

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018
7:00 PM
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM

I. OPEN SESSION

Members present: Sarah Player, Hugh O'Flynn, Charles Whitten, Pavika Kneedler, Barry Hopping, Nicole Zito, and Carl Nylén.

Others present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent, Joanne Cuff, Director of Finance & Operations, Chris Bergner, Student Representative

Sarah Player, SC Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:16pm.

READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT - Chris Bergner

ANNOUNCEMENTS - Sarah Player, School Committee Chair

- The School Committee will be presenting the FY19 School Budget to the Finance Committee over three nights- March 13, 14, 15 at Town Hall, Meeting Room A at 7:30pm.
- The Policy Subcommittee will meet on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 7pm in the MS/HS Guidance Conference room.
- There will be an Athletic Subcommittee Meeting on Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at 6pm in the MS/HS Guidance Conference Room.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

- Carl Gardner, Wood's Lane wanted to follow up on his questions from the last meeting including the cost of the Winthrop School building and doing something with it rather than give it to the Selectmen. What are your feelings about that? Secondly, there is a number floating around that there is a \$400,000 savings by consolidating the 2 schools. Is there a public document that breaks that down? Ms. Player & Mr. O'Flynn stated that the budget sub-committee is looking at potential costs, savings in energy costs. It was a small document 1.5 years ago. Mr. Gardner is still unclear as to the answers, stating there is no evidence for that \$400,000 figure. Mr. Nylén said that there are a number of considerations to building costs - analysis done by previous superintendent (9-12 months ago) was for potential and preliminary estimates for cost savings including staff. Dr. Blake said that he does not know if the details are public - not accurate of current plan - cost savings report needs to be re-done. Mr. Gardner said that at a meeting last fall, Dr. Ken Cooper said that the building was too big for an administrator to run like a small school. It is still unclear to him - wants to be upfront to the community sooner rather than later - encouraged the One School group to

remove the \$400,000 figure from its website. Mr. Nylen rebutted stating that the number is not necessarily invalid, but the analysis needs to be revisited. Mr. Gardner wants to compare an update with new assumptions and detail.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Mr. Hopping gave a shout out to the IHS Robotics Team, which is competing for 2 days with over 100 teams in Windham, NH. Discussion followed as to how the competition works.
- Ms. Zito gave kudos to Kathy Simms for the Suzy Boss article written about her work fundraising for RM4TJ Foundation.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - Christopher Bergner, IHS Student Representative

- Florida school shooting hit hard; former IHS student attends there and is fine. The week before break was stressful.
- This week's drug assembly went over well.
- Students are glad to hear about tomorrow's safety assembly.
- The Junior/Senior Cotillion is going on as planned tomorrow night (3/2); however, because of impending storm, all students attending must ride the bus.
- Students are concerned about the weather.
- There is a blood drive on March 6th, sponsored by the Red Cross and Interact Club.
- The Class of 2019 is holding a movie fundraiser tomorrow night (3/2), showing Zootopia.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT -Dr. Brian J. Blake, Superintendent

- Attended screening interviews for town manager, 3 moved forward, public meetings this weekend
- Attended Policy Sub-Committee meetings (remove from tonight's agenda - not ready)
- Met with Technology Director and Athletic Director
- Attended ASA Conference in Nashville - speakers: Newtown Superintendent, Khan Academy founder, Doris Kearns Goodwin
- Negotiations planning with teachers
- Engineering School Building - \$400,000 under budget
- Met with Lt. John Hubbard regard school safety
- In Bill Hodge's absence, conducted custodial interviews
- Ed Eval Committee meetings
 - Model discussions to see what works, what doesn't, improvements
 - Additional training/professional development for Administration
 - May not be included in current collective bargaining this go-round

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

PUBLIC HEARING FOR SCHOOL BUDGET -Sarah Player opened the hearing at 7:38pm, no stipulations for time limit

- Mr. Hopping asked if there were any changes to the budget presented previously. Joanne Cuff reported that health insurance costs are much lower than predicted, so stabilization funds will not need to be used (savings could be used for security upgrades). There has been staff movement within the schools (new hire at Doyon). School Committee needs to consider FinCom assessment of \$19,500 for trash removal - based on 12 month pick-up cycle. She will analyze the assessment. Dr. O'Flynn asked about and RFP for private pick-up vs. town pick-up. Ms. Cuff stated due to time involved in developing RFP, it would not be done in time and asked if the school committee really wanted to take on that cost. Dr. O'Flynn asked Ms. Player to contact the town manager to attend meeting to explain assessment. Carl Nysten seconded the request.
- Discussion followed regarding cost savings for Medical. Mr. Nysten asked Ms. Cuff what happens at the end of the budget cycle when drawing on Stabilization Funds. She cannot determine a figure because we have to ensure funds for the \$250,000 feasibility study of the new school.. Ms. Cuff has already put a placeholder on the town warrant. She wants to speak with the Budget Sub-Committee, and move money into the Special Education Stabilization fund.
 - Ms. Cuff asked for a motion to approve \$29,795,216 plus \$2,533,775 of outside debt for a total budget for FY 2018-2019 of \$32,329,091.
Dr. O'Flynn made the motion, Mr. Nysten seconded, and the vote was unanimously approved.

SCHOOL CHOICE DISCUSSION

- Ms. Zito asked if there was deadline that needed to be met. Ms. Player responded that there is May 1st deadline as to whether the District will participate in School Choice, but that date has fluctuated during her time on School Committee.
- Lengthy discussion regarding philosophical vs. budgetary decision to accept Choice students.
 - Some members feel that the District's goal is to decrease dependence on outside funding - including Choice - and want to know what en
 - Projections are for a drop of 200 students over next 2 years
 - Not clear on enrollment levels in order to maintain programming
 - Realize no plan for this year's decision
 - Dr. Blake: Choice students are significantly tied to budget - many original choice have graduated or will within next year, but School Committee has chosen to not open slots for replacement. This will alter how budget is done going forward.

- What are numbers required for MS & HS to run specific programming?
 - Dr. Blake: With declining enrollment, decision points are made along the way
 - Mr. Hopping: Tough to determine based on placement
 - Mr. O'Flynn: The number of teachers in 2014 is the same as today, even though enrollment is lower.
- Discussion regarding what programming the District would have with lower enrollment and how other districts offering high caliber programs and serving their students across the spectrum. Comment that all enrollment is declining, thus the Choice pool is also shrinking.
- Discussion regarding what a district of 1500 students looks like in terms of education delivery. Some feel that there is not as much demand for choice slots.
- Discussion regarding "who" choice students are. Faculty members' children are not counted as Choice. Siblings of current Choice students are 1st acceptance if there are open slots. If no slots are available, siblings are not accepted.
- In the past, MS opened a large number of slots in order to maintain its model. Reports are that the HS benefited financially from this decision. MS currently wants 71 slots open so as to maintain its current model (just laid off 2 teachers). Some members felt it was better to open elementary slots so that they can move up through the system. Question regarding what will happen if all slots are open, staff is hired/re-hired, then the slots are not filled.
- Discussion regarding class numbers and whether Choice students affects education if classes are larger - if adding numbers to a class draws energy & resources from the teacher.
- Discussion regarding Choice students being motivated, added value to District, cost addition to schools is negligible, can continue to add as positive contributors, raises bar across the arts, academia, and athletics
- Dr. O'Flynn wants to add Choice students where possible so as not to change the current model. MS and elementary schools should be easy - HS is more difficult; need to maintain the diversity of the population.
- Questions as to whether a decision needs to be made now.
- *Dr. O'Flynn made a motion to participate in School Choice for the 2018-2019 school year. Ms. Kneeder seconded. Motion approved with vote of 5 in favor, 2 against (SP and BH).*
 - More discussion regarding the fact that they can vote on specific numbers later and a request was made to have school principals justify their numbers at a later meeting. Ms. Zito stated that she is not advocating for Choice to overtax teachers, but if the student is an Ipswich resident already in the class (who may move) or School Choice, it shouldn't matter. Target student #s per educator: K (20); 1-2 (18-20), 3-5 (24), 6-8

- (24). Ms. Zito feels low numbers are not good for a class (18 is too low, 20 is great). Mr. Hopping suggested we look at reasons people leave the District (private, Choice, etc.) and address those issues.
 - Discussion regarding NESDEC study.
- *Dr. O’Flynn made a motion to accept 5 Choice spots in grade 2 and 3 Choice spots in grade 4 at Winthrop. Ms. Zito seconded. Mr. Nylan is not comfortable with this and requested that it be revisited. The motion failed with a vote of 3 in favor, 3 against, and 1 abstention.*
 - Need to come back to numbers; want more MS & HS information (Administration to attend future meeting); want feedback from teachers regarding Choice #s adding to classroom size.

SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE - Sarah Player, School Committee Chair

- Combined meeting
- Brought budget into alignment - good conversation
- Discussion regarding why cover board (roof protection boards to walk to HVAC unit, protecting roof) over entire roof was eliminated.
- Value Engineering budget was disseminated at the meeting - will try to get electronic version for SC members.
- Discussion regarding steel vs. aluminum costs
- List of things reduced from budget but could be added later.
- Comment regarding good practice to continue to scrutinize costs, how to better understand the cost implications. Dr. Blake recommended to look at the Architect Estimator Report for individual things and costs associated with them.
- Mr. Hopping discussed his attendance at the Universal Design conference put on by the Boston Society of Architects related to sensory integrated into building design. He was pleased to be invited - 30 people in attendance Focus on students’ sensory issues on daily basis - textured walls, meandering hallway, students with eye contact issues need LED lighting on floor to guide them, flowers, sensory rooms throughout the building, parametric space (personal bubble), “EIFS” Wall (stucco insulation - similar to soundboard). Things that trigger sensory issues: sound, touch/vision, movement, body awareness.
- Solutions/Answers for Town Meeting
 - Administration & Organization (staffing all levels, grade configuration) - Educators & Administrators should have huge input
 - Committee Members, Administration, Educators to visit to similar sized schools (Georgetown [690] & Newburyport [685] - new buildings)
 - Open schools to show why 1 new school is needed. Dr. Blake asked principals to do this & hold forums to motivate the community without children; arrange tours while school is in session; school committee members to email Ms. Player their availability to lead tours; Dr. Blake to meet with Council on Aging - maybe arrange lunch with students in their cafeterias.

- Transportation (buses, parent pick-up/drop-off)
- Operations/Maintenance/Capital (what it will cost to keep the building running)
- Picking person(s) in building - do "A Day in the Life", how do they navigate the building, get to what they want. (Virtual reality: Doyon/Winthrop vs. new building)
 - Ms. Zito gets stopped often by parents regarding EDP size, where EDP will be located. We need to make clear that it will be a good experience for small children.

The next school building committee meeting has not yet been scheduled.

PRINCIPAL SEARCH UPDATE - Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools

- Received a wide variety of applicants (45) from public, private, in-state, out-of-state principals, assistant principals, teachers
- Good pool
- Committee members include:
 - Meghan Horst, 1st year IHS Math Teacher & Andy Sargent - IHS English Teacher
 - 2 Parents Rachel Rossler &
 - Barry Hopping & Hugh O'Flynn - School Committee
 - Tom Gallagher, AD - Administration
- Plan is to screen applicants next week and set meetings for following week.
 - Discussion regarding sharing confidential applications and grading rubric for committee members - scan applications and put in Drop Box. Committee members to review, grade. Those meeting a minimum grade (TBD) will move on to next round. Dr. Blake suggested a beginning of April decision deadline.
 - Meeting to set up rubric will be scheduled. Members to email 6 year old MS principal search, recent superintendent search rubrics.

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. VOUCHERS/BILLS - Joanne Cuff reported it was all set.

B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE - scheduled for Wednesday, March 7, 2018
2. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE - changes, budget, impact & focus groups
3. GRANT SUBCOMMITTEES -
 - Instructional Mini-Grant Subcommittee - 5/4 submission deadline; check-in with Administrative Assistants by 4/27 regarding vendors & buying groups; informational meeting during March
 - OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE - need to schedule meeting

- POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE - meeting on Tuesday, 6/6, Part 2 of Policy G
 - TURF FIELD SUBCOMMITTEE - trouble with vendor not responding; promised to have specs for Stage 2; he has the plans but none of our money; may have an answer next week.
 - SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE - already discussed
4. NEW BUSINESS
- Mr. Nylen asked about implementation of new drug screening - state mandated opiate legislation - doesn't remember discussing it. Dr. Blake responded that it was administered already at MS. It is in-house during the school day - only an interview to answer questions. Parents were notified and they can opt out. Less than a handful chose that option.
 - Dr. Blake reported that the Ipswich AWARE Youth Behavioral Risk Survey is coming soon. Based on the Gloucester Survey (which is more thorough), provides a baseline & enables IPS to apply for grants. It is not mandated by law, but he spoke at length with Ipswich Police Department and Ipswich AWARE.
 - Mr. Nylen said a nice job was done in responding to parents regarding the school shooting in Florida and that the District should have more conversation regarding school violence at the school committee and community levels.
 - Arming teachers
 - Need to be prepared to be vocal, not silet
 - Dr. Blake reported that students want to participate in the 3/14 nationwide walk-out. It is not "sanctioned", but they will allow it for the 17 minutes and has asked for police support during that time so that it is organized and safe. Staff will be there to support students on both sides. Students will not be disciplined for participating.

IV. CONSENT

- 2/8/2018 Meeting Minutes: No votes were reflected in the last meeting's minutes for budget approval. Laura will amend the minutes to show the motions and votes, then it will be put on the agenda for approval at the next School Committee Meeting.
- Ms. Player read the following:
 Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept a \$500 donation to support the FRC Robotics Team to be deposited into the high school gift account.
 Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept a \$75 donation to support the Robotics Team to be deposited into the high school gift account.

Ms. Kneedler made a motion to approve, Mr. Nysten seconded, and the vote passed unanimously.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Nysten made a motion to adjourn the Open Meeting. Ms. Kneedler seconded, and the vote was unanimous. Ms. Player adjourned the meeting at 9:35pm.

NEXT IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 and Thursday, March 15, 2018 7pm-9:30pm - SC Budget Presentation to Finance Committee Town Hall

***All business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Agenda items may be taken out of order to fill time gaps and/or to accommodate presenters when necessary. All times are approximate.**