

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
JANUARY 9, 2014  
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM**

**OPEN SESSION**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Barry Hopping, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. with the following members present: S. Gresh, S. Player, J. Bauman, H. O'Flynn, and C. Nylen. Also present were Superintendent W. Hart, and Finance Director J. Cuff.

**READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

Mrs. Bauman read the Mission Statement.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Hopping read the following announcements:

Executive Session will be held for the purpose of discussing personnel matters

Policy Subcommittee will meet on January 15, 1:30 p.m., Payne School  
School will be closed for students on January 17 due to a staff Professional Development Day

Schools will be closed on January 20 in observance of M.L. King day

School Committee will meet on January 23, 6:30 p.m., Room A, Town Hall

A candidate will be interviewed then for the Whittier School Representative opening

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

K. Zagarella, kindergarten teacher, questioned whether the Head Start program could be reinstated in Ipswich so that all families in Ipswich could have access to early childhood benefits but doesn't know where to begin. Dr. Hart and Mr. Hopping both acknowledged the same desire and assured her that she would be included in the process to bring people together and work toward making progress with the need to provide early childhood education.

**SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

**PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF CHECK FROM NE BIOLABS**

Regina King and Nicole Whitten recalled their appearance in July in regard to the Green Initiatives, now Ipswich Sustainable Education, including composting at the schools, Green Teams in the Green Scholars Program, gardens in the schools working with the Three Sisters, and purchase of non-styrofoam products. A total of about \$5,000 is needed to keep the non-styrofoam products out. Mr. Hopping applauded them for their work. They, in turn, thanked Dr. Hart, Ms. Cuff and New England Biolabs for cooperation and communication.

Mr. Nylen moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, to accept the check of \$1,000 from New England Biolabs for the purpose of purchasing non-styrofoam product in the elementary cafeterias. UNANIMOUS.

**PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF CHECK FROM YMCA & O'LEARY FAMILY**

Mr. Gerry Beauchamp, YMCA, and Drew Marcorelle of the O'Leary family, spoke of the heart-healthy initiative funding by the O'Leary family (\$30,000) and the Thanksgiving "Run for the Pies" sponsored by the Y. Funds will be dedicated again to be given to the elementary schools for the heart-healthy curriculum with Marini Farms included to provide elementary students the opportunity to see how things grow.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Dr. Gresh, to accept the donation of \$16,099 from the O'Leary family and the YMCA. Mr. Hopping thanked the Y students and staff for all their support over the years. UNANIMOUS. The check will purchase an oven at each of the elementary schools, one of which is long overdue.

**A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Dr. Hart spoke of a successful meeting with Ipswich Facilities Director Bill Hodge and Ms. Cuff to define the collaboration between the Town and the schools. The district will post the Director of Pupil Personnel Services immediately to begin July 1, 2014, and follow the search structure and process previously used. On January 6 and 7, twenty-two teachers representing four schools in the district participated in a two-day Teacher Curriculum Leadership Team retreat which focused on defining the role teacher leaders will play in curriculum development district wide. This group looked at the Mass. Common Core Curriculum and Ipswich's role and analyzed the input from hundreds of stakeholders on the habits and skills associated with highly effective people. The two-day retreat launched the new vision and associated curriculum work aggressively.

**I. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS****A. NESDEC REVIEW OF MAINTENANCE & CUSTODIAL SERVICES**

Dr. Hart reported that, in talking with the public, he found concern with maintenance and cleanliness of the buildings. Dana Cotto, a former educator, building facility manager and representative from NESDEC, gave an overview of school custodial and maintenance operations in three separate tours of the schools. He met with Dr. Hart, Ms. Cuff and the day-shift custodians. He thanked Kathy Carleton, the principals and custodians for their cooperation. In concentrating on custodial aspects, he made the following observations and recommendations:

- A working supervisor had full responsibility and reported to the superintendent—very difficult to do.
- Staffing at Doyon – 1.2 custodians for 50,000 sq. ft.
- Staffing at Winthrop – 2.6 custodians (3 hrs. at Doyon) for 50,000 sq. ft. ---a real imbalance
- Schedule timing issues in both elementary schools. No need to come in at 12:30, clean the cafeterias, and not be able to work in classrooms until after 3 p.m.

- MS/HS – 3.0 custodians for 250,000 sq. ft.—real shortage of personnel. HS--62,500 sq. ft.--day shift working 4 hrs. each—cannot expect a reasonable cleaning
- Huge amount of carpeting throughout the system--no carpet extractor. Small vacuums insufficient to handle huge areas. Carpet washing simply forces all dirt downwards.
- Recommends hardwood floors for durability and ease of maintenance. Recommends a small rug for elementary areas. Asbestos removal with tile removal under carpet was also recommended.
- No head custodian to be responsible for taking care of the building.
- Employee hire process: no training and no details for cleaning, lifting, and only some demonstrations on some equipment—no awareness of regulations nor of hazards
- No formal process for building inspections.
- Evaluations should be on a biannual basis.
- Purchasing is all done through the State bidding process. Vendor assistance, not always available with the State process, makes the bidding more cost effective.
- Outsourcing should be considered, especially if a building were to lose custodial help through attrition, an example that he has witnessed.
- Recommended sectional cleaning in a small system such as Ipswich, done easily with two custodians at each school in two shifts - a day custodian and a night custodian with a head custodian overseeing what needs to be done.

Mr. Cotto cited that green products are used, but there are some needs for specialty products to deal with calcification. He reported that bathrooms, kitchens, and larger spaces were incredible in the buildings. The custodians do a good job regardless of lack of leadership and tools.

Dr. O'Flynn requested that his full report, expected to be completed by the end of January, would include recommendations for purchasing equipment to make custodians' jobs more efficient. Mr. Hopping would like prices included. In the long term, Mr. Nysten suggested looking at the capital plan. Mr. Cotto stated that Ipswich is not unusual in its needs and reduction of custodial personnel happens in order to protect the educational process for the children.

#### B. BUDGET UPDATE: OVERRIDE REQUEST

Mr. Hopping announced that the School Committee will be seeking an operational override in the Spring. The School Committee has been engaged in several lengthy budget workshops. Dr. Hart commented that he has talked to hundreds of people and worked with dozens of teachers with question for the

community: "What is the single most important component of a child's effective education?" The response was "a high quality teacher working with my child." Ipswich has done an exceptional job of keeping highly qualified and dedicated teachers. Professional development was cut, technology spending was eliminated, custodial support was reduced, and building maintenance was deferred. Administration looked at fuel costs, favorable contracts, and relied highly on Choice and Circuit Breaker to keep high quality teachers. Where are we going from here? Ipswich has a history of being on the cutting edge of public education. Over the last few months, the administration has worked on a clear vision for the next five to ten years. We are working on descriptors for the subject of highly effective education: classrooms, curriculum, and computers. As the result of Feoffee funds, 150 teachers have been able to implement highly innovative programs in the classrooms. Twenty-two teachers have begun the Learning Community (curriculum). Close to \$900,000 of Feoffee money was used to comprehensively change the infrastructure of computers in every one of the four schools. These changes are what take a good school system to a great system. Any deviation from this would be a significant mistake. We have great kids, great teachers, and a great vision. We need community help and ask for support.

Mrs. Bauman commented that the community must make a choice to support the Town Manager and the Superintendent who both have long-term vision but both need the tools to make those changes. Nobody wants their taxes to go up but there are needs.

Dr. Gresh urged the community to be cognizant of the vision of the future, not just one year to address particular needs. We are educating students to be competitive in a global community.

Mr. Nylen commented that, in the beginning with weighing costs relative to our revenue, we realized that we are at the end of our ability to cut. In the areas of capital improvement, professional services, field maintenance, library systems, it has never been a case of spending too much; it is a case of spending too little. Services have gone away, facilities have suffered, assets have depreciated. Choice and Circuit Breaker funds are now exhausted. Some of those investments that have atrophied over time must be restored.

Dr. O'Flynn, as an eleven-year School Committee member, is a student of the budget and its process. Hamilton/Wenham spends \$6.7 million more than Ipswich; Triton, \$2.5 million more for the same number of students; Manchester and Newburyport, \$4 million more. We've been able to maintain with teachers being paid less, and Choice from other schools, which has now gone away as a major funding source. With a 4- 4 ½% increased need every year on budget, and a take-in of 2 ½% in income, it is now an opportune time for us to make the investment.

Ms. Player commented that Ipswich has been known as a great system and now we are in a state of mediocrity. She believes that the voters will look, will study that the Feoffees have helped, will know that there is a beginning of improvement, and the Ipswich community will see the opportunity.

Mr. Hopping stated that, in principal, public education was originally designed to be free. However, in Ipswich we are constantly being encouraged to generate new fees to find money in the schools: athletic fees, transportation fees, even a parking fee. He bemoaned the fact that the system relied so heavily on Choice fees. This is a terribly wrong message. It is clear that the School Committee cannot sit back and hope that the override will pass. We continue to look within and there is extensive study with the food service and custodial services. The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee are collaborating and consolidating to realize better services and ultimately realize a cost saving. That is not the answer — we need the Town, yet again, to step up and help to get us where our students deserve to be. Having heard repeatedly that the answer is the Feoffees money, he commented that after the first three years of the settlement, only about \$400,000 will be realized each year; as good as it is, it does not solve the problem. He wants to assure people that there will be ample opportunity to meet with the School Committee. On January 23, the three Town Boards will be meeting at Town Hall to help us promote the override passage in an informational rather than a contentious session.

Dr. O'Flynn and Mr. Hopping spoke of the many meetings and workshops already held: the Director of Finance/Operation reviewing funding for the future and from the outside, the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, and Finance Committee all being a part of this issue.

Kerry Zagarella, Co-Chair of the Ipswich Educators Association, offered support and turnout for meetings. Dr. Gresh voiced his thoughts about investing for the future of the students and what they and their teachers will be achieving. Mr. Nylen urged the community to ask questions and to volunteer support.

## **II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. VOUCHERS/BILLS
- B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS
  - 1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE
  - 2. ATHLETIC FIELD STUDY COMMITTEE

- 3. BIRTH-TO-THREE SUBCOMMITTEE

- Mrs. Bauman introduced Dana Allen who is replacing Kit Cox at the helm of Birth to Three as interim director who gave a personal bio of her family, education, and experience.

- 4. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
- 5. COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
- 6. DAY CARE CENTER SUBCOMMITTEE
- 7. GRANT COMMITTEES

Ms. Player mentioned a planned meeting on January 21 with the large grant committee to join them. Dr. Hart was urged to contact Chris Burke to get snippets of the use of the mini-grant monies put on ICAM.

- 8. LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLANNING
- 9. MUTUAL CONCERNS SUBCOMMITTEE
- 10. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

- 11. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Nylen reported on study, but not finalization, of two policies.

- 12. SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEPAC)
- 13. TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

- 14. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hopping mentioned that the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College & Careers (PARCC) has a workshop scheduled for January 21, 6:30-8:30, McGlynn MS Library in Medford for which one can register online. Also, he alerted the Board to a response letter from Sen. Brownsberger on OPEB to be scanned and emailed to them.

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Mr. Nylen, to accept the following consent agenda items:

Acceptance of December 19, 2013, Open Session Minutes

Acceptance of a donation of \$1,000 from Kortec, Inc. to the High School for the Student Racing Challenge team

Acceptance of a donation of \$875 from the Kent-Lucas Foundation to the Winthrop School Annual Fund

Acceptance of a grant of \$500 from the Bovio Baker Family to the Winthrop School Annual Fund

Acceptance of a donation of \$800 from the Kent-Lucas Foundation to the Winthrop School Annual

Acceptance of a donation of \$500 from Mr. Doug DeAngelis to the Winthrop School Annual Fund

Acceptance of a donation of \$1,000 from Mr./Mrs. Jim Patrick to the Winthrop School Annual Fund

Acceptance of a check for \$552 from Boxtops Education to the Winthrop School. UNANIMOUS.

