

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
JUNE 5, 2014  
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM**

**OPEN SESSION**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Temporary Chair C. Nylen called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. with the following members present: S. Player, J. Bauman, S. Gresh, H. O'Flynn and F. Krason. Also present was Superintendent. Hart.

**READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

Mrs. Bauman read the Mission Statement.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Nylen read the following announcements:

Executive Session will be held this evening to discuss strategy in preparation for collective bargaining with IEA and AFSCME

Policy Subcommittee will meet June 9, 6 p.m. Payne School

School Committee Workshop will take place June 9, 7 p.m., Payne School

School Committee meeting will be held on June 19, 7 p.m., M/HS Ensemble Rm.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

Mark Allman of 68 High Street, who had written a Letter to the Editor and is a member of Citizens Opposed to Fast-food Drive Thrus, asked the School Committee to consider sending a letter to the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board re the three-properties' merger proposal for Lord's Square. The petitioner anticipates a 30% increase in traffic at the same time that children are walking to the M/HS and Winthrop Elementary at the two entrances where up to 30 cars will be entering/exiting with their coffee. He spoke also of the health aspect when cars idling at the drive-in are the equivalent of 3500-smoking cigarettes a day, not to mention the cheap calories made easier for the children. School District property is an abutter, especially to the traffic patterns at Linebrook Road and Liberty Street. He urged change--of raising concerns or of proposal. Dr. Hart mentioned that they had been notified as an abutter but didn't choose to go to meetings and hasn't had specific dialogue. Mr. Allman said Planning and Zoning committees are having simultaneous discussion, and there could be a decision as soon as the next eight weeks. While the traffic study was done in January or February, safety concerns are pretty significant, he said.

Kerry Zagarella read her letter from the Ipswich at a Crossroads campaign, thanking the workers and the Finance Committee and the website for its great information regarding the override.

**SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Mr. Nylen welcomed new School Committee member, Feruza Krason, who thanked everybody who voted for her. It was her birthday as well!

**A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Dr. Hart announced that six of the seven Payne Grant applications have been approved; the SAT Prep Grant was turned down. However, funding uncertainties may impact the ability to approve the student leadership grant. Others approved were in curriculum, professional learning communities, professional development, technology, and a strategies plan for sustainable education. The presentation will probably take place at the next School Committee meeting.

He announced that MSBA has approved the Winthrop School Statement of Interest (SOI) application. With voter approval, the Winthrop School project will begin the feasibility study process within the next nine months which will lead to the selection of an architect and, later, a contractor.

The new Director of Pupil Personnel Services has accepted the position, has begun meeting with staff members, and officially begins on July 1.

The security system for the Ipswich Public Schools is fully installed, including a new Mass Communication System and buzzer system. They will become operational on Monday, June 9. An email message and Blackboard Connect message went out today.

**I. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS****A. DONATION OF XENITH FOOTBALL HELMETS**

Athletic Director Tom Gallagher announced that for the past two years, the Impact Testing Program has monitored student athletes so that if there is an impact to the brain, comparable data is available. The concussion management program is looking at Ipswich and three other high schools to which they plan to provide helmets. On May 13, Beverly Hospital sent the news that they will provide 70 new football helmets, to be custom fitted for each player together with two years' worth of conditioning, and the helmet will remain with the student throughout his high school athletic career at Ipswich. He explained (with a visual) the shock bonnet inside the helmet which provides cushioning for shock. Dr. O'Flynn, the team doctor, spoke of the seriousness of a concussion which could have lifelong repercussions. These helmets are five-star rated and the fact that the athletes are getting them for no cost is a significant benefit. There has been an increase in reports of concussions in the last few years, and it is best to protect the football players. Following discussion, Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Dr. Gresh, to make the discussion of donating the Xenith Football Helmet an ACTION item.

**UNANIMOUS.**

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Dr. Gresh, to accept the generous donation from Beverly Hospital of 70 Xenith football helmets (\$18,500 donation), custom-

painted black with orange wings and individually fitted to each student athlete to be used throughout his high school commitment. UNANIMOUS.

The Athletic Director estimated that the life span of a football helmet is 7-10 years. When a helmet is rejected, it has done its job by protecting the athlete who has received a serious blow to the head. To Ms. Player's question, Mr. Gallagher replied that he will investigate a buy-back program for the current helmets, a donation or other program so that there may be added value, and he will inform the School Committee. The School Committee asks that Beverly Hospital be thanked for its gift.

#### C. UPDATE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MINI-GRANT COMMITTEE

Mr. Loeb, Chair of the Mini-Grant Committee, gave an overview of the one and a half years of its existence and the makeup of the Committee. On their opening night, because teachers are a part of this committee, work began on a rubric: "Does the request provide supplemental educational enhancement?" with 5 bullet points: creativity, clarity of goals, quality and objectivity, evaluation plan, and compatibility with State Frameworks." These bullet points have a potential total of 20 points. If each application passes with 16-20 points, they put them aside. Sixty-one applications this year took about five hours of Committee review (individuals on the Committee spent many other hours reviewing the individual applications) and, because of this, the goal of June 1 completion wasn't reached. Forty-seven have been granted at a total of \$186,911.

Mr. Loeb's term expires on June 30, a new person is needed for a three-year position. He suggested that Ms. Player be reappointed, but not as a one-year appointment. As for the two teachers on the committee, he suggests taking one position for expiration on June 30, 2015, and the other, for June 30, 2016. He advised that Principal Conley remain because she is happy doing it.

Further, he advised that expansion of the Committee would be a mistake. The current size is right, and the Committee meets in Alan LaRoche's classroom at 3 p.m. One of the concerns was that school(s) not represented didn't fare as well. Going forward, applications will be blinded to eliminate this concern.

The role of the administrator needs to be reviewed. We had said that everyone had to be signed off by a principal as a gate keeper. Administrators look at it as to whether it can work in his/her building. The Committee's view is, when the voting starts, it is in terms of limits of dollars. The School Committee needs to start voting dollars. There have been discussions about stipends and that number needs to be changed, not increased.

The Committee went through a learning curve. The first time through, everybody who was turned down, was done over. This time that didn't happen. There was a mid-year report requirement and a year-end requirement. Loeb

wanted to reject anybody this year who was late, but the Committee did not support his view. Mid-year reports are onerous. The Mini Grant Committee was requiring reports and the Payne Grant Committee was not.

Also, there needs to be a way to communicate what is going through Mini-Grants and what is going through the Payne Grant process, especially in the technology area—there was no coordination in the technology requests. Lots of duplication caused hesitation by the Committee. More sharing is needed as money gets short in the future. More creativity is needed. Ms. Player felt that the person in charge of technology in the future should make sure that there is no redundancy; i.e., Chrome Books.

Dr. Hart quoted \$900,000 set aside for Payne Grants and \$600,000 is being spent.

Mr. Loeb stated that there are applicants who are being told not to apply a third time, once given a Mini-Grant for one and then a second year. Acceptance and rejection letters will be personalized and signed by a member of the committee.

Applications from Birth to Three needed to go via the Payne Grant route. The Payne Grant area was \$19,000 short and now Mr. Loeb feels there is \$14,000 available from the Mini-Grants.

Mr. Loeb stated he thinks that refusing to accept some of the applications enhances the value of these grants and hopes that the School Committee will schedule a time for grant recipients to talk about what they have been able to do. Ms. Player reported that Chris Burke is working on a grant website. Dr. Gresh hopes that the community will be informed about enhancement. Dr. O’Flynn said that Mini-Grants can motivate the teachers to get their kids involved in their own education. It is important to let these grow in the first years, and he has concerns still about limiting “dollars.”

Mr. Loeb indicated frustration with the fact that there are fewer ideas this time and many were repeats of last year. Some of the programs being funded are not really enhancement, but the budget can’t bear it. There should be books in the Kindergarten classrooms, but it was the Mini-Grants that got them rather than the school budget.

Mr. Loeb feels that \$200,000 for the Mini-Grants is fine and will foster some competitive nature. It is the work of the principals to start evaluating this among their buildings. Because there is no “year 3” for a grant, there needs to be administrative involvement with creativity. The Committee wants to be in a position where there is a \$300,000 compilation of applications but only \$200,000 available and the Committee must decide.

Everyone thanked Jeff Loeb for his report.

#### **D. APPOINTMENT TO ADHOC AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Mr. Nysten referred to the amendment at Town Meeting which the Finance Committee initiated to study the expenses of the schools and identify the areas to be audited by appointment of an ADHOC Audit Committee to consist of one Board of Selectmen member, one Finance Committee member, one School Committee

member, and two citizen representatives. Mrs. Bauman moved, seconded by Dr. Gresh, to appoint Mr. Nylén as the School Committee member. Dr. O'Flynn said he would be happy to do it and urged aligning audits to the success of the district, always moving forward, watching the process of the audit performance by a firm which has knowledge and consensus. He suggested Rachel Roesler and Ed Traverso as citizen committee members. UNANIMOUS.

#### C. DISCUSSION ON OVERRIDE VOTE & DECIDING NEXT STEPS

Mr. Nylén began by thanking those who put so much effort into the campaign despite the outcome and recited a long list of reasons (which follow) that the vote turned out the way it did. A meeting of the Chairs of the three Town Boards has been held about this issue.

1. Dollar amount of the override.
2. Stabilization fund and perhaps some misunderstanding with the idea of banking it.
3. Dollars not being used wisely and being a "waste" in the schools.
4. Not understanding the superintendent's vision fully.
5. Our State Rep's comment at Town Meeting.
6. Feoffees' discussion—concerns about feelings and confusion.
7. The message that said "if you are against the override, you are against kids."
8. What happened to the money in 2008?
9. Concerns of getting started a little late and not having enough time.
10. A five-year time frame being too long.
11. A feeling by some that the override was "in the bag" at Town Meeting and the voters stayed away from the ballot box.
12. Misunderstanding some of the math behind the amount requested.

Mr. Nylén led the Board in discussion of next steps. If another override is pursued, there are three ways it could be done because another Town Meeting is not needed: (a) Special election, (b) Fall town meeting and (c) Annual Town Meeting next spring. In the meantime, what will the impact be? Will there be funding to lessen the impact of these cuts? Mrs. Bauman felt that workshops should be continued with the three Boards and continue to talk to people. Dr. Gresh had three comments: a message that was presented as too negative, five out of six people who did not show up to vote because the outreach to the community was not strong enough, and a need to reach out to those who oppose this to get them to help us and help alleviate the perception that they "hate" the school children.

Dr. O'Flynn spoke of looking at an inexorable situation that requires another override. Town Boards must remain unanimous in their decision to support and make the populace understand that the current mess won't go away without an override. Ms. Player suggested open-air discussions with the citizens. Mrs. Krason wants to hear of "thinking outside the box." Dr. Hart commented that listening and

finding ways to get the money is not our primary function—it is about teaching and learning.

Scott Johnson (from the audience) commented that the SC is blind-sided by more general economic situations. People's discretionary or disposable income isn't going up. Too many individuals do not have the capacity to absorb the expenses, and because of this, he felt that there is need to look back to the way schools are organized. Mr. Nylen stated that the Board does appreciate the economic burden it puts on the taxpayer. Dr. Gresh asked what Mr. Johnson might do to help the Board and he suggested Charter Schools. Dr. O'Flynn explained that Prop 2 ½ cannot sustain public education and the other public institutions. Union contracts with steps/lanes and health insurance are mandated. Private monies come with athletic fees and transportation fees and, ultimately, a vote of the community.

Bill Graham (audience member) suggested learning how to work together so that there is no winning side nor losing side. The Board is being defensive, and Dr. Hart (who wants to educate people) and the Board have an attitude that is all wrong and won't create a solution without the basic idea of having everyone win. Mr. Graham had problems with the way the override presentation was done. Prop 2 ½ came because there were problems about people being overtaxed. With a \$1.45 million shortfall in the school budget, the request was for over 10% as a one-year adjustment. He advised a different mindset from those who don't have school-age children, who are on social security, people whose specific purpose is to save money, not spend it, to work with you. Ask if it is needed, would it be nice, is it State mandated—be more inclusive in terms of the people that you have working on this. Mrs. Roesler, former School Committee member, responded to Mr. Graham by telling him that the School Committee had full unanimity with both the Fin Com and Board/Selectmen, most of whom do not have children in the schools.

Sue Brengle looked at it, not as a total failure, having lost by 60 votes with a 39% voter turnout. People were educated along the way. To that degree, she believes we won. What has not changed is that the schools have a serious financial crisis and a long-term solution is needed. For the short term, Dr. Hart needs \$600,000 to shift practices in the schools. There is a direct benefit to everyone because of good schools. Her son saw 20% of his class leave to go to other schools outside of Ipswich. She asked those who voted against the override to help to come to a solution.

Larry Seidler, Chair of the Long Range Financial Planning Committee, thanked those non-supporters who came to the meeting and advised that NOW is the time to organize to find a solution and get the maximum number of supporters.

Keri McRae spoke about there being no winners or losers except for the children who will be impacted for the rest of their lives by not having appropriate sized classes, textbooks, and teaching models. There will be almost a whole generation of children who will be hurt. A dedicated community of teachers, administrators, and School Committee are talking about the childrens' needs, not about the message and how the override was run. On June 16, the Tri Board

meeting (Board/Selectmen, Fin Com, and SchCom) will meet, Dr. O’Flynn said, when we need to hear from the full Boards and the community on both sides of the issue. Mrs. Bauman, citing the structural problem, asked for ideas and help. A newcomer to town felt that a property owner has a civic responsibility to take care of his/her property and the community. Lastly, Dr. Hart remarked, as an objective observer of the town, that this issue began about five years ago with no or little investment in technology, professional development, and all the things on the periphery of teachers working with kids have been whittled away. Ipswich tax rates and per pupil costs are not unreasonable in their expectations.

**II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. VOUCHERS/BILLS**

**B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Dr. O’Flynn reported on several discussions that had taken place. New teams were presented; a new girls’ soccer coach was named. The question of responsibility for maintenance and oversight was made: Who is in charge of assessing the Mile Lane wells? Who oversees the grounds/athletic fields and outside contracts? Kerry Bates has asked for a skateboard park at Green Street. The Doyon fields will be looked at again. Outsiders using fields could be charged a fee. A golf tournament at Turner Hill this summer will benefit the Ipswich Education Foundation. Dr. Hart promised to contact Mr. Gallagher, Mr. Hodge, and Ms. Cuff.

Mrs. Krason asked if home-schooled kids were eligible to participate in athletics and the answer was a resounding yes.

**2. ATHLETIC FIELD STUDY COMMITTEE**

**3. BIRTH TO THREE SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mrs. Bauman was disappointed that Feoffee grant funding was not forthcoming.

**4. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE**

**5. COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**6. DAY CARE CENTER SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mrs. Bauman questioned the need for this item.

**7. GRANT COMMITTEES**

Mrs. Bauman will have details of the Payne Grants at the next meeting.

**8. LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLANNING**

Dr. O’Flynn reported a debriefing after the override ballot.

**9. MUTUAL CONCERNS SUBCOMMITTEE**

**10. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mr. Hopping will coordinate with Mrs. Krason to get her “on board.”

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

Dr. Hart reported that the consultant, Mary Burns, hired on the short-term, had her last meeting in a combination of the process where she was sharing some of her findings. She has now finalized her document and done a thorough job. Dr. Hart will ask her to come back and present to the School Committee.

**14. NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Bauman asked for some action relative to Mr. Allman’s concerns in Lord Square’s safety issues. It was suggested that the Board digest the matter and put it on the next agenda.

To Dr. O’Flynn’s question re the MSBA and the Winthrop School, Dr. Hart replied that MSBA will assign a coach to Ipswich in the next few days who will answer Sch Com and Fin Com questions.

Mr. Nylen announced that the Manning Fund, in an agreement with the current Trustee, is being co-mingled with Feoffee funds and folded into their management, retaining the purpose of the fund, and will dedicate amounts of money in the future.

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Nylen moved, seconded by Dr. O’Flynn, to accept the Consent Agenda as follows: Acceptance of School Committee Minutes of May 15, 2014, Open Session Approval of the Ipswich High School Band, Choir and Orchestra overnight field trip to England from April 16, 2015, to April 24, 2015.

Acceptance of a donation from the Edward J. Sindoni Fund to the Ipswich Middle School in the amount of \$1,000.

Acceptance of a payment from the City of Newburyport to support school health services at the Ipswich Middle School in the amount of \$1,500. UNANIMOUS.

Mrs. Bauman asked for more details to be included in the paperwork about the Consent Agenda items.

**IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Dr. O’Flynn moved , seconded by Dr. Gresh, to adjourn to Executive Session at 10 p.m. for the purpose of strategy in preparation for negotiations with IEA and AFSCME, not to return to Open Session. Roll call vote IN FAVOR- Krason, O’Flynn, Player, Nylen, Gresh, Bauman. UNANIMOUS.