possible amendments.

They have had discussions with the Citizen Petitioner. It seems fairly well-formed petition. The Petitioner is reaching out to other boards/committees, to conduct her due diligence. Another public hearing will be needed. TA Ferrara advised that Town Counsel has responded to the Board of Health on questions they had regarding this petition. The Select Board advised they have not been contacted recently. Moderator Fallon has been working with the Petitioner and reported that she considers the current her final version. However, it needs to be clarified whether she needs to generate another petition and get the requisite signatures.

The Planning Board will be working with the Select Board on 5G technology concerns. Littleton has already begun to work on their regulations. Littleton Electric is working with both Towns on these issues.

Finance Committee updates

Ling Chen will be asked to step up to serve on the Cable Advisory Committee.

They have reviewed the Community Preservation applications. RecCom will be coming to their next meeting to discuss their Liberty Fields renovations and proposed phasing of the project. With the continuing low bonding rates [recent bonding went out at 0.75%] FinCom would prefer that this project be done all at once and not piecemealed. Phasing increases costs.

Budget updates

They have done an initial review of the proposed FY 2022 Budget/ATM Timeline.

A significant discussion as to sufficient support staffing to meet the Town’s needs and the repercussions of the Town Clerk’s pending retirement should occur.

Other Business

Town Clerk Markiewicz was congratulated on her management of the recent election, including the early voting activities. TA Ferrara reported that there was one negative incident with a voter,who came in for early voting, attempted to retrieve their ballot from the ballot box and subsequently posted images that they took to Facebook. This incident was referred to the Police and the District Attorney’s office. In response, additional measures were taken to secure the ballot box.

TA Ferrara shared pictures of the Veteran Tribute TC project.

TA Ferrara reported that due to additional measures [installing drainage] now being required by MassDOT the Route 111/Mass Ave. sidewalk project has been push back to next spring. They are targeting April and the Town is mindful that the grant runs in June 2021.

Brolin encouraged everyone to get out and hike our trails.

Next meeting will be chaired by the Finance Committee on December 8, 2020

Adjourn

At 7:58 PM Fowlks moved to adjourn. Seconded by Neyland. **Approved by Roll Call vote:11-0**, Fowlks “aye,” Kushner aye,” Shine “aye,” Brolin “aye,” Markowitz “aye,” Lazarow “aye,” Markiewicz “aye,” Neyland “aye,” McKinley “aye,” Neville “aye,” and Klein “aye,”

Exhibits

- Agenda
- Minutes of 10/06/20 – Draft
- Proposed FY 22 ABRSC Budget/ATM Timeline
- BLF leadership schedule
- Pictures of the VTC project