

Ipswich School Committee
Thursday, January 18, 2018
7:00PM
Middle/High School Ensemble Room

Agenda

II. OPEN SESSION

Following an executive session, Ms. Player, Chair, called the meeting back to order in open session at 7:08pm with the following members present: Mr. Whitten, Ms. Kneedler, and Mr. Hopping. Also present were Mr. Bergener, High School Student Representative, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Blake and Ms. Cuff, Director of Finance and Operations. Mr. O’Flynn joined the meeting at 7:14pm and Ms. Zito joined the meeting at 7:36pm.

READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

High School Student Representative Mr. Bergner read the mission statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Player read the following announcements:

- Combined School Building Committee/School Committee meeting on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at Town Hall, Meeting Room A at 7:00pm
- The next School Committee meeting will be Thursday, February 1, 2018 at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Ensemble Room
- The middle school is holding a Geography Bee on Friday 1/19 at 8:30 AM. All students will attend.
- Also, National Read Aloud Day is Thursday February 1st. This is another whole school event!
- The 9th grade history fair was taking place in the high school at the time of the School Committee meeting.

CITIZEN’S QUERIES

None.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kathy Simms and the entire 6th grade class were acknowledged by the School Committee for their work in helping to raise over \$500,000 in three weeks for cureCMT4J. Ms. Simms explained that after taking a Project Based Learning course in November, she was looking for ways to take her cookie jar project a step further and add a fundraising component. After the success of the cookie jar project, the STEAM teachers came up with the idea for a viral video that included the entire 6th grade class and teachers. Ms. Simms talked about the process and how it created a ripple effect- kids from all grades, neighboring towns and across the nation came together. It was a lesson that small contributions can make a big change. Ms. Simms described the experience as an “unpredicted powerful learning”.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Student representative, Mr. Bergener, stated the past week had been uneventful at the high school. Students were gearing up for midterms the following week. He also mentioned that 30 student musicians

participated in a district competition. Sixteen of those students have moved on to the state level competition with the possibility of advancing to “all states”.

SUPERINTENDENT’S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

B. FUNDRAISING RECOGNITION

This was addressed in the Special Acknowledgement portion of the meeting.

C. WHITTIER TECH UPDATE

Whittier Tech School Committee member Garry James, Superintendent Maureen Lynch and Business Manager, Kara Cosmos presented an informational session on Whittier Tech and Ipswich’s role within the school. Ms. Lynch led the presentation stating that Whittier Tech serves 11 cities and towns. The school has opted to not accept Choice students due to the increase in in-district student applications. 24.3% of the Whittier Tech student population is special education. 40% of the Ipswich students that are enrolled in the school are special education students. In 2016, 88.5% of Ipswich students with disabilities graduated from the school. Ms. Lynch stated there are currently 28 Ipswich students attending Whittier Tech and used a slide to show the breakdown of career paths of those students. The next slide showed the percentage of low income students attending Whittier to be 30%, slightly lower than the state average. Some budget considerations for the upcoming school year include payroll, insurance, statement of interest and a stabilization account for capital projects- the main being a feasibility study. Ms. Lynch further explained that their current building is 50 years old and in desperate need of attention. She also explained that money going into the stabilization fund comes from budget surplus. The School Committee would vote to use those funds if needed. Whittier Tech has received several grants recently including a Life Science Grant to develop makerspaces, a Capital Equipment Grant to revitalize Machine Technology, and a grant from Project Lead the Way to support engineering technology. The total grant money given this year was \$635,000. Future plans for the school include a Dental Assisting program, child care center, post secondary programs, and updating athletic fields. Ms. Lynch then shared examples of the students giving back to their communities through programs like a traveling culinary team and town beautification projects. She finished the presentation by explaining to the Committee that Whittier Tech has the lowest cost per student of any vocational school in the state.

After being thanked for their presentation, the Whittier Tech team responded to questions by the Committee surrounding decision making, tuition increases, capital costs, etc. It was explained that the School Committee, comprised of a member of each of the 11 cities or towns Whittier serves, acts as the governing board for price increases and capital investments. All communities contribute to major capital costs through tuition increases. Currently, Whittier Tech has no debt. It was also explained that when creating the yearly budget, Maureen and Kara consult with the Town Manager of Ipswich.

D. COMPUTER SCIENCE AND DIGITAL LITERACY STANDARDS

The Director of Teaching and Learning, Ms. Wagner, presented with the Integrated Technology Director, Chris Burke on the Digital Literacy and Computer Science Standards introduced by the state in June 2016. Ms. Wagner shared the vision:

Digital Literacy and Computer Science knowledge, reasoning, and skills are essential both to prepare students for personal and civic efficacy in the twenty-first century and to prepare and inspire a much larger and more diverse number of students to pursue the innovative and creative careers of the future. The abilities to effectively use and create technology to solve complex problems are the new and essential literacy skills of the twenty-first century.

Ms. Wagner also discussed the guiding principles, highlighting the following, which she explained were all nods to what the district is already doing:

- *Teaching- An effective program is based in a carefully designed set of content standards that are clear and specific, focused, and articulated over time as a coherent sequence.*
- *Literacy Across the Content Areas- An effective digital literacy and computer science program builds and develops students' literacy skills and knowledge.*
- *Planning and Support- A effective digital literacy and computer science program requires coherent district-wide planning and ongoing support for implementation.*

Ms. Wagner then explained the Learning Progression “strands” listed on the DLCS overview are not meant to be stand alones, but rather integrated into curriculum areas. Strands will be combined into two groups-*Computing and Society* and *Digital Tools and Collaboration* will be combined and *Computing Systems* and *Computational Thinking* have been combined. The Computer Science PLC, with members from all grade levels, have tackled *Computing Systems* and *Computational Thinking* through events like Hour of Code. The Technology Committee has been working on the *Computing and Society* and *Digital Tools and Collaboration* strands with a focus on safety and security and digital footprints. They are also working on a timeline to produce “power standards”.

The next steps include the introduction of priority standards in Spring 2018. Ms. Wagner would like to work to create a space to hold resources to support content teachers with the implementation of these new standards. In the next school year, Ms. Wagner will work with staff to draft curriculum and go through learning cycles with the intent to blend these new standards into core curriculum.

Overall, Ms. Wagner believes that the Ipswich School District is ahead of the curve, but now has a better direction from the state on how to incorporate these new standards. As she does with all standards, these, too will be revisited each year. The collaboration will not change, but the “tools” will. Ms. Wagner, with the help of Ms. Burke is also working on creating a document to include what skills students need to know at what age.

E. FINANCIAL REPORT

Director of Finance and Operations, Ms. Cuff presented the finance report as follows:

Warrant Article Submissions

Three warrant articles for the May 2018, Town Meeting have been prepared and were submitted to the Town Manager on January 2nd. For the first time in FY19 we will be using funding from the Education Stabilization Fund to support the appropriated budget total.

The second and third articles were submitted as placeholders for transfer of appropriated funds into the Educational Stabilization Fund or the newly established Special Education Stabilization Fund. While it is still too early to determine if there will be funds available for transfer, in order to have the opportunity to move the funds in May the articles need to be represented on the warrant.

Wind Turbine Meeting

Last week, a meeting was held with the Ipswich Utilities Department to learn more about the wind turbine and its potential impact on our budget. Topics discussed included the status of the MOU, maintenance needs and the REC commodity credits. Ray Leczynski, Utilities Director, explained to us that the school department credits are based on two revenue sources: Renewable Energy Credits (REC) and the value of the electricity generated by the turbine. Since the turbine came on line its performance and the value of the electricity generated remains steady. In recent years, the commodity market has changed and the REC prices have fallen. Although these RECs have been sold in advance, and we have seen a slight decrease in our credits to date, they expect that next year we will see a significant drop the amount of REC credits awarded to the school department. John Blair, Business Manager, has estimated this reduction to be between \$30,000 and \$40,000 in FY19.

The topic of the gearbox maintenance/replacement was very informative. Industry standards indicate that major repair work is usually required on this mechanism after seven years of operation. The system which is monitored electronically will reach the point of repair at any time in the next few years. In order to be proactive, the utilities department has asked the school department to reserve \$63,000 for three years so that funding will be available when the time comes to do the repair. The utilities department does consider this funding as “capital funding” and has budgeted for the repair work in their capital plan. While the school department did add this to the FY19 Capital Plan submission, it was not move forward by the Town Manager for funding.

When the repairs finally do take place, the wind turbine will be taken off line for a period of approximately six weeks. To minimize the loss of credits received from electricity generation while the system is down, the utilities department hopes to schedule the repair during months with lowest electricity generation.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Next week, the district will be participating in a special education transportation review. Performed by members of the Massachusetts Special Needs Transportation Task Force, the study will look at our current transportation practices and, hopefully, provide us with instruction on creating cost efficiencies in the area of student transportation. One of the reviewers, Colleen Cavanaugh has been involved in special education transportation management for over 25 years. Beverly Hegedus successfully sought out a matching funding grant from the DESE which will reduce the cost to the district by 50%. The cost to the district for the study will be \$3,000. Attached for your review is a listing of the documentation the team has asked to review.

F. SCHOOL BUILDING UPDATE

Dr. Blake spoke to the Committee about the two visioning meetings that took place on Wednesday, January 17, 2018. Both meetings were invitation only with the purpose of presenting an overview of the project and an update to school council members and Ipswich business owners and community members. Dr. Blake reported that he received great feedback from both groups. Some of the takeaways from the meetings included how to better educate the community of the importance of this building, to explain the need for the project, not try to sell it and how to better prepare for the conversation that will take place at Town Meeting.

The next SBC meeting will be January 24, 2018 at Town Hall in room A. The next meeting will discuss special education spaces and there will be a vote on the special education plan to send to DESE for approval. Plans will include the location of the spaces, their intent, and the number of spaces. It was asked by the Committee to have the presentation sent ahead of the meeting so they may draft questions in advance.

IV. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. VOUCHERS AND BILLS

B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE-** The subcommittee met on January 17, 2018. They discussed with the IEF items that needed funding and were told that some “no” items may still be considered. Winter sports numbers are down. Chris Tolios has resigned as the high school baseball coach. The group will be revisiting the rental policy. In a future meeting, they plan to look at the number of sports being offered compared to the number of students participating.
- b. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE-**did not meet.
- c. GRANT SUBCOMMITTEE-** did not meet. It was noted that Jen Spencer is the new chair of the Mini-Grant Committee.
- d. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE-** did not meet.
- e. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE-** Their next scheduled meeting is January 23, 2018.
- f. TURF FIELD SUBCOMMITTEE-** did not meet.
- g. SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE-** previously discussed in meeting.
- h. NEW BUSINESS**
 - Mr. O’Flynn asked the Committee if there is any current policy on the flu immunization for staff and if not, could that be a consideration. It was explained that there is not currently a policy that mandates teacher’s receive a flu vaccination, however the school does offer the vaccine to all teachers in the fall.
 - Ms. Player read an email from Garry James, Whittier Tech Representative, expressing his interest in continuing his term for the next three years. His term as Whittier Tech School Committee member expires in March 2018.

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Ms. Zito to renew Mr. James’ term as the Whittier Tech School Committee member representing Ipswich. UNANIMOUS.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Player moved, seconded by Mr. Hopping to accept the following:

- The minutes of the January 10, 2018 Open Session Meeting.
- An anonymous donation in the amount of \$2,000 for the Plymouth Plantation field trip to be deposited into the Winthrop School Gift Account.
- A check in the amount of \$511.80 from Box Top Education to be deposited into the Winthrop School Gift Account.

UNANIMOUS.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Mr. Whitten to adjourn the meeting at 9:16pm. UNANIMOUS.