

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2020
7:00 PM
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM

MEETING MINUTES

I. OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Hopping, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03pm

Present: Mr. Nylen, Ms. Kneedler, Ms. Gilliam, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Whitten

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

READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Gallagher read the mission statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next School Committee meeting will be Thursday, March 19th at 7:00pm in the MS/HS ensemble room
- The School Committee will present the FY21 School Budget to the Finance Committee on Tuesday, March 10th at 7:30pm and Thursday, March 12th at 7:30pm. Both meetings will take place at Town Hall in Meeting Room A.
- The Athletic Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, March 11th at 6:00pm in the MS/HS guidance conference room.
- The Feoffee Policy Working Group and the Policy Subcommittee will hold a joint meeting on Monday, March 16th at 6:00pm in the MS/HS guidance conference room.
- The Policy Subcommittee will hold a meeting on Monday, March 16th at 7:00pm in the MS/HS guidance conference room.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

There were none.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mr. Whitten spoke about the recent passing of Gina Persson who had volunteered as a piano accompanist at Winthrop School for over 20 years.

Mr. Hopping asked for a moment of silence in her honor.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Mr. Gallagher discussed the Snow Ball dance hosted by the Senior Class and how the Ipswich High School drama group presented a show at a recent drama festival. On Monday, three students from Ipswich competed in a French auditory competition. Students at the high school participated in a presentation on the Bi-Literacy Seal and also on local scholarships for seniors. Lastly, students successfully participated in a fire drill.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Dr. Blake reported on a busy two weeks in the district. He participated in his weekly facilities update with Chris Rais, as well as participated in observations at both Winthrop School and Doyon. He attended a North Shore Superintendent's Round Table luncheon where unconscious bias was discussed and met with middle school counselors around a student issue. Dr. Blake participated in a Massachusetts Emergency Management conference call and held a meeting to discuss payroll. He went to a Northshore Education Consortium Board meeting and attended a Town emergency management meeting regarding coronavirus. He attended various subcommittee meetings, as well as a Town Strategic Plan group meeting. Lastly, Dr. Blake issued a letter to all families regarding coronavirus updates and information.

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS	7:10 PM
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NEW BUSINESS: IPSWICH MIDDLE SCHOOL READATHON

Kathy McMahon, IMS principal, explained that the Student Leadership Senate had planned a Readathon/Lock In on Friday, March 27th from 7:00pm through 6:00am on Saturday, March 28th. As a fundraiser for literacy around the world, students will get sponsorships for minutes of reading they complete throughout the night. Over the course of the event, students will be reading quietly and also participating in events such as a dance party and ice cream social. There will be assigned quiet areas throughout the space and students will have an opportunity to sleep. At this time, Ms. McMahon anticipates 130 student participants with 10 chaperones, as well as teacher and parent volunteers helping throughout the night.

Mr. Whitten moved to support the Ipswich Middle School Readathon, seconded by Mr. Nylen. The motion passed unanimously.

DONATION OF BLEACHERS AT MILE LANE FIELD

Brian Baise, President of Friends of Ipswich Baseball Boosters and who resides on Turkey Shore Road in Ipswich, came to ask the School Committee for the approval of a donation of bleachers at Mile Lane field to be installed directly behind the backstop.

Dr. Blake read an email from Athletic Director Tom Gallagher which further explained the request:

"The Baseball Boosters were approached by an anonymous donor who would like to donate a set of bleachers for the Mile Lane Baseball field. The bleacher set is 8 rows high and 21 feet

long that will have 91 seats. The bleachers would be installed directly behind the backstop. The cost of the bleachers is \$12,000 plus \$2,500 set-up fee and approximately \$800 for shipping. So the total cost will be approximately \$15,300. We would like the school committee to accept the donation of the completed bleacher set.”

Mr. Baise explained that once installed, the bleachers would become a permanent structure at the field. He also said that ideally, they hope to have the bleachers installed before the first scheduled baseball game on April 8th, however they understand that due to permitting, it may take longer.

Lastly, School Committee members did recommend that as a courtesy, the group should notify neighbors of the upcoming project.

Mr. Nysten moved to approve the gift of the bleachers to be permanently installed behind the backstop at Mile Lane Field, seconded by Mr. Stevens. The motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET PRESENTATION TO FINANCE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Mr. Hopping spoke to the committee about the structure of the School Committee presentation to the Finance Committee on March 10th and March 12th. The meeting will begin at 7:30pm each night and have a hard stop of 10:00pm. Mr. Hopping anticipates getting through the entire presentation on the first night, which will leave the second night for more detailed questions. He has asked the Finance Committee to provide questions in advance of the two meetings in hopes that those answers can be incorporated into the presentation ahead of time.

Mr. Hopping explained that it was decided he would present the introductory slides and Dr. Blake would follow up with the rest of the presentation in a similar style as his presentation to the School Committee. They are currently working on additional slides to address the need for an override and an explanation on how the stabilization fund has been extended beyond the initial five year commitment. It was decided that the override conversation should be held at the end of the second night, once all school budget questions had been addressed.

Dr. Blake will also be adding additional slides into the presentation to address MCAS data, accomplishments in the district, and assessment scores.

It was also decided that the conversation about an upcoming override should be limited to information that was already discussed at the School Committee level. While conversations have been underway and the Budget Subcommittee is currently looking at the numbers, the School Committee did not feel comfortable making a formal statement about the override at the time of the Finance Committee meetings. Mr. Nysten felt that it would be okay to defer a more formal conversation until Bean Counting.

Mr. Hopping reviewed the attendance at each meeting, making note that three School Committee members will be coming directly from the Winthrop School's ballroom dancing event on Thursday evening and may be running late.

Lastly, there was a question as to whether the school building(s) project would be discussed. Mr. Hopping felt that at this time, the focus should be on the Capital Plan and addressing the results of the School Dude report. At this point, the School Committee has not had any concrete discussion about the building project.

TA EVALUATION AND JOB DESCRIPTION UPDATE

Dr. Blake shared with the committee that the final draft of the Teaching Assistant's job description and evaluation document have been approved and ratified by the Ipswich Educators' Association and the Teaching Assistants. He explained that a committee was developed to review and edit the evaluation document and job description to better align with their current work in the district. The final version of both documents were shared in the meeting folder for review by each School Committee member. These documents need the approval of the School Committee.

Mr. Hopping, while reviewing the two documents, reiterated that the building principal does the assessment with input from the teachers. The staff signature line should be for the person who is being assessed. He then asked what an unwillingness to sign the document would signify. Dr. Blake answered that an unwillingness to sign means the person being evaluated does not agree with the assessment.

Mr. Hopping then asked if the district had any type of baseline requirements for credentials when hiring teaching assistants. Dr. Blake responded that Teaching Assistants must have some college coursework and that the district is always looking to hire the most qualified candidate.

Ms. Kneidler moved to accept the Teaching Assistant evaluation document as presented, seconded by Mr. Nylan. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Gilliam moves to accept the Teaching Assistant job description as presented, seconded by Mr. Stevens. The motion passed unanimously.

END OF YEAR SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION DISCUSSION

Mr. Hopping discussed the need for the Operations Subcommittee to meet soon to discuss the End of Year Superintendent Evaluation. He reminded the School Committee that at an earlier meeting, they had voted to not give a full summative assessment this year. Even without the summative assessment, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does require that the School Committee provides an end of year report. With Town elections approaching this spring, Mr. Hopping said the time to do Dr. Blake's evaluation is now time sensitive.

PRE-SCHOOL TUITION INCREASE PROPOSAL

Dr. Brian Blake discussed the proposal to increase fees for the Ipswich Integrated Preschool. The initial proposal was first brought to the Budget Subcommittee where they voted unanimously in support of these changes.

When considering the rate increase, several factors were taken into consideration including surveying area preschools and comparing their program hours and rates. It was also noted that

the integrated preschool had not seen a rate increase in 10 years. Even with this increase to fees, tuition would still be less than those area preschools surveyed.

Dr. Blake then shared the following information:

Proposed cost hike: *As of 2020, the Ipswich Integrated Preschool will offer a 5 ¾ hour/day program on M, T, W, F and a contractual 5 1/4 hour day on Thursdays. Typically-developing students must comprise half of all available seats in our programs and, as such, efforts have to be made not to overprice our program. Additionally, higher costs often force families to delay preschool until students are 4 years of age. We do, however, offer competitive services. Changes to bring our cost more in line with other preschool programs found in the community must be made.*

Registration fee increase: From the current rate of \$100 to \$150/year, no pro-rating with a mid-year entry.

Cost per program increase :

Two day programs may range from 44-46 hours/month.
Increase from \$240/month (\$5.71/hr) to \$383/month (\$8.50/hr)
This would be a monthly change for existing families of \$143/month.

Three day programs may range from 67-69 hours/month.
Increase from \$240/month (\$3.63/hr) to \$578/month (\$8.50/hr)
This would be a monthly change for existing families of \$338/month.

Consideration should be made to spread this increase over the course of the next two years. (Year 1-\$480/\$7.05 per hour; Year 2-\$578/\$8.50/month)

Ms. Cuff assured the committee that they are trying to do this in a manner that is least impactful to families. At this time, they are considering a two-year rollout of the three day program increase.

Mr. Hopping expressed that his concern is about parents being notified of these changes.

Mr. Nysten moved to support the changes to the Ipswich Integrated Preschool fees as written, seconded by Mr. Whitten. The motion passed unanimously.

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS	8:45 PM
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VOUCHERS/BILLS

Complete

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11th.

2. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

This committee met tonight prior to the School Committee meeting.

3. GRANT SUBCOMMITTEES

a. Payne Grant Subcommittee

This subcommittee has not met.

b. Instructional Mini-Grant Subcommittee

There is an informational meeting scheduled on March 31st at 3:30pm. The subcommittee is currently looking for a community member. It was decided that this opening should be advertised and posted.

4. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee has not met, but will be scheduling a meeting.

5. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

The subcommittee met on March 3rd. Ms. Gilliam shared the two policies that are ready to come forward BEDH: Public Comment at School Committee Meetings (changes from legal court case and updated by MASC) and GBGE: Domestic Violence Leave Policy (new policy). Both of these policies have been adapted from the MASC and reviewed by legal counsel.

Mr. Stevens moved to accept policy BEDH and GBGE as presented, seconded by Mr. Nylan. The motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

This subcommittee met tonight. Ms. Gilliam shared that they talked about the last newsletter, which will be sent on April 16th. There is a Meet and Greet scheduled in May at the Council on Aging. The Communications Subcommittee is also going to help the Feoffee Policy Working Group with the rollout of the revised Feoffee Policy.

7. SEPAC

This group will be meeting on March 24th.

8. BIRTH TO THREE

This group will meet on March 11th.

9. WORKING GROUPS

a. Town Strategic Planning

Mr. Nylan shared a summary of the work that will be presented at the next triboard meeting. He explained that the group is working on financial modeling around eight major investment types of decisions the town needs to make in the upcoming years. Their plan is to come up with models on financial impacts. Mr. Nylan did share the need for the School Committee to begin their talks about school buildings so the strategic group can use the information to include in their calculations.

b. Feoffees Working Group

This group is hoping to have a full draft of the Feoffee Policy to bring to the School Committee meeting on March 19th. There was some discussion on what the rollout of this updated policy would look like and how it would get to different stakeholder groups.

c. High School Student Council

Ms. Kneedler explained that a group has been formed to address transition from 8th grade to 9th grade. Both the Middle and High School principals have been talking about it all year and

working with their mentor to address this issue. The new Secondary Education Plan was also introduced at the most recent meeting.

d. Facilities

This working group needs to schedule a meeting. Mr. Nylen addressed the need to also schedule a workshop with the School Committee to talk about the values around a new building project in an effort to see where the committee lands and what it feels strongly about. He suggested that the discussion be facilitated by a volunteer to help moderate the discussion. Ideally, this discussion should take place in April.

e. Climate Resiliency Committee

This group is giving a presentation to the Select Board about goals for the town with regard to carbon reduction. Mr. Nylen would ask them to present to the School Committee as well.

f. Community Development Plan Group

This group has kicked off the next round of the development plan process. They have set goals and created an action plan.

10. NEW BUSINESS*

Covid-19 Update:

Dr. Blake stated that as the coronavirus develops, he will continue to send updates as necessary with the latest information to the Ipswich Schools community. He is currently in close contact with the Department of Health, reading advisories with CDC, and working with Town officials. He is following directives as they come out and meeting with the leadership team to do forward planning in the event schools need to close.

Dr. Blake also addressed what the district is doing to address both local and international trips that were planned. At this time, the French Exchange program is going to cancel their trip and they are working with the airlines to issue refunds to families.

At this time, the district is monitoring the conferences that staff are attending and creating a plan should staff return with symptoms.

Families traveling over the holidays and breaks are encouraged to report their travel plans. At this time, there has been no guidance issued for this particular issue yet.

IV. CONSENT

A. CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Hopping moved the Ipswich School Committee to approve the School Committee Open Session meeting minutes from Thursday, February 27, 2020, seconded by Ms. Kneedler. The motion passed unanimously.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Nylen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:18pm, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously.

