

Ipswich School Committee

Thursday, May 16, 2024

MS/HS Ensemble Room

134 High Street, Ipswich

6:45 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

KE called the meeting to order.

Present: Kate Eliot (KE) Jenny Connolly (JC)
Jeff Poirier (JP) Jen Donahue (JD)
Dianna Freehan (DF) Sasha Sopic (SS)
Mat Perry (MP)

Also Present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools (BB)
Tom Markham, Director of Finance and Operations (TM)
Jimmy Bornstein, High School Student Representative (JB)

2. Executive Session:

- *Motion to meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purpose:(3)To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining was made by KE and seconded by JP.*

Roll Call

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Return to Open Session

4. Reading of the District Mission Statement

JB read the mission statement.

5. Announcements

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, June 6th at 7:00 PM in the MS/HS ensemble room.
- Negotiations with the Ipswich Educators' Association will be held on May 30th at 4:15 PM at the high school.
- The Policy Subcommittee will meet on June 4th at 5:30 PM in the MS/HS guidance conference room.
- This is the last meeting for JP and JB.

6. Special Acknowledgements

Abby Frost and Rebecca Pagano were acknowledged for their work with the choir and wind ensemble. Rebecca was also recognized for her work with the students who performed as Shalin Lui. Tracy Wagner and members of the STEAM Team were recognized for the STEAM Showcase.

7. Remarks from the Chair

KE discussed the fights that have taken place at the high school. These events are examples of unacceptable behavior and are being taken seriously by the school administration. The School Committee is aware and is keeping in good communication with the Superintendent and building administrators to ensure this does not become a pattern. The School Committee takes student safety seriously and will work to ensure that the schools are a safe place for all students.

8. Public Comment

Becky Slawson, President, Ipswich Educators' Association: Spoke on behalf of the high school faculty to ask the School Committee to create a district-wide policy banning student cell phone use in all four of the Ipswich Public Schools during the academic school day.

9. High School Student Representative Report

JB talked about his experience as the student representative over the past two years.

10. Presentations

A. Whittier Tech Update

Carol Sullivan, the Ipswich Representative on the Whittier Tech School Committee, reviewed a potential job description/list of responsibilities of a Whittier Tech School Committee member. Ms. Sullivan's update also included:

- A review of the number of Ipswich students currently enrolled at Whittier
- A review of the number of applications from Ipswich students for 2024-2025 school year
- The number of students enrolled in each of the 21 programs offered at Whittier
- A review of the employers that Ipswich students are working as part of the Co-Op program
- The total cost the Town of Ipswich pays to Whittier Tech
- A review of Capital Projects/Assessments for Whittier Tech
- The per pupil cost
- FY25 budget considerations and overview
- Future planning
- An overview of Ipswich student achievements at Whittier

Ms. Sullivan talked about the enrollment process, noting that she believed Whittier does not have a cap on the number of Ipswich students they accept each year. She then talked about the list of responsibilities she had put together and where that information may live. KE suggested reviewing the list of responsibilities with the Select Board and Finance Committee as well. BB added that the area agreement suggests that outside of appointing the Whittier Tech School Committee representative, the budget presentations and ongoing conversations with Whittier are under the purview of the Select Board and not the School Committee.

B. Town Meeting Debrief

Members were pleased the FY25 School Budget passed and that the number transferred into the Stabilization Fund was more than what was originally planned for.

C. Feoffee Policy Working Group Update

The Feoffee Policy Working Group spent the year reviewing the current policy around Paine Grant and Traverso-Wetheral Grant distributions. They began by meeting with authors of the original policy to understand the intent behind the policy. Trying to ensure that what the policy is doing lives up to the intent of the policy, while also ensuring there are guardrails in place, has been challenging. The working group then reviewed the changes that were made to School Committee policy DDA:

Returned Funds

Some grants have come in higher than the original ask. Updated language to the policy states that if the total amount necessary to fund the grant unexpectedly increases after the grant was approved, previously returned funds may be made available to fund such unanticipated increases upon a vote and approval of the School Committee during the year in which the grant was approved.

Terms for Paine Grant Committee Members

The recommendation is for each Paine Grant Committee member term to be two years. There is no limit to the number of terms a person can serve.

End of Year Reporting

The end of year report will soft launch this year, but will become a requirement going forward for all Paine Grant recipients. The purpose of the end of year report is to be able to share the effectiveness of the grants with the Feoffees and the community.

Staff Positions

It was suggested that staff positions did not need to be limited to a particular number of years, but should be part of a grant application yearly until absorbed into the budget or when it is determined the position is no longer necessary. JP shared a concern about the timing of the district building their budget vs. when the Paine Grants are approved. TM also talked about job security for the staff that are employed through a grant as being important. Having staff that are employed 12 months at a time may not seem attractive to potential staff. BB clarified that he reviews Paine Grant applications prior to them moving forward to the Paine Grant Committee to ensure they align with district initiatives.

Committee Membership

The working group agreed that the guardrails around the School Committee not being able to override the Paine Grant Committee recommendation was important to keep in place. The change to the current policy would allow the Paine Grant Committee to move a grant forward for School Committee approval if they could not come to agreement with how to proceed with a grant.

The School Committee will continue to review this policy at their summer retreat.

D. Policy Review/Approval

DF reviewed changes and updated to the following policies: BEDH-E, BEE, BG, BGB, BGC, BGD, BGE, BGF, BHC, BHE, BIA, BIBA, BID, BJ, BK, DA, DB, DBC, DBD.

➤ *Motion to approve the policy changes as described was made by JP and seconded by MP. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

DF then discussed the draft EBACA, the sustainability policy. It is currently ready for a first review of the School Committee.

11. Superintendent's Administrative Report

BB reviewed his schedule over the weeks since the last School Committee meeting which included:

- Reviewed Special Education student cases
- Wellness Committee meeting
- Ipswich Education Foundation meeting
- Subcommittee/working group meetings
- Ipswich Aware monthly meeting
- DEI Team meeting
- Meeting with Adam Mullen/Kathy McMahon
- Attended the Junior Prom
- IEA Negotiations
- Legislative Luncheon at Whittier Tech
- Town Meeting
- End of year budget review
- Northshore Education Consortium Board of Directors meeting
- Meeting with Michael Dougherty re: storage at Doyon
- Meeting with Amy Sullivan re: space issues
- Time in the schools
- STEAM Showcase

BB detailed the space needs at Winthrop School, talking about the need for service delivery and testing. BB then talked about the two Traverso-Weatherall Grants, one for a tackling sled and one for a conditioning camp, that were both denied. BB has been in discussions with the high school about how to fund the conditioning program over the summer. BB was encouraged to look at alternative funding sources to fund both these initiatives.

12. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports

- Ipswich Education Foundation: Last meeting of the year. Looking to increase awareness of the organization.
- Communications Subcommittee: Review of the May newsletter

- Operations Subcommittee: Will need to meet to onboard new members.

13. New Business*

SS asked what it looked like if the School Committee were to move forward with consideration for a cell phone use policy at the high school. BB clarified that it would start as a handbook change. BB then suggested the School Committee and high school work collaboratively to review a policy. It was suggested that the School Committee could come up with a district-wide policy and then a more detailed policy could be included in the handbooks. The discussion continued around steps that the School Committee could take towards a cell phone use policy.

14. Vouchers and Bills

All were reviewed and signed.



















15. Consent Agenda

- *Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented was made by JP and seconded by MP. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

16. Adjournment

- *Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by MP and seconded by DF. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

DOCUMENTS:

-  1.School Committee Meeting Agenda 05.16.24 
-  5.Announcements: 05.16.24 
-  15.Consent Agenda: 05.16.24 
-  15.Consent Item: SC Meeting Minutes 03.21.24 
-  15.Consent Item: SC Meeting Minutes 04.04.24 
-  15.Consent Item: SC Meeting Minutes 05.02.24 
-  Copy of DDA for purposes of FPWG discussion and review 
-  DDA for purposes of FPWG discussion and review 
-  Draft EBACA 
-  Draft May Newsletter 