

Ipswich School Committee
Thursday, November 30, 2017 at 7:00PM
MS/ HS Ensemble Room, 130 High Street, Ipswich

Minutes

II. OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sarah Player called the meeting to order at 7:08PM with the following School Committee members present: C. Nysten, N. Zito, B. Hopping, P. Kneedler, C. Whitten, and H. O’Flynn. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Blake, Finance Director J. Cuff and High School Student Representative C. Bergner.

READING OF THE MISSION STATEMENT

C. Bergner read the Mission Statement

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Wednesday, December 6-** MEP Subcommittee Meeting at 7:00pm, Town Hall, Room C
- **Thursday, December 7-** School Building Committee Sustainability Committee Meeting at 5:00 pm, Town Hall, Room C
- **Thursday, December 7-** School Committee Meeting, MS/HS Ensemble Room, 7:00 pm
- **Tuesday, December 12-** Policy Subcommittee Meeting, MS/HS Guidance Conference Room, 7:00pm
- **Thursday, December 14-** MEP Subcommittee Meeting at 5:00pm and a Sustainability Subcommittee Meeting at 7:00pm, both at Town Hall, Room C
- **Monday, December 18-** Turf Field Subcommittee Meeting at 6:00pm, MS/HS Guidance Conference Room

CITIZENS COMMENTS

None

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Blake made the following acknowledgements:

1. **Congratulations to Lori LaFrance for receiving a recognition from the Ipswich Democratic Town Committee:**

“The members of the Ipswich Democratic Town Committee each year selects an organization or individual demonstrating the aspirations contained in the Massachusetts Democratic Platform. Our 2017 award goes to Lori LaFrance and her Sustainability Scholars for their tireless efforts to affect change in the public’s perception of packaging and other contributors to pollution and global warming.”

2. Congratulations are in order for Mr. Steve Hopping.

Steve was inducted into the Ipswich High School Athletic Hall of Fame Friday, November 23rd. Steve played football, hockey and baseball at Ipswich High School, played baseball at the University of Maine and was later a successful varsity baseball coach, as well as an assistant football coach at Ipswich High School.

Dr. Blake also recognized Jen Reed, nurse at the Middle School for performing lifesaving skills on a student choking during lunch. The student was reported to be okay.

Angel Hopping was also acknowledged for her years of service with the Ipswich Public Schools. She will be retiring at the end of December.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Bergner reported that winter sports have begun at the high school and students are working to return all forms required to participate. The Jingle Bell Walk will be taking place on Saturday, December 2nd. He encouraged attendance at the event. Bergner also stated he was approached by students with complaints regarding the closure of the first floor bathroom at the high school and wished to bring it to the attention of the School Committee. The School Committee acknowledged his concerns and directed him to speak with the High School Principal on this matter. He ended his report with good news, acknowledging the football team's Thanksgiving game victory over Hamilton-Wenham High School.

A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Dr. Blake attended his monthly North Shore Superintendent's Round Table event where they looked at an online program designed to simulate complex classroom issues and ethical dilemmas to be used as a tool for administrators to both evaluate and help teachers in the handling of difficult situations. He met with Keith Borgen, Tech Director, to talk about the status of system updates and infrastructure. He has asked Keith to attend an upcoming meeting to give a tech update. Dr. Blake attended a meeting at the State House with Senator Bruce Tarr where they discussed local issues including funding. He also attended his weekly Leadership Team meeting and discussed with them his policy manual project calendar and reviewed sections of policy with them. On Monday, December 27th, Dr. Blake attended a hazard mitigation meeting at Town Hall to discuss preparedness. He attended a Crest Collaborative Board Meeting and was provided with a copy of their annual report. Dr. Blake had a call in the with MSBA to discuss their feedback on the last presentation, as well as next steps in presenting the Preferred Schematic Report in December. He attended a Turf Field meeting prior to the School Building Committee combined meeting and has an upcoming Policy Subcommittee meeting planned. Lastly, Dr. Blake attended a Community Collaboration meeting where the District Attorney presented on human trafficking and signs to look out for in students. Overall, it was a busy week.

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

B. FIELD TRIP REQUEST TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Middle School teachers Kevin Murphy and Karen Reed presented a field trip request to Washington, D.C. for the 8th grade class in June 2018. This trip was designed as both an educational experience and an end of the year celebration. Through the attendance of this trip, students will be able to develop a more personal connection with our Nation's capital, connect curriculum themes to the memorials and monuments they visit, recognize the ultimate sacrifices our Veterans and to celebrate 3 years together as a class before moving on to high school. The trip has been organized through Capital Tours, Inc. The cost of the tour per student will be \$760 (based on 120 students attending) which includes 3 meals per day and food vouchers, security, tour guides and hotel accommodations. Day trips will be organized for those students who chose not to attend the trip.

Mr. Whitten moved, seconded by Mr. Nylen to support the trip with Washington, D.C. in June 2018.
UNANIMOUS.

C. MILE LANE BATTING CAGE PRESENTATION

Athletic Director Tom Gallagher notified the School Committee that he had received a donation from the Friends of Ipswich Baseball for a state-of-the-art fenced batting cage to be installed at Mile Lane Field. The Ipswich Education Fund will also support funding for the project. The cage is the first part of a three year plan to provide renovations to the varsity baseball facility. The site for the cage is in the open space between the left field foul line and the soccer field. The dimensions of the cage will allow for it to be used both as a bullpen and batting cage. A proposal from 360 Sports Systems was submitted and includes construction and installation of the cage, turf, and batter box. They are prepared to complete the project by the start of the 2018 season. The School Committee members stressed the importance of security surrounding the new facility to which Mr. Gallagher assured them it was a priority.

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn to grant permission to build the batting cage on the Mile Lane property. UNANIMOUS.

D. SCHOOL COMMITTEE NORMS

Mr. Nylen explained to the Committee that at their last meeting, the Operations Subcommittee developed a draft of School Committee Norms. The norms were pulled from the MASC, School Committee handbooks and contributions from Operations Subcommittee members. The draft norms are as follows:

1. We acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a meeting of the School Committee that is held in public and we will make every effort to ensure that Committee meetings are effective and efficient.
2. We will strive to reach decisions by consensus and recognize that a member's authority is derived only through a majority decision of the committee acting as a whole during an open, public

meeting. Once the School Committee has taken action, members will support the official position of the School Committee.

3. We agree to debate the issues not each other and all members will contribute to maintaining an open meeting environment where each member is encouraged to freely express opinions, concerns and ideas.
4. We will strive to have no surprises for the committee or superintendent. All members will receive the same information on all topics in a timely manner.
5. It is our responsibility to set the tone for the entire school system, and we will make every effort to promote a positive image for our school system. We will operate transparently and respectfully, maintain confidentiality, and respect the Open Meeting laws.
6. We recognize the importance of professional growth and development, and agree to participate in formal training and experiences designed to further our knowledge and understanding. All new School Committee members will participate in an orientation session, and if desired, a School Committee mentor will be assigned.

Mr. Nysten explained further that these norms were not created to solve a problem the Committee is having, but rather to act as guidelines to how the Committee operated. Ms. Zito stated that as a new School Committee member, she believes the norms help with the onboarding process. After a discussion on where the norms are housed and where they will stand in the future, it was suggested that as part of the annual goal setting, the School Committee would also revisit the norms. Mr. Nysten suggested that the norms be made into policy which can be revisited annually.

Ms. Zito moved, seconded by Mr. Whitten to accept the School Committee norms for this year.
UNANIMOUS.

E. FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. Cuff reported she created a new format of the appropriated budget making it easier to navigate. She is cautiously watching the increased demand in special education funding which includes an increase in need for additional substitutes for paraprofessionals on long term leave and unilateral student placements. It was suggested that the Director of Pupil and Personnel Services could attend a meeting to discuss with the Committee the drivers for increased spending in the special education budget, which Ms. Cuff agreed could be very informative. A discussion evolved around growing concerns that the special education budget may be spiraling out of control and the Committee should know of any dramatic demands the department incurs. Ms. Cuff explained that the State does offer “pothole” funding to districts who experience drastic mid year increases in spending. It was decided the Committee would draft a list of questions for Dr. Hegedus to include clarity on out placements, the increase of paraprofessionals versus professionals in the schools and the direction of the special education budget.

Ms. Cuff went on to discuss the revolving gift accounts, explaining that as of tonight’s presentation, two recreation grant funds were in the red. The grants were in, however they had not been processed and therefore were not reflected on her spreadsheet. The Audit Committee will be meeting December 19th at 7pm. There were questions around the timeliness of the meeting to which Ms. Cuff explained that the

work had been completed by October 10th and that the delay was due to scheduling conflicts. As previously mentioned at a prior meeting, the audit was clean.

Ms. Cuff also reported that the staff transitions in the Business Office were going well.

F. BUDGET PROCESS REVIEW

The budget packet was sent to administrators before Thanksgiving and included a timeline, all available budget lines and a FTE comparison worksheet. All that appeared in the FY18 budget, appears in the FY19 budget. Now through mid December is the “gathering information” phase. Administrators will be focusing on program needs, supplies, and FTE’s, while Central Office will spend time looking at fixed costs, utilities cost projections, health insurance, contracts and settlements. On December 18th, the first draft of the budget is due. At that point, a discussion regarding outside funding and circuit breaker accounts begins. In January, an electronic version of the budget, as well as the book, will be distributed to all School Committee members. It was suggested to Ms. Cuff that the Finance Committee be presented with the budget further in advance of their meeting. Ms. Cuff explained that is dependent on the amount of changes and edits that occur between the administrators and the School Committee. The budget is then presented to the Finance Committee in late March and following that meeting, it is voted on at the Town Meeting in May.

G. POLICY A, F, REVIEW

Last year, the School Committee worked with the MASC to update the current Ipswich Public School Policy Manual. This fall, the School Committee approved the full manual with the understanding that the Policy Subcommittee would then review and edit the policies and present those changes to the School Committee for final approval. Dr. Blake created a calendar to help roll out the policies in a timely manner. Based on his timeline, the policy project will be completed in May 2018. Each policy section will be brought to the leadership team for review. Those suggested revisions are then presented to the Policy Subcommittee where they will edit and revise as needed. The final copy, approved by the Policy Subcommittee, is then presented to the full School Committee for final approval. It is the understanding that at the time the policies are presented to the School Committee, they have been fully edited and vetted.

Ms. Player moved the Committee to approve policy sections A, F, and H, seconded by Mr. Hopping.
UNANIMOUS.

H. SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ms. Player gave a report about the combined School Building Committee/School Committee meeting on Wednesday, November 29th regarding exterior materials and the process to choose those materials. Mr. Whitten spoke about the architect’s suggestion of moving the building back 75ft to free up space in the back of the building and create more green space. Ms. Player also informed the Committee that on December 4th, the architects will be meeting with subgroups compiled of specialists, secretaries, and custodians for discussion surrounding the use of space in the building. Dr. Blake mentioned that there are

growing concerns from the public surrounding grade configurations and administrative structure of the new school and it may be time to begin conversations as to what both will look like. Committee members agreed that the leadership team should be consulted and asked to present recommendations. It was also discussed that determining the grade configurations and structure of the school this soon may relieve some anxiety for a lot of people and also create more anxiety for others. It was also mentioned that after the vote in May, it will be another 2 or 3 years before the building is completed, at which time there may be different administrative needs or learning needs than what was decided now. It is important at this stage to emphasize the flexibility the new school design has to accommodate several different learning and teaching configurations.

Next steps were also discussed, as well as what decisions are made by the School Committee and how are they made. Dan Collier spoke with Ms. Player and explained that through the process of presenting and discussion the options, decisions are made. Subcommittees have been formed to discuss in great detail different options which are then presented to the full Committee. These options have been vetted and both pros and cons are presented. Through this process, stronger options became clearer and eventually the final decision bubbles to the top.

A question regarding transportation plans was also discussed and it was decided that although not critical at this stage, eventually the Transportation Subcommittee should be revived to evaluate different transportation needs with the new school site.

IV. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. VOUCHERS AND BILLS

B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE**-Have not met
- b. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE**- Need to schedule a meeting
- c. GRANT SUBCOMMITTEES**- Have not met
- d. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**- Have not met
- e. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE**- Met and reviewed policy sections C, L, K. Scheduled to meet on Tuesday, December 12th.
- f. TURF FIELD SUBCOMMITTEE**- Met and discussed Phase 2 financing.
- g. SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE**- Reviewed early in meeting
- h. NEW BUSINESS**- None

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A.** Ms. Player moved, seconded by Mr. Hopping to:

Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept the minutes of the November 16, 2017 Open Session Meeting.

Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept the minutes of the following combined School Committee Meetings (combined with the School Building Committee):

- October 4, 2017
- October 17, 2017

Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept a donation of \$2,500 given by the Institution for Savings to support the Robotics Team to be deposited into the High School Gift Account.

Move the Ipswich School Committee to accept a donation in the amount of \$1,500 given by the Ipswich Education Fund for expenses associated with activities hosting exchange students from France to be deposited into the High School Gift Account.

UNANIMOUS.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Player moved, seconded by Ms. Kneeder to adjourn at 9:34 PM. UNANIMOUS.