

**Ipswich School Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 5, 2019**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Middle/High School Ensemble Room**

**Meeting Minutes**

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**Call to Order:**

Mr. Hopping, Chair called the School Committee meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Members Present: Chair Mr. Hopping, Mr. Nysten, Mr. Whitten, Dr. O’Flynn, Ms. Kneedler, Ms. Gilliam and Mr. Stevens.

Also Present: Dr. Blake, Superintendent of Schools; Joanne Cuff, Director of Finance and Operations; and George Gallagher, High School Student Representative

**Reading of the Mission Statement:**

Read by George Gallagher

**Announcements:**

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, September 19th at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Ensemble Room.
- The Policy Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, September 11th at 7:00pm in the MS/HS Guidance Conference Room.

**Citizen’s Comments:**

None

**Special Acknowledgements:**

Dr. Blake acknowledged Chris Rais, Facilities Director and the custodial staff for their efforts to prepare the schools for the beginning of the year.

**High School Student Representative Report:**

Mr. Hopping first introduced the newest High School Student Representative, George Gallagher, who is a current senior in high school and actively involved in a variety of school activities and clubs.

Mr. Gallagher reported that school had just begun for all students. Some students disapprove of the new attendance policy being enforced at the high school. He explained that students felt it was restrictive and there are questions on how absences are being counted. There is some confusion around the policy that should be addressed.

### **A. Superintendent's Administrative Report:**

Dr. Blake reported on his schedule over the weeks after the last School Committee meeting. Dr. Blake attended a School Safety Conference with some of the administrative team and the School Resource Officer, toured the buildings prior to the start of school and held an Opening Day event for all staff. He was involved in a disciplinary meeting and attended his monthly meeting with the Ipswich Educators' Association, as well as a Communications Subcommittee meeting. Dr. Blake visited all the schools on their first day, attended a Rotary meeting, Vision 2030 meeting and a School Facility Working Group meeting. Lastly, he met with the Human Resources department and the Town Manager to discuss issues around payroll.

### **II.B. Field Trip Request**

Model U.N. Co-Advisors, Jeff Krieger and Alex Hayoz-Laverdiere, walked the School Committee through their field trip request to the Boston College Model U.N. Conference at the Westin Copley Hotel. The date of the trip is March 20, 2020 through March 22, 2020. The estimated cost per student is \$348.00 with the potential option to receive a scholarship from Boston College for the event. This is the 7th year that Ipswich Model U.N. has attended this particular conference.

*Dr. O'Flynn moved to support the field trip as presented, seconded by Mr. Nysten. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **II.C. Digital Learning Specialist Introduction/Update**

Mr. Hopping first introduced Amy Gregory in her new role as the Digital Learning Specialist. Ms. Gregory was formerly a 5th grade teacher at Doyon School.

Ms. Gregory told the Committee that she was excited about her new role in the district and has spent a good amount of time in the district introducing herself and getting to know staff in all the buildings. She then presented the Committee a slideshow and discussed what her focus would be this first year in her new role. Areas to focus on included:

- Digital Tools Coaching- working one on one with teachers to discuss how to embed technology into the classroom and also assisting teams of teachers
- Professional Development- continuing her work on her Innovative Practices course and looking at ways to incorporate more professional development throughout the year
- Technology Committee- working with subcommittees from within the Technology Committee and streamlining the information and resources that come from the Committee into a place for all teachers to find and use
- Technology Plan 2019-2024- working with the Technology Director and the Tech. Team to create a plan for the district
- Digital Literacy Computer Science Standards- the district is currently in year two of the development and implementation of these standards

Ms. Gregory then addressed questions from the School Committee, explaining that although she needs to spend time evaluating the district, she feels that they are in a good place with technology and devices. Her hope for the end of this year is to have a developed technology education vision that aligns with the

Strategy for District Improvement document, as well as having a completed professional development website launched for teachers' use.

Mr. Hopping ended the discussion by telling Ms. Gregory that this is a well-deserved position for her and that the district will be well served. He would like to invite her back for future meetings for a progress update.

#### **II.D. School Building Visits**

Paul F. Doyon Memorial School: Ms. Gilliam toured the school with Sheila Halloran, principal. Overall the building looked clean and the classrooms were bright and welcoming. The pre-school space had been transformed with a new dividing wall into a space for the IT team, custodians, a math center and lactation room. As always, the STEAM studio located in the library is a cornerstone in the school.

Ms. Gilliam spoke to some issue that Sheila and her discussed on the tour. Those included what was already reported in the Dude Solutions report. The roof and HVAC systems are in desperate need of repair or replacement. There is a lack of space to meet the needs of the building and the age of the building is becoming more and more obvious. Ms. Gilliam did note that the staff seem to be doing a great job working within the constraints of the building.

Facilities Director Chris Rais spoke to some of the issues at the school and what maintenance was done during the summer. He said that his department built the new dividing wall and removed a tree. There was extensive work done on the roof, as well as fire and sprinkler testing throughout the building. He explained to the Committee that they will continue to do preventative maintenance and address any issues as early as possible. He continues by saying there is only so much you can do with what they have now.

Winthrop School: Mr. Stevens toured the school with Sheila McAdams, principal. The general theme of the building was “Engage- empowering students to act or do something, embracing diversity”. Some highlights from the tour included the new interlocking gym floor, a new sound system, a larger mental health space and the new combined pre-school space.

Building issues included water damage to roof tiles, unreliable freezers and refrigerators and an inability to regulate the temperature in the building. Sheila explained to Mr. Stevens that they always seemed to be chasing repairs.

Similar to his report on Doyon, Mr. Rais explained that his team will continue to do preventative maintenance on the building and address issues as early as possible. He highlighted some work that was done to the school over the summer, which included the installation of a new hydration station, repair work to the AC units and light and ceiling tile repair and replacement. The bathroom stalls were also currently being repaired.

Middle/High School: Both Mr. Whitten and Ms. Kneedler toured the Middle and High School with the building administrators and Chris. Overall, the school looked very clean. Chris was able to give a good

rundown of the HVAC systems and issues in the building. Mr. Whitten said that the immediate needs in these two buildings are far fewer than those in the two elementary schools. Ms. Kneedler said the Performing Arts Center floors looked amazing after having been repainted this summer. The LED parking lights and the newly painted green screens in various pods were also discussed.

Mr. Rais was asked to elaborate on the HVAC systems in these buildings and how he will prevent potential freeze-ups this winter. He explained different ways to address the issues short terms and hope to be able to address these issues more long term with grants received through Green Communities.

Mr. Rais then talked about Central Office and the work that was done there, including the installation of a hydration station, reconfiguration of the first floor, the installation of security cameras and repainting an office.

Mr. Hopping thanked the Committee members who toured the schools for their reports and for Mr. Rais for being present at the meeting as a part of that conversation.

### **II.E. Opening Day Update**

Dr. Blake reported on a successful Opening Day for both students and staff. On Monday, August 26th, faculty met for a presentation in the morning and then in their individual schools in the afternoon. On Tuesday, August 27th, teachers were in their classrooms setting up and meeting in teams. On Wednesday, August 28th students were in the buildings for their first day of school. The total enrollment for the first day of school was 1746 students. He reported that there were few complaints about starting school before the holiday.

### **II.F. Transportation Update**

Ms. Cuff reported that the bus route changes went over very well. Due to overcrowding on the Middle School buses last school year, she worked with Salter to try and re-proportion those buses this year. This year, a total of 736 passes were sold which falls in line with last years sales.

Dr. Blake did state that this report did not address special education transportation. Due to a limited number of vendors, special education transportation has had a lot of issues and the PPS Administrative Assistant spends a significant amount of time each day working with parents and vendors.

### **II.G. Draft Goals**

At a prior meeting, Mr. Hopping has asked the subcommittees to meet and draft goals to be presented and reviewed. It was his intention that at this meeting, the subcommittee could talk about their draft goals and asked for feedback. He would like the final goals to include action items and a timeline for completion.

#### Communication Subcommittee:

Short Term: To improve access and frequency of information about Ipswich Public Schools for the community-at-large through the 2019-20 school year.

Long Term: To broaden and deepen our communication in order to increase the school-community connection by fostering meaningful, consistent two-way communication with staff, parents, town leaders, businesses, and other stakeholders and supporters of Ipswich Public Schools.

Ms. Gilliam explained that the way to target these goals was to:

- Create a newsletter,
- Introduce the Elementary Education Plan,
- Attend meet and greet events open to the public,
- Update the website
- Utilize social media

Mr. Hopping asked the group to narrow down the topics and timelines.

#### Budget Subcommittee:

Short Term Goal: Set long term budget priorities in conjunction with the administration prior to the year end

Long Term Goal: develop long term budgeting strategy by June 2020

Mr. Nylen said the group discussed the timing of developing a long term budget alongside developing the district plan. The group has asked to schedule a time to meet with the administrative team.

Action items for these goals include:

- Meeting with Administrative Team to pick brains and draw out their ideas

Mr. Hopping said he would like to see the Budget Subcommittee be added to the meeting agenda on the second Thursday of each month for an extensive conversation about the status of their goals and what they have been working on.

Mr. Nylen finished by asked for suggestions for preliminary questions to the administrators. Should a Committee member have one, they should forward it to him.

#### School Facility:

Originally, the name of this working was the School Building Working Group, however, to avoid confusion, it was renamed the School Facilities Working Group.

Short Term Goal: serve as School Committee input to the town leadership group putting together a capital improvement plan for maintenance and repair to school buildings

Long Term Goal: Work on developing a process to determine the facilities solution to meet our elementary school building needs- to include clarification on what a future MSBA process may look like

Mr. Nysten explained that the subcommittee discussed both the elementary school building needs as well as the overall needs of the district. First, there needs to be a focus on the elementary schools. This group will not focus on solution, but rather the process to get there.

### Vision 2030:

This subcommittee was also given a new name from the original District Strategy Subcommittee.

Goal: Develop a Vision for the Public Schools of Ipswich document to articulate the district vision, strategy, practices and outcomes and integrate existing district plans into a unified framework.

The timeline and action items include:

- A framework for the plan and alignment of existing district plans will be completed by January 2020
- District and community outreach and input will be completed by Spring 2020
- A draft Vision plan will be completed by June 2020
- A finalized Vision plan will be completed by September 2020

Mr. Hopping asked that the next steps for the goals include fine-tuning and a creation of action steps. He asked that the goals be finalized and voted on by October.

### **II.H. Vision 2030**

The Committee already discussed this under goals.

### **II.I. Special Town Meeting Warrant Article Discussion**

Mr. Hopping told the Committee that the citizen petition has been withdrawn. At this time, they would not assign speakers to each article. Mr. Hopping asked the Committee to review the warrant and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting.

### **III. School Committee Reports**

- A. VOUCHERS/BILLS- Done.
- B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS
  1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE- Meeting on 9/25/19
  2. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE- Meeting on 10.2.19
  3. GRANT SUBCOMMITTEES- Have not met
    - a. Payne Grant Subcommittee
    - b. Instructional Mini-Grant Subcommittee
  4. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE- Have not met
  5. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE- Meeting on 9/11/19
  6. TURF FIELD SUBCOMMITTEE- Have not met
  7. COMMUNICATIONS- Meeting on 9/23/19
  8. WORKING GROUPS- Discussed under goals
  9. NEW BUSINESS\*

Dr. Blake asked for a member of the School Committee to join the STEAM Team led by Tracy Wagner. Ms. Gilliam volunteered.

#### **IV. Consent Agenda**

*Mr. Hopping moved the Ipswich School Committee to accept the Open Session Meeting Minutes for August 22, 2019, seconded by Mr. Whitten. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### **V. Adjournment**

*Mr. Nysten moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 PM, seconded by Mr. Stevens. The motion passed unanimously.*