

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR & BUDGET MEETING  
FEBRUARY 10, 2014  
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM**

**OPEN SESSION**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Barry Hopping, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with the following members present: S. Gresh, S. Player, J. Bauman, C. Nylén, and R. Roesler. Also present were Superintendent W. Hart, and Finance Director J. Cuff.

**READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

Sean Gresh read the Mission Statement.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Hopping read the following announcements:

There will be no Executive Session

Communications Subcommittee will meet on February 14, 1:30 p.m., Payne School

Schools will be closed from February 17 to 21 for school vacation

School Committee will meet on February 13, 6 p.m., Executive Session, for the purpose of discussing strategy in collective bargaining

School Committee will meet on March 6 for a Public Hearing on the Budget, 7 p.m., M/H School Ensemble Room

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

Mr. Hopping informed the audience that there will be no debate on budgets and no discussion on the override. There were no comments from the audience.

**I. CENTRAL OFFICE AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS FY15 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

**A. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION BUDGET**

Dr. Hart again thanked the Principals for their herculean efforts, having developed two full budgets. He thanked Joanne Cuff for all her work and, especially, her invaluable work with him on the budget. His budget presentation is an override budget. He reviewed his feedback from the Town in his six months and, even though people are very pleased with the educational experience due to pockets of excellence, they believe there is no clear vision as there was ten years ago when outsiders visited Ipswich schools because of cutting edge technology.

He reviewed external demands of Common Core, a rigorous complex set of disciplines that students are expected to accomplish in grades 8 – 12. The PARCC assessment looks much closer at thinking skills. The professional evaluation system is connected with student achievement. People want to see the Ipswich Public Schools as a regional innovator again.

His focus has three themes to ensure that graduates have what they need for their life's journey: classrooms, curriculum, and computers. Focus also is on intellectual challenges where students are expected to know much more at an earlier age than previous generations and be creative thinkers, collaborators, and innovators. He answered the question of how students get to be highly successful people, by saying that students have to be informed in the classroom in a powerful learning experience.

Dr. O'Flynn joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Dr. Hart illustrated the movement already existing in the schools with the Professional Learning Communities which support curriculum and technology, starting with the district-wide curriculum, working out with content and skills, habits and dispositions, technology infused powerful learning and collaboration. The estimated available revenue for 2015 is \$25,875,094 and his override budget is \$27,830,642. In looking forward with a five-year plan (very rarely done although much talked about), people will realize that this is good thinking to ask for a \$3 million override for a five-year period, allowing \$1,044,452 to go to Free Cash for future appropriations. He delineated positions and stipends needed to support his vision, district-wide, at the high school, middle school, and the elementary schools in the areas of classrooms, curriculum, and computers (technology innovation). Of significance, a structural budget deficit exists which has been years in the making, and the impact has been deferred because of careful fiscal management, outside funds (Choice and Circuit Breaker) and significant use of fees for services (athletics and transportation). At this point, cost savings and new revenues won't fill the gap. He compared Ipswich with surrounding communities and the State average, Ipswich being at the bottom in per pupil spending, with Triton at \$2.4 million over Ipswich and H/W at \$6.4 million over. Average annual growth of Ipswich's budget was 4%, and excessive dependence on Choice and Circuit Breaker funding was the result; thereby, causing the significant structural deficit.

If the override should fail, the shortfall, without raises, will be \$662,891 for professional/support staff. It is a contract year, and a 1% employee raise creates a \$170,000 additional shortfall, the equivalent of 8 fulltime employees.

Dr. Hart's Central Office budget includes stipends of \$86,200 in teacher leadership, a fulltime technology director, a fulltime SPED director and accompanying ELL instruction and SPED transportation, operational costs of retirement, workers' compensation, health insurance, and regular education transportation, \$888,454; negotiations, \$30,000; building operations of \$62,110; and purchased services of \$9,000.

Mrs. Bauman commented that, if the override fails, administration must

make cuts against cuts already made, against more cuts. She commented that we now have a superintendent with a long-term vision.

Dr. Gresh looks forward to going into the community with the story. Common Core is supported by 48 states and Ipswich will be there getting a 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom, collaborating around the world.

Mr. Nylen felt the need to explain the consequences of a failed override. The need is to make the community understand what we will be losing.

Mrs. Roesler wondered, also, about the approach and cited areas which would be deleted: no maintenance of buildings, no IT director, etc. Not having interested parents at this meeting made her nervous—the community must be made aware of the situation that will occur if the override is not successful.

Mr. Hopping talked of the fine line being walked. Dr. Hart spoke of the fact that the school system is at a crossroad. What type of community do the people want? There is a good solid community here; if 8-10 positions are gone, this small community will be devastated. As an exemplar community, everybody wins; every homeowner in the district is a winner. If the override fails, Ipswich will be in tough shape, the trust will have been broken, all here have dedicated themselves to keeping this place afloat. This culture which is now exceptional, will be rocked to its core.

Dr. O'Flynn has a new Excel spreadsheet that he is working on for presentation to the Finance Committee. He questioned the School Committee's hesitation to talk negatively in wishing to do the righteous thing for the kids. Dr. Hart followed up with the new generation of school systems, and Ipswich can be the leader in defining that new generation. Even the best of the best are working with old rules. It is the Administration's and the School Committee's hope to bring the whole educational process to another level. Ipswich is small enough to make these changes fairly rapidly. Some of the great districts will be looking at Ipswich 5-6 years from now. He remarked about colleges which are applying this method of becoming highly effective learners.

Ms. Player suggested illustrating a student schedule in two ways: with the advantage of an override and without one; also using educational standards such as guidance counselors so that parents and the community can see value. The better educated the students, the more apt they are to return to live here.

Mr. Hopping asked about the revamping of Special Education. Dr. Hart responded that the current staff of paraprofessionals has aligned with the students. Everybody benefits with Response to Intervention, and there has been an important

cultural shift. Mr. Hopping asked about IEPs and what the service delivery model looks like.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mrs. Roesler, to take the Superintendent's budget of \$27,830,642 under advisement. UNANIMOUS.

#### B. WINTHROP SCHOOL BUDGET

Mrs. McAdams began her Powerpoint presentation by thanking her clerical staff and the Winthrop Council for their work and dreams. Winthrop's theme this year is diligence. The tools the students need for diligence are very different from the tools their parents had. She cited the reality that, in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), there will be over a million jobs unfilled in the U.S. because the workforce neither possesses the skills nor the interest. Also, she questions, in a global market, how U. S. children can compete without a speaking knowledge of at least one more language. The elementary budgets reflect the needs of Ipswich youths to solve complex real-world problems with strong foundational skills instruction while honing social skills in fostering communication and collaboration. As a result, her fiscal goals for FY15 are three: Strengthen instructional support in English language arts and math, Renovate and enrich science and math instruction, Embed cultural literacy through exposure to foreign languages. She showed charts of Grades 4 and 5 where percentages in MCAS testing at "proficient" and above have dropped and the high needs subgroup performances are below or at State average. She anticipates continuing the remedial academic summer instruction, having a library/media specialist/curriculum coach, and having increased budget funding for reading/math specialists and tutors. She feels the need for a better way to introduce the kids to STEM. Her implications for the future include retooling with STEAM supplies, increasing fine arts staffing, and redefining math instruction. She also desires a foreign language exploratory program to allow native and non-native speaker language acquisition and vocabulary development with progressive software and with Ipswich's own rich culture. She told of Feoffee mini-grants that effectively blur the grade levels when, instead of waiting, a student is allowed to explore beyond grade level in subject matter.

Dr. O'Flynn was concerned about the worrisome achievement figures and how she addressed them in her fiscal budget. She explained the STEM/STEAM design, tutors for RTI and small-group reading, and guided technology.

Mrs. Bauman and Mr. Nysten found it an excellent presentation—looking at evident change. Mr. Fabrizio commented that he sees these changes as a "blended learning model" when elementary students get to the middle school. Dr. Gresh was very pleased about the language piece and hoped it will mean full language programs at the middle school. School Committee members talked about consequences to the Winthrop School should the override fail, mentioning the lack

of room at the school in addition to lack of librarian, staff support and doing without programs elementary kids need for their future studies.

Mr. Hopping thanked Mrs. McAdams for her phenomenal presentation, thanking all the staff at the Winthrop School as well. Mrs. Bauman moved, seconded by Mrs. Roesler, to take the Winthrop School FY15 budget under advisement. UNANIMOUS.

#### C. DOYON SCHOOL BUDGET

Ms. Conley, Doyon Principal, thanked the clerical staff, teachers, and School Committee who helped put this budget together. She feels that the budget is more forward looking than what is currently available. Her fiscal goals are to maintain class size, have a library media specialist/curriculum coach, increase STEM instructional materials, increase the art teacher from .8 to 1.0 FTE, and support RTI by increasing the math specialist from .4 to 1.0 FTE. She mentioned her summer remedial instruction for RTI which kept those students on track and excited to come back in the fall. English Language Learners (ELL) number 7 at Doyon and 15 at Winthrop. She spoke of volunteers from the Council who reorganized the books in the library and, with software, have collated and have a system for borrowing/returning books. Funding from the Feoffees has allowed professional development in the reading/writing curriculum. She called the TAs a major gift to Doyon because the majority of them are certified teachers.

Mr. Nylen inquired about the library media specialist/curriculum coach and Ms. Conley explained that a certified library media science person often has dual certification in another area that would aid the school. Ms. Conley spoke of the MS library person who collaborates with Doyon.

Dr. OFlynn offered some pointers for the Finance Committee budget presentations. Mrs. Roesler and Mr. Hopping agreed that Feoffees grants must be highlighted in the different buildings at the Finance Committee presentations.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Nylen, to take the Doyon School FY15 budget under advisement. UNANIMOUS.

#### D. APPOINTMENT OF SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR DIRECTOR OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES POSITION

Mr. Hopping appointed Dr. Sean Gresh to the PPS Director Search Committee.

### III. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Nylen moved, seconded by Ms. Player, to adjourn at 10:10 p.m. UNANIMOUS.



