

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 2020
7:00 PM
Remote Meeting via Zoom Video Conferencing

Minutes

I. OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Hopping called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

Present:

Mr. Hopping, Mr. Whitten, Mr. Nysten, Ms. Kneedler, Ms. Gilliam, Mr. Stevens, and Dr. O'Flynn.

Also Present:

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

Mr. Gallagher read the District Mission Statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next School Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, June 18th at 7pm. This will be a remote meeting utilizing Zoom video conferencing
- The last day of school for all students is Wednesday, June 17th
- The Central Office is now open to the public with limited hours, Monday through Friday, 9am-1pm
- Mr. Hopping announced that he has decided to not seek re-election and will step down from the School Committee after 21 years.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Ipswich resident, Kate Elliot of Argilla Road, introduced herself and announced that she would like to run for School Committee as a write-in candidate. She went on to discuss her community involvement through the years.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Blake acknowledged Kathy Simms for her work as the Chair of the Paine Grant Committee.

Mr. Hopping and the members of the School Committee acknowledged George Gallagher, as this was his last School Committee meeting as the High School Student Representative.

Members of the Committee thanked him for his service and leadership, noting how valuable his voice was throughout the school year.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Mr. Gallagher reported that the last assignments for students were given on May 22nd. He then shared the details of the High School graduation for Saturday, June 13th. Lastly, Mr. Gallgher thanked the School Committee for the opportunity to learn and for the experience serving as the High School Student Representative.

A. SUPERINTENDENT’S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Dr. Blake reported on his schedule from the time of the last School Committee meeting. In his report, he stated the following:

- He participated in a North Shore Superintendent’s Round Table planning meeting to plan for a meeting to discuss state funding
- He held his weekly leadership team meetings
- He attended the Paine Grant Committee meetings
- He attended several subcommittee meetings
- He participated in the Finance Committee warrant hearing
- He taped another Town/School COVID-19 update with ICAM
- He participated in two conference calls with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- He met with Joanne Cuff to discuss the FY21 budget
- He attended two School Facilities Working Group meetings
- He participated in several calls with Illustrative Math program vendor for elementary schools and middle school
- He had a meeting with Scott Ames to discuss the Performing Arts Center
- He participated in a virtual Ipswich Education Foundation meeting
- He participated in a conference call regarding the upcoming Town Meeting on June 27th
- He had a conference call to discuss the future of state funding
- He had a meeting with Joanne Cuff and the directors of the Tiger Tots program
- He participated in a remote Rotary meeting

Dr. Blake also shared that Central Office is reopening with limited hours and a limited rotating staff that meet state guidelines. The office will be open to the public from 9am-1pm. He then outlined the safety precautions that have been put in place for both the staff and community.

<h2>II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS</h2>
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B. HANDBOOK APPROVAL

This agenda item was deferred until the next School Committee meeting.

C. WILLIAM PAINE GRANT APPROVAL

Kathy Simms, Chair of the William Paine Grant Committee, first reviewed the steps the committee took when deciding what to move forward for School Committee approval. This year, the total distribution amount allocated for Paine Grants was 609,726.00, while the total requested amount was 670,136.00. Although the Paine Grant Committee would have funded each submitted grant in full, they were tasked with cutting the funding by \$64,000. Prior to submitting their recommendations to the School Committee for approval, the Grant Committee met first to talk amongst themselves about the grants and then a second night to address any questions they had with the applicants. A third meeting was added so that Grant Committee members could prioritize the grants to fund.

Of the ten grants applications submitted, the Paine Grant Committee recommended funding eight of those grants in full, one partially, and one not at all.

1.

Grant Name: Using Document Cameras
Funding Amount: \$28,736.00
Grant Author: Susan Merrill, Doyon, written to support both elementary schools
Discussion: Members of the Committee discussed how many classrooms would be outfitted with the new cameras and how it was determined which cameras would be purchased. It was explained that the 40 cameras would be placed in 36 classrooms. The type of cameras being purchased were vetted by both teachers and the technology department.
<i>Vote: Dr. O'Flynn moved to support the grant "Using Document Cameras" in the amount of \$28,736.00, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes-0 No.</i>

2.

Grant Name: Centralizing Youth Opportunities
Funding Amount: \$137,500.00
Grant Author: Sheila McAdams in collaboration with Sheila Halloran, Kath McMahon and Tom Gallagher
Discussion: This grant will allow for a new way for parents to look at the Extended Day Program, as well as other area after school activities. The idea is to create a centralized place for parents to see all after school offerings in town and streamline the ability to register for these activities in one place. The goal is to make this program self-funding after its first year. Because Mr. Stevens was part of the brainstorming process prior to this grant being written, it was suggested that he abstain from the vote.

Vote: Mr. Nylan moved to support the grant “Centralizing Youth Opportunities” in the amount of \$137,500.00, seconded by Mr. Whitten. The motion passed in favor by roll call vote, 6 Yes- 1 Abstention (Mr. Stevens).

3.

Grant Name: Expanding Learning Opportunities Through Place Based Learning
Funding Amount: \$69,000.00
Grant Author: Sheila McAdams in collaboration with the Administrative Team
Discussion: While a similar grant has been submitted in the past, this grant has been scaled back to reflect the uncertainty of the upcoming school year. Ms. Simms explained that the Committee should expect this grant to continue to come forward in some capacity because it impacts different students each year in enriching ways. Tracy Wagner, Director of Teaching and Learning, talked about the variety of trips students attend, ensuring the Committee that students are being exposed to different venues and trips. She also stated that even if students were to take advantage of more local trips, the cost of transportation would not change. It was also discussed that while there may be fewer trips in the upcoming year, transportation costs may still be high due to potentially restricting guidelines.
<i>Vote: Mr. Nylan moved to support the grant “Expanded Learning Opportunities Through Place Based Learning” in the amount of \$69,000.00, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes- 0 No.</i>

4.

Grant Name: New England Authors
Funding Amount: \$12,000.00
Grant Author: Heather Chang, Teresa Hohenstein, Kathy McMahon, Jon Mitchell, Sheila Halloran
Discussion: This grant will fund two different authors to visit Doyon, the Middle School and High School. Winthrop was excluded from this grant because they currently have their own funding source for this program. If restrictions are still in place in the fall, authors will still provide virtual experiences for the students. Should presentations be done virtually, the total grant amount would decrease because the travel expenses currently included would not be necessary.
<i>Vote: Mr. Stevens moved to support the grant “New England Authors” in the amount of \$12,000.00, seconded by Ms. Kneeder. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes- 0 No.</i>

5.

Grant Name: Digital Piano for Winthrop
Funding Amount: \$8,210.00
Grant Author: Laurie Colitti
Discussion: The current piano at Winthrop is in need of replacement. The piano listed in the grant has been vetted and will be able to withstand the significant temperature fluctuation in the building.
<i>Vote: Mr. Nylan moved to support the grant "Digital Piano for Winthrop" in the amount of \$8,210.00, seconded by Mr. Stevens. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes- 0 No.</i>

6.

Grant Name: Preparing a Nimble System: Moving Quickly and Fluidly in a Changing Educational Landscape
Funding Amount: \$266,144.00
Grant Author: District Administrative Team
Discussion: The grant was written with the intention of opening up opportunities for remote learning going forward. As written, the grant is divided into groups that address hardware, digital tools and apps; social-emotional support; and funding a strategic planning group for the fall. The administrative team worked collaboratively on this grant and feel it is the best way to support the district for the upcoming year.
Because of the uncertainties of reopening this fall, the grant and funding is designed to be fluid and help meet the needs of students and staff in a variety of scenarios.
There was some talk about what the CARES Act will cover in relation to this grant. It was explained that should anything within this grant be found to be reimbursable, the money reimbursed would be put back into the Feoffees Trust.
Dr. Blake stated that the district is not looking to go back to an antiquated system upon returning to school. Remote learning has great potential for the future in terms of reforming education and this grant will allow for the opportunity to think forward.
<i>Vote: Mr. Whitten moved to support the grant "Preparing a Nimble System: Moving Quickly and Fluidly in a Changing Educational Landscape" in the amount of \$266,144.00, seconded by Ms. Kneedler. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes- 0 No.</i>

7.

Grant Name: Closing Equity Gaps and Increasing AP Readiness
Funding Amount Requested: \$38,420.00
Funding Amount Recommended: \$18,420.00

Grant Author: Tim Sidmore
<p>Discussion: Ms. Simms explained that in an attempt to meet the target amount of Paine Grant funding for this round, the Grant Committee removed \$20,000.00 from this grant. When requesting that the grant writer adjust the grant amount and resubmit their application, Jon Mitchell asked if it would be possible to move funding from this grant to the CNC Machine grant instead. With this shift, both this grant and the CNC Machine grant will be only partially funded.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the process in which a grant can be funded. In the new language in the most recently updated Feoffee Grant policy, the School Committee could vote to roll over unspent funds from the previous year into the current year's disbursement. While the money is available and the mechanism to move it is written into the policy, the Committee felt they needed to review and understand the process better prior to voting.</p> <p>Dr. Blake added that the Paine Grant Committee was willing to fund all of the grants in full, but could not because the money was not available.</p> <p>Ms. Simms was asked to bring both this grant and the CNC Machine grant back to the Paine Grant Committee.</p> <p>While there are unspent funds available from last year, some Committee members expressed the need to be cautious and really understand the process before making any decisions.</p>
<p><i>Vote: It was decided that this grant would be reevaluated at the next School Committee meeting. No vote was taken.</i></p>

8.

Grant Name: Improving Student Achievement through Adult Professional Learning
Funding Amount: \$60,268.00
Grant Author: Jon Mitchell
<p>Discussion: This grant is similar to the grant written last year by former Middle School principal Dave Fabrizio. This grant, however, was reduced significantly and focuses more on bringing people together and bringing professional development opportunities to the district. Rather than funding conferences, the professional development included in this grant is targeted to specific programs such as the new Illustrative Math program. The overall goal of this grant is to provide support for teachers in the district.</p>
<p><i>Vote: Mr. Nysten moved to support the grant "Improving Student Achievement through Adult Professional Learning" in the amount of \$60,268.00, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes- 0 No.</i></p>

9.

Grant: CNC Course

Funding Amount Requested: \$40,358.00
Funding Amount Recommended: No funding recommended
Grant Author: Bill Gallant
Discussion: This grant was discussed when talking about the grant “Closing Equity Gaps and Increasing AP Readiness”.
Vote: <i>It was decided that this grant would be reevaluated at the next School Committee meeting. No vote was taken.</i>

10.

Grant Name: College Application Bootcamp
Funding Amount: \$9,500.00
Grant Author: Justine May, Claire Powers
Discussion: This program has been offered at the High School for the past four years with a great turnout each year. While the initial application notes that the grant will fund 60 students, some Committee members wanted to see if it would be funded for any student who was interested in participating. The Committee asked for some clarity on the funding and for how many students prior to taking a formal vote.
Vote: <i>It was decided that this grant would be reevaluated at the next School Committee meeting. No vote was taken.</i>

D. COVID-19/SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE

Dr. Blake updated the School Committee on information that he has received regarding COVID-19 and the continuing school closures in the state, along with what is happening within the district. He reported:

- The High School graduation will be held on June 13th in the Crane Beach resident parking lot following a town-wide parade
- The Senior Baccalaureate will be pre recorded and aired on ICAM
- Both elementary schools, along with the middle school will each hold moving up ceremonies the last week of school
- Central Office is open to public on limited hours
- The Extended School Year (ESY) program will be done remotely based on ongoing concerns and limited staff, materials, and state guidance
- The last day of school is June 17th
- The ESY program starts on July 6th and runs through the first week of August
- The School Facilities Working Group has shifted gears and begun to plan alongside the administrative team for the reopening of schools this fall
- The Food Services Department continues to provide meals to any Ipswich student who needs one
- The track, tennis courts and turf field will be reopening

- He has participated in several calls with the Commissioner of Education regarding ongoing updates to state guidelines
- September 14th will no longer be considered a holiday because of the cancellation of the Boston Marathon
- At this time, the district has not received state guidance for summer programming
- Guidance around the reopening of schools in the fall should be released the week of June 15th
- Any guidance for the fall will come as a directive from the state on how schools should reopen
- The state is currently compiling a bid list for PPE in the fall
- At this time, the state is recommending that school districts purchase a three month supply of PPE to get started
- The return of school sports in the fall will be determined on a sport by sport basis dependent on the level of closeness between athletes

E. BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Hopping shared with the Committee that Dr. Blake, Ms. Cuff and he attended the Finance Committee Warrant Hearing. In the process of discussing the school and town budget, there was some confusion over the \$204,000 reduced from the Capital Plan in an attempt to decrease the school budget. It was agreed that rather than counting money from the Capital Plan as part of the district's budget reduction, the School Committee would find additional money in the school budget to make up the difference.

Ms. Cuff said that in order to address a budget deficit in compliance with the request of the Town, it is recommended that the School Committee utilize a hybrid model which includes reducing the total budget by \$356,461 and withdrawing an additional \$271,092 from the stabilization fund.

Ms. Cuff walked through the "School Committee Budget Reduction Plan" spreadsheet she provided to the Committee prior to the meeting. The worksheet shows the two budget reduction rounds. The first round of reductions included \$208,440 which was already approved by the School Committee. After this most recent Finance Committee meeting, the district was given the directive to find an additional \$204,000 worth of reductions. Those reductions, totaling \$102,550 appear on the spreadsheet in the second round and are broken down by where and how the reductions would take place. Added to the round two reductions is the cost savings of \$45,471 from retirement. With these additional budget reductions plus an additional withdrawal from the stabilization fund, the total FY21 School Budget would be \$32,019,077

Dr. O'Flynn explained that when Dr. Blake and the Town Manager originally met to discuss the FY21 budget, it was assumed that Dr. Blake could cut the Capital Plan budget and use the free cash to supplement the school budget. It was then realized that the Town did not use free cash to supplement their budget, but instead gave up the free cash and made reductions to the budget in other ways. Because the district assumed permission to use the free cash that was not there, they were asked to go back and either cut the budget or fund it through the Stabilization Fund.

Dr. O’Flynn moved to approve the total FY21 School Budget of \$32,019,077.00, which includes a base budget of \$30,849,488, a planned Stabilization Fund contribution of \$898,497, an additional withdrawal from the Stabilization Fund of \$215,113 and another additional withdrawal from the Stabilization Fund of \$55,979, seconded by Mr. Stevens. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes-0 No.

Mr. Hopping reviewed the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles that will be presented at the Town Meeting on June 27th. He explained that this will be a condensed meeting and only the first fourteen warrant articles will go forward.

1	Consent Calendar	This article was already voted on.
2	Finance Committee Election	<i>Ms. Gilliam moved to support the appointment of Janice Skelton for the Finance Committee for a three year term, seconded by Mr. Nylen. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes- 0 No.</i>
3	FY 2021 Municipal Budget	This article was already voted on.
4	FY 2021 School Budget	This article was already voted on. Mr. Nylen was assigned the speaker role.
5	FY 2021 Whittier Regional High School Budget	This article was already voted on.
6	FY 2021 Essex County Technical Institute Budget	This article was already voted on.
7	Transfer of FY20 Appropriated Budget Funds to Educational Stabilization Fund	This article was voted on at the last School Committee meeting.
8	Transfer FY20 Budget Funds to Special Education Reserve Fund	This article was voted on at the last School Committee meeting.
9	Annual Capital Plan	This article was already voted on.
10	Single-Use Straw, Stirrer, & Hotstopper Ban	This article was already voted on.
11	Citizen’s Petition – Home Rule Petition for lowering the voting age in local elections	<i>Mr. Nylen moved to indefinitely postpone support, seconded by Mr. Stevens. The motion passed unanimously in favor by a roll call vote, 7 Yes- 0 No.</i>
12	Water Main Replacement	No position taken.
13	Rescinding Funds from 2019 ATM Warrant – Article 10	No position taken.
14	Wastewater Infrastructure Repair/Replacement	No position taken.

III. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. VOUCHERS/BILLS- Signed and completed

B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE- This subcommittee met on June 3rd. Their discussion included the hiring of a new volleyball coach, the outstanding balance for student user fees and the MIAA plans for fall sports. At this time, registration for fall sports has been postponed while the state awaits further guidance on reopening.

2. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE- This subcommittee presented their information earlier in the meeting.

3. GRANT SUBCOMMITTEES

a. **William Paine Enhancement Grant Subcommittee-** This Committee presented information earlier in the evening.

b. **Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Subcommittee-** Grants have been submitted to this committee for review. A meeting is scheduled on June 10th to determine which grants will receive funding.

4. **OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE-** Mr. Hopping reminded the Committee to submit their summative evaluations to him no later than June 11th.

5. **POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE-** This subcommittee presented four policies to the School Committee for their final approval.

Mr. Nylen moved to support policy IKB: Homework Policy as presented, seconded by Mr. Whitten. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes-0 No.

Mr. Whitten moved to support policy IHAMB: Teach about Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs as presented, seconded by Mr. Nylen. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes-0 No.

Mr. Nylen moved to support policy BBA: School Committee Powers and Duties as presented, seconded by Mr. Whitten. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes-0 No.

Mr. Nylen moved to support policy JJF: Student Activity Accounts as presented, seconded by Mr. Whitten. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes-0 No.

6. **COMMUNICATIONS-** This group will be meeting on June 16th. There is currently a newsletter scheduled to be released on June 18th. It was agreed that the Communications Subcommittee should work to put together a separate newsletter announcing the new names of the two Feoffee grants, along with the grant recipients.

7. **SEPAC-** This group has not met.

8. **BIRTH TO THREE-** This group has not met.

9. **WORKING GROUPS**

School Facilities- This group has met twice and has another meeting scheduled to evaluate and plan for four possible reopening scenarios. With each scenario, members of this subcommittee, along with the four principals, are listing considerations and grouping them into categories. The goal is to be as prepared as possible for when the state guidelines are released. Dr. Blake also released a parent survey to district families in an attempt to see what has worked and has not worked so far with remote learning. A similar survey will also be sent to staff members.

Town Strategic Planning Group- At their last meeting, this group asked that the School Committee complete two worksheets addressing the potential for an operational override and the potential impacts of an elementary school(s) building project.

10. NEW BUSINESS*

Letter from the School Committee regarding the death of George Floyd- A letter was sent to the district on behalf of the School Committee and Dr. Blake. In addition to this letter, Dr. Blake said there are current and former students that are sending letters to him demanding that the district do more to educate our students around diversity issues and racial bias. Some of the students had some valid points that we need to reconsider. Dr. Blake said that the district will continue to develop the curriculum and make necessary changes to address these requests.

Tiger Tots Program- Dr. Blake explained that the Tiger Tots program, which is fully self-funded, is currently running low on funds due to the closure of school. The co-directors of the program reached out to both him and Joanne to discuss what to do next. Ms. Cuff explained that prior to the closure, their finances were in good standing. Because they have not been receiving tuition since the start of the closure, it is projected that the program will only be able to fund their payroll through August 13th. The decision needs to be made of whether the program can be supplementally funded through school funds or if some staff would be laid off.

Mr. Hopping asked that more information on budget implications and funding sources be provided at an upcoming meeting.

MASC Sponsored Call June 11th with Deputy Commissioner of Education re: FY21 budget- If any Committee member is interested in attending, please let Mr. Hopping know.

IV. CONSENT

A. CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Hopping moved the Ipswich School Committee to approve the School Committee Open Session meeting minutes from May 7, 2020; to approve a donation from the Institution for Savings in the amount of \$2,500.00 to fund hardware and banners in support of the class of 2020 to be deposited into the High School Gifts Account; and to approve a donation from Tedford's in the amount of \$540.00 to fund hardware and banners in support of the class of 2020 to be deposited into the High School Gifts Account, seconded by Ms. Gilliam. The motion passed unanimously in favor by a roll call vote, 7 Yes-0 No.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Whitten moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:31 PM, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn. The motion passed unanimously in favor by roll call vote, 7 Yes-0 No.

