

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 24, 2017
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM**

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Chair S. Player called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with the following members present: B. Hopping, C. Whitten, P. Kneedler, N. Zito, and H. O'Flynn. Also present were Superintendent Blake, and Fin. Dir. Cuff.

READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Dr. Zito read the Mission Statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Player read the following announcements:

September 4 – Labor Day

September 5 – First day of school, Grades 1-12

Sept. 5 and 6 - Kindergarten orientation

September 7 – First day for kindergarten

“ 7 – School Committee meeting, 7 p.m., M/HS Ensemble Rm.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Dr. Blake, to date, reported seven entry meetings conducted, six administrative meetings, five Central Office interviews including hiring of three, and attended a Rotary meeting at which three high-school students presented. In addition he conducted a teacher orientation for new staff. He met with several parents and staff members, attended a retreat at Crane Castle, and met with MSBA in Boston on the feasibility study.

On the matter of the email issue, in July the Central Office received information regarding the potential misuse of town-owned information. It was sent out via Mail-Chimp, an independent marketing platform and not operated by the school district. It appeared to have been sent out from the Lord Square address before the effort put forth at the Special Town Meeting in June. Residents and the SC requested Dr. Blake to investigate and it seemed to originate from the Winthrop School mailing list. Events have led to finger-pointing, false information, and ill will. He has not been able to determine that, when it was opened in May, 2017, that there was an attempt to mislead residents. It wasn't opened by any school district employee or council. The account was created with a school address of 1 Lord Square. He is satisfied that the persons involved are now aware, and it is clear that email addresses were downloaded from the Winthrop School list. He does not know

about the impact and recommends utilizing Blackboard (Word) use only. The school account should be secure and he recommends that only school personnel have access to it. If parents wish to subscribe to the Ipswich school directory, they should be made aware that the school is public and that it should be used only for birthday parties and playdates. When Dr. O’Flynn asked if there are no disciplinary measures, Dr. Blake replied that, after numerous interviews with all of the parties involved, at this point there is no discipline. Mr. Hopping questioned the decision to retract an Executive Session and Dr. Blake replied that, after the administrative retreat, the decision was to take the posting for Exec. Session down.

I. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

B. PAYNE GRANT/UPDATE/VOTE

Bandi Chen, Payne Grant Chair, was not available.

C. GREEN TEAM UPDATE – PROJECT DISCUSSION

Mr. Whitten, whose wife was a presenter, recused himself and sat in the audience during the presentation. He did comment that two experiences, one in NH, and one in Manchester, MA had impressed him re the gardens at schools.

Dr. Blake commented that the Generation Green growers came to him during his first week in Ipswich. Having reviewed the Minutes of January, 2017, when the SC had given the go-ahead for the project, he asked the group to come before them again for approval. Nicole Whitten and Amy Borgman of Ipswich Sustainable Education, part of the Ipswich Education Foundation, presented the Green Generation Growers project with the base concept of bridging the generations for a community garden at the quarter-acre plot in front of the High School entrance. The ladies detailed the cooperation and donations from many people and organizations including EBSCO, Rotary, YMCA, Corliss Bros., NEBiolabs, Lions Club, STEAM, and Rep. Seth Moulton, Sen. Eliz. Warren, and Gov. Charles Baker excited about the project. Rob Crocker, father of a Green Team member and architect, is a guiding light. She described the plot diagram (having distributed literature to the SC) with a pergola as an entry gate, bushes and trees, raised garden vegetable beds, and tables for community dinners. In a “healthy plans and healthy living” vision, she hopes that the first Thursday of the month will be a coming together of seniors and kids working on a growing plan.

Lori LaFrance, high school teacher, told how this plan fits into her STEAM initiative and SHOM. Her Sustainability Scholars have suggested going solar, another example of project-based learning. One of these Scholars will be the garden coordinator. The old garden site at the rear of athletic fields had proved to be “out-of-sight and out-of-mind.”

Mrs. Borgman detailed funds and materials: Corliss donating trees and bushes, a garden consultant in a five-year commitment, and further green-team fundraising at the store. Tedford is donating materials, hardware, and man labor (over \$2,000); NEBiolabs has committed to \$5,000; P. Eliot, outside seating; Brick End Farms, compost. Zumi’s has done a wall about composting/recycling and is selling glass straws with proceeds to go to Generation Growers; First Class Day Care

has donated \$1,000, Three Sisters at Notre Dame will teach planting. Over \$20,000 has been donated/committed. She reviewed the restrictions for the adult helpers and the maintenance needs and discussed questions from the Superintendent and SC re security, snow removal, winter storage, heavy traffic twice a day at dropoff and pickup times, water and outside electricity availability.

Mr. Nylén, who joined the meeting at 7:50 p.m., suggested some kind of active involvement to tell the whole student body about this project to increase awareness and the safety factor.

To Ms. Player's question of the proposed timetable, they answered that they would like to start production of the raised beds and have the composite and beds filled for the fall.

Dr. Blake commented that some administration questions have been asked and answered over the past two weeks. The project is on school property and the Town Manager will waive all permit fees. The only permanent part would be the trees. Ms. Cuff recommended that it be deemed a gift for refurbishment of the property.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Nylén, to accept the gift of the traffic circle project entitled Gen Garden being proposed by Ipswich Sustainable Education (ISE) at the discretion of the administration for its construction and applicable policies. UNANIMOUS.

Mr. Hopping urged updates to the SC as the project moves forward. Sister Rolinger of Three Sisters commented that, on the night of the fundraiser, there were verbal and articulate men and women who love the community.

D. REQUEST FOR NONRESIDENT PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL CHILD TO ATTEND

Mr. Hopping explained that a Middle School teacher has requested that her sixth grader be allowed to attend the MS this year. Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Nylén, to accept the Middle School educator's child into the sixth grade. UNANIMOUS.

E. SCHOOL CHOICE OPENINGS

Ms. Player explained that this was originally the request of a professional staffer who has a current Choice student in the 11th grade and now wants a sibling to attend the 9th grade. Mr. Dalton's request for 5 slots for Choice had been denied by the SC. Thirty-one students in Grade 9 have opted to attend schools elsewhere (14 @ Whittier, 2 @ Essex Tech, and 15 at several other institutions).

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Nylén, to open a Choice spot at the 9th-grade level. Mrs. Zito asked if these slots are special education blind and SC members said yes. Mr. Nylén recommended that SC not open up the broader Choice number; Dr. Blake wondered if this request might result in additional requests. Mrs. Zito asked if there is data on Choice students, and Mr. Nylén explained that Choice students have excelled in Ipswich and brought diversity to the student body. After further discussion, the vote was IN FAVOR- O'Flynn, Nylén, Zito, Whitten, Kneedler; OPPOSED – Player (on principle), Hopping (never has been in favor of Choice). When Dr. Blake requested a vote to accept this particular student, the

argument was made that that had already happened when a Choice spot was opened.

F. REVIEW OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

Ms. Player asked for commentary regarding the workshop of August 10. Mr. Hopping remarked that, while SC has primary responsibilities of hiring/firing a superintendent, making policy, and setting the budget, Dorothy Presser, the workshop presenter, had reminded them that “their most important responsibility is student achievement.”

There was some discussion re goal setting for the new year, one of which would be the school building project which can't wait. Ms. Player and others suggested that 3-4 goals be the most and conducting periodic (every meeting or every quarter) checkups on the progress of the goals.

G. GOAL SETTING

Ms. Player mentioned the goal needed about the School Building Committee, and the need to communicate to the public the progress of the project; that is, the design and the educational goals.

Dr. Blake suggested a goal around policy review and implementation to be rolled out to the entire district because some of his early findings are that policies may not be being followed or overlooked, or haven't been reviewed or implemented across the board. Mr. Hopping reminded that, while there has been recent adoption of the MASC manual, there are some unique to Ipswich, and Dr. Blake added that MASC policies are required by law, but there are probably a lot that Ipswich could have but doesn't. Dr. Blake didn't feel that SC should wait on goals until his entry plan was completed but thought that policy discussion and goal discussion will shape and support much of his work to be done this year. Mr. Hopping asked him to attend the next meeting of the Policy Subcommittee. Mr. Gilbert of MASC will be attending and the question of who is responsible for letting employees know policy could be answered.

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn, that the SC develop goals that speak to the following four areas: budget, policy, school building, and student achievement. Dr. Blake added that communication can become a part of and indicator of each of these goals. UNANIMOUS.

H. STAFFING UPDATE

Dr. Blake announced the positions as follows: an opening at the Central Office for a secretary/receptionist, two open TAs at the High School, a social studies teaching position at the Middle School due to a resignation, and three TAs at the Doyon. One student teacher will be working at the Middle School with social studies and at the Winthrop, three additional personnel will work, one as an apprentice and two as fellows for a full year with graduate school at night.

Mr. Whitten thanked Cindy Parker who will be leaving on September 1 and asked who is replacing her. Dr. Blake announced, because the NESDEC study recommended splitting the position, Laura Hilliard has begun as the administrative

assistant (executive confidential secretary) and Denise Vahn has been on board for two weeks as Human Resources Specialist. Both are non-union positions.

Mr. Nylen mentioned and a date for New Staff Welcome was set for September 21 with food and music (by the high school students) between 6 and 7 p.m. before the School Committee meeting in the Dolan PAC lobby.

I. BUILDING INSPECTION ASSIGNMENTS

Mr. Whitten will be touring the Winthrop School; Mrs. Zito, the Doyon; Mrs. Kneedler, Middle; and Mr. Hopping, High on Monday and Tuesday, the 28th and 29th of August, hopefully with Mr. Hodge as guide.

J. SUBCOMMITTEE ASSSIGNMENTS/CREATE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE YEAR

Athletics – O’Flynn, Hopping
Birth to Three – no selection at present
Budget – Player, O’Flynn, Nylen
Communications – to be dropped
MASC – Kneedler
Mutual Concerns – Player, Hopping, Zito
Operations – Player, Whitten, Nylen
Policy – Hopping, Zito, Kneedler
School Building – Player, Hopping, Whitten (Nylen maybe)
SEPAC – Zito
Turf – O’Flynn, Hopping
Payroll – Kneedler, Player (backup)
Professional Negotiations – Zito, Kneedler, Player
Support Staff Negotiations 1, 2, 3 - Whitten

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. VOUCHERS/BILLS

B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE
2. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
3. COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

4. GRANT COMMITTEES – still waiting on rewrite of one grant
5. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
6. POLICY

7. TURF
8. SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE – Ms. Player reported that Dr. Blake, K. Murphy, P. Queeney, and R. Bell have received approval from MASC for a nine-month feasibility study. This will go through June, 2018, and past Spring Town Meeting.

Mr. Nylen requested that the School Building Committee be a

regular topic included at every meeting.

9. NEW BUSINESS

The Feoffees, having requested a meeting in August, met with Ms. Player, Mr. Hopping, Ms. Cuff, and Dr. Blake on all the grants that had been approved since the inception of the program. They are hoping to expand bequests to other trusts/foundations. They want to begin helping us gather information. The group showed them the STEAM video. Dr. Blake had suggestions for moving forward. Perhaps the School Committee could create some state-of-the-program report that could be sent to the citizens each year. Also, it was suggested that they could create an accounting of the program to the citizens as well. Mr. Nylen suggested doing this as a joint report, and Mr. Hopping agreed and he commented that the videos of student presentations amazed the Feoffees.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Player moved, seconded by Mr. Hopping, to accept the Consent Agenda as follows:

Acceptance of Minutes of August 10, 2017, Workshop

Acceptance of the 2017 contribution of the Schools' portion of the April 2004 Tax Increment Financing Agreement (TIF) for \$10,000 from New England Biolabs, which will be used for Science and will be deposited into NEBiolabs gift account.

Acceptance of a check for \$1,000 from Fidelity Charitable Foundation, a matching grant from Mr. Edward J. Sindoni that was accepted earlier in the year by the School Committee, to be deposited into the High School Music gift account. UNANIMOUS.

Mr. Hopping moved on July 27, 2017, Executive Session, and now moved to amend to Open Session, seconded by Mr. Whitten, to authorize the School Committee to waive the administrator vacation policy where long-term administrators have exceeded the policy cap on vacation accrual and establish a schedule with the Superintendent to use their excess vacation time over the maximum period of two years ending 7/1/19. In the event an administrator leaves prior to that date, the administrator would be entitled to a maximum of 45 days. Any new administrator hired after July 27, 2017, will be required to follow policy. UNANIMOUS.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Whitten moved, seconded by Mr. Nylen, to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. UNANIMOUS.

