

Ipswich School Committee
MS/HS Ensemble Room
134 High Street, Ipswich
Thursday, November 3, 2022
7:00 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Ms. Eliot called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Present: Ms. Eliot, Ms. Cannon, Ms. Donahue, Ms. Freehan, Mr. Poirier

Also Present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools and Jimmy Bornstein, High School Student Representative

Absent: Ms. Kneeder, Mr. Stevens, and Cheryl Herrick-Stella, Director of Finance and Operations

2. Reading of the District Mission Statement

Mr. Bornstein read the mission statement.

3. Announcements

- The School Committee will be holding a workshop on November 7th from 5:00-8:00 PM at Ipswich Town Hall.
- The School Committee will meet on Thursday, November 17th at 7:00 PM in the MS/HS ensemble room.
- The following subcommittee groups will meet:
 - Communications Subcommittee- November 16th at 5:00 PM, remotely
 - Policy Subcommittee- November 16th at 7:00 PM, remotely
 - Budget Subcommittee- November 17th at 5:30 PM in the MS/HS guidance conference room
- All schools and district offices will be closed on Friday, November 11th for Veterans Day.

Ms. Freehan also talked about the success of the Doyon Spooky Walk. This was a community event that raised funds for the Doyon School playground project.

4. Special Acknowledgements:

Ms. Eliot acknowledged the junior and senior students inducted into the National Honors Society this school year.

5. Citizen' Comments

Bill Craft, East Street: Said that an issue had come to his attention that deals with the possible future of the Town Hall as one of the two future elementary schools in Ipswich. To his knowledge, a comprehensive facilities plan that would include locating one elementary school at Town Hall and building a new elementary school at the Doyon site has never been fully researched and vetted. He said that he has some compelling new research on the topic and even though it needs to be deepened, a single elementary school at Town Hall and a new elementary school at the Doyon site may be accomplished at a savings of about \$50 million relative to other plans presented. If there is potential, Mr. Craft thought the School Committee should look into it. Mr. Craft shared his belief that with this plan, Ipswich could also realize the additional benefits of two smaller neighborhood schools- they bring people together, they attract families, and they build and support community cohesion. He said he has scoured the literature to get something definitive on one large school versus smaller neighborhood schools, but could not find anything definitive either way. Mr. Craft talked about his experience visiting schools in his travels. He prefaced by saying the information was anecdotal, but shared that the smaller schools had stronger neighborhood connections and closer connections with families. He said he has looked for something definitive to say otherwise- that if you build one building a certain way, it will accomplish the same feeling. The larger schools that he visited do not report the same level of connection. Mr. Craft asked that if the School Committee had already studied a two-school plan similar to what he had suggested and ruled it out, that he would like to see the results. If not, he believes this plan has sufficient merit and that it should be looked at seriously. At the very least, Mr. Craft said he liked to see elements of municipal and school departments work together. As a taxpayer, he said it shows good government. Mr. Craft acknowledged that even mentioning Town Hall as a location and knowing that it would precipitate some change and some disruption on some services, could be alarming. He thinks that if the town is hypersensitive to those changes and disruptions, we

could work through it. By engaging Town Hall in a discussion about this, it shows good government and that the Town and schools are working together for the future and best interest of Ipswich.

Ms. Eliot then asked if Mr. Craft's plan was to forward the research he mentioned to the School Committee. He agreed that the information would be shared with the School Committee.

Ms. Eliot then asked if the plan he was suggesting would keep Town Hall as Town Hall and also build a school on the site or use Town Hall as the school. Mr. Craft said the plan still needed to be developed, but in concept, Town Hall could be made into a very effective elementary school facility. Mr. Craft felt that it would require little disruption to the surrounding area if it were just a right-sized school in conjunction with a new right-sized school at the Doyon site. The financing has to be researched, but this can be an attractive project for a town with the history that Ipswich has.

Mr. Poirier asked for clarification on what research Ms. Eliot was looking for- research on the educational benefits of big schools vs. small schools that Mr. Craft has done independently?

Ms. Eliot clarified that Mr. Craft alluded to research being done around the utilization of Town Hall for an elementary school and the potential cost savings of \$50 million.

Nat Pulsifer, Waldingfield Road: A member of Feoffees Trust and School Committee liaison to the Feoffees, came to propose an idea. He felt that the Ipswich Public Schools and the Town of Ipswich were missing an opportunity. He proposed that the School Committee, with the potential assistance from the Feoffees, develop a “yard stick” that measures the outcomes from the money the district distributes in Feoffee grants. This measurement could be used to benefit the town and help engage new employers and promote the schools. He felt that the district and town would have “bragging rights” when discussing the positive outcomes of these grants.

Mr. Poirier added that he had spoken to Mr. Pulsifer about this topic last year. As part of the Feoffee grant process, grant recipients are required to complete a one page summary of their grant. In the years pre-Covid, the district also held a grant showcase for the public. He agreed that the School Committee does not do a good job looking at the success and failures of the grants and could improve the process.

Kelly Healy, Argilla Road: Supports the proposition of moving Winthrop School to Town Hall and building a new school at the Doyon site. She said she was in favor of two small schools and that was a large factor when deciding to move to Ipswich. A small school and small class sizes were important to her and her family. She felt that Town Hall had enough space and that there were plenty of special resources and educational opportunities right at that location. Town Hall has been updated and is not being used to its full potential. She felt that the number of people working at Town Hall compared to the size of the building was disproportionate. The Town Hall space has not been looked at. She is concerned with one large school at Doyon and fears that classes will grow in size. She said she would also hate to see teachers cut if the schools were combined. She worried about the long bus times for the students on the “Neck”.

Alex Villa, Argilla Rd: Said his family supports a smaller school. He said he did vote for one school during the last project and was very upset when the vote failed. In that time, he has done a lot of thinking and talked to people who have been staff in larger schools. He said that the overall theme was that in a bigger school, chaos level that amps up. He appreciates the benefit of the school community. He said he has tremendous faith in the School Committee and will support when the School Committee consensus is.

Tyler Mosher, Labor in Vain: Said he moved to Ipswich in 2020. He then referenced a book that talked about how cities in America have been gutted and neighborhoods were lost. He said one draw of Ipswich was the vibrant downtown. He felt that it was important to keep a school in the downtown area. As the largest town in Essex County, having two schools makes sense.

Katie Henry, Water Street: Stated she was a former teacher in Brooklyn, NY at a time when there was an initiative to move into smaller, neighborhood schools. She moved to Ipswich because it is a walkable community. Ms. Henry supports a school at Town Hall in an effort to keep a small school in the heart of downtown Ipswich. She understood there were concerns about traffic at the Winthrop School site and felt that moving the school to Town Hall could alleviate some of concerns. It would be easier to walk or drive to a school location at Town Hall. She felt that environmentally, it makes sense to have a walkable school. Ms. Henry said it

would mean a lot to have her son close by her local business and that having a school at the heart of the community feels good. She felt Ipswich should capitalize on a system of not just having kids dropped off or bussed to school.

Irene Josephson, Washington Street: Asked if she understood correctly that it was suggested through public comment that Town Hall be used as a site for a new school. Ms. Josephson asked where Town Hall staff and business would be relocated to. She then asked that all students who live within a walkable distance from a school site, be given priority to attend that school. The Chair closed citizens' comments at this time.

6. High School Student Representative Report

Mr. Bornstein shared that the overall feeling of students at this point in the school year is good. He talked about how students felt that communication between faculty and students was an area in need of improvement. He gave an example highlighting the lack of communications which left students feeling frustrated.

7. Presentations

A. IEA Lesson Snapshot Presentation: A Peek into Music Class

Beth Haltmeier, general music teacher, chorus director and musical director for the Middle School theater program presented a snapshot of what a typical music class in middle school looks like. She highlighted programs in grade 6, grade 7, and grade 8 and how they incorporated the Successful Habits of Mind initiative.

B. IEA Statement of the Elementary Building Project

Becky Slawson, IEA president, first stated that the teachers in Ipswich are invested in the elementary building project. She said that the group was disappointed to see a building project fail years ago and that teaching in the elementary schools has been hard due to the conditions of the buildings. The Ipswich Educators' Association has come together, working hard to maintain a transparent and inclusive process, to create a collective statement on a future elementary building(s) project. After several meetings and an in depth writing process, the statement presented tonight was unanimously approved by IEA membership. Ms. Slawson read the statement below and thanked the School Committee for allowing the IEA to be part of the process:

The Ipswich Educators Association supports the Ipswich School Committee's decision to address the expired life of its town's elementary buildings. Because of their grave state of disrepair, we believe that it is neither realistic nor educationally responsible to continue to make the adjustments that we have made on behalf of our students for many years. It is the charge of the School Committee to determine the configuration and location of any new building(s). Therefore, our input and opinion, regarding the Ipswich Elementary Building Project(s), will solely center on our professional knowledge, expertise, and experience as educators.

We know that in order to provide a rigorous, relevant and engaging education for the students of Ipswich Public Schools, we need the following: a learning environment where health and safety is paramount, and a learning environment ready to support the innovation, community, and joy of learning we have come to expect of Ipswich Public Schools.

Health and Safety

We know that in order to learn, take academic risks, play, and grow, children must first be healthy and safe. Healthy learning spaces have clean air, regulated temperatures, and consistent maintenance to ensure the space does not negatively affect its occupants. Safe learning spaces have secure entrances to both indoor and outdoor learning spaces and well established evacuation procedures for all floors and spaces within the building(s). Proper learning spaces are appropriately outfitted for all elementary classes, specialists, supports, and therapies; are conducive to the learning that is expected to occur within; and, are respectful of student privacy. To ensure longevity, Ipswich's future learning environment(s) must be designed with the most contemporary ideas and sustainable materials, so that Ipswich students continue to realize the potential environmental impact of their decisions. Therefore, the project(s) should be created in an environmentally conscious manner that both students and educators can be proud of.

Innovation

Students are inspired in spaces where they learn and create. When educators and students have access to physical spaces that allow for opportunities beyond the traditional four walls of a classroom, learning is less constrained, more student-driven, and

more importantly, is inspired by creativity and curiosity. This project(s) must think beyond the current models of education. It must harness powerful and accessible technology that has the capacity to serve, grow, and change in an ever changing world. Additionally, we believe that elementary learning in Ipswich would be enhanced by including a versatile place for industrial arts, computer programming, and STEAM project-based activities that could support educator projects, guest presenters, or residencies. Space(s) which values innovation and enables teachers to engage in research-based teaching practices that encourage students to develop real-world problem solving and critical thinking skills essential for 21st century learners.

Community

Elementary schools have been long regarded as the heart of a community. Ipswich Elementary Schools are no exception. Within school(s), a strong sense of community and collaboration is built through smaller cohorts with small class sizes and clusters of teaching teams. Community is grown through shared experiences like special programs and presentations in spaces that afford communal gathering and which further enhances learning opportunities. Community is sustained and valued because it shows an inherent respect and care for one another. Additionally, we know that community is enhanced by access to a community closet, laundry services, and basic hygiene needs. Our elementary community needs space that would allow for the enrichment, support, and partnership with outside organizations that service student need (i.e. Open Door, Girls Inc, Change is Simple, Ipswich Museum, Audubon, Trustees).

Joy of Learning

As educators we strive to develop a joy and love of learning in our students. We know excitement for learning is found in larger, student-driven projects of interest which can be stored for continued work. Additionally, love of learning can be found when we encourage the diverse learning styles and needs of students with space available to meet those needs; whether it be a quiet meditative space, music lab, or maker space. Elementary learning space(s) must include adaptable spaces which meet developmentally appropriate needs for all students pre-kindergarten through grade five. These learning spaces, both indoor and outdoor, must be accessible for all students to get the play they need and deserve.

We, members of the Ipswich Educators Association, are a dedicated, passionate, and talented group of people who love the students and families we serve. Composed of educators, registered behavior technicians, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, board certified behavior analysts, guidance counselors, nurses, and paraprofessionals, our expertise is diverse and our knowledge is vast. It is with admiration and care for Ipswich that we say with conviction: our elementary schools have reached the end of their life expectancy, and something must be done.

Ms. Slawson then mentioned that the IEA would like to have a representative on the Elementary Building Project Working Group to act in a liaison capacity between the School Committee and IEA and suggested that Alicia Thomas would be a good fit. Ms. Slawson listed ways in which this liaison position could be helpful/contribute:

- Assist with transparency
- Survey teachers
- Be a “real time pulse” with elementary school perspective
- Provide a special education/general education perspective
- Access to education research

Ms. Eliot said that she loved the statement from the IEA and liked that educators had something tangible to use when talking with the community. She felt that the individual pieces listed in the statement “hit a lot of notes” that the School Committee felt similarly about.

Ms. Cannon thanked the IEA for the statement, saying it was masterfully put together and delivered. It was a great guide for the School Committee to use as they continue in this process. Ms. Cannon also expressed support for Alicia Thomas in a liaison position to the Elementary Building Project Working Group.

Ms. Freehan said the statement gave her hope that the School Committee could come up with something similar to help group the conversations going forward.

C. Clarification on NESDEC Enrollment Numbers and Potential Vote

Dr. Blake started the discussion stating that Mr. Poirier had questions regarding the enrollment projections from NESDEC that were presented this spring. He had hoped that the School Committee could come to a consensus on what enrollment projection should be used when talking about a future elementary school project(s). The original report included different types of data- birth rate, data that included building projects currently underway and then an inferred set of data that did not include a number of potential building projects that have not started yet.

Dr. Blake referred to page 19 of the NESDEC enrollment projections slideshow. This page outlines the approved projects currently under construction in Ipswich. Those numbers are included in the enrollment projections. The projected impact to enrollment from these projects over the next 3-5 years is 30-40 students. Those projected enrollment numbers are in the current study.

Dr. Blake then referred to page 20 of the NESDEC enrollment projections slideshow. This page outlines the approved projects in Ipswich that are currently not under construction. The projected impact to enrollment from these projects is an additional 10-15 students over the next 5 years. These projects have not broken ground yet and are not included in the enrollment projections.

Dr. Blake referred to page 28 of the NESDEC enrollment projections slideshow. The projected enrollment assumed the increase of residential construction of 30-40 students. Those numbers are looking at the residential construction currently underway, but not including residential construction projects that have not started. The enrollment projections outlined on this page, plus the 15 students projected from residential projects that have not started, would be the best estimate of enrollment in the next 5 years. All of the projects will likely not be complete in the next five years, leaving the projections to be on the high side.

Dr. Blake recommended adding an additional 4 students per year. By adding that number to the projections for the 2026-2027 school year, you would have a projected enrollment of 747 students in grades K-5. This does not take into account any preschool numbers. This helps to clarify what the best estimate is for enrollment as the School Committee plans for future elementary building(s).

Ms. Cannon asked if they should be including preschool numbers into their projections.

Dr. Blake said the difficulty in doing that is the study originally did not include preschool numbers.

Ms. Freehan said that the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) does not include preschool numbers in their enrollment capacity. Their charge is not to specifically fund preschools, although they will fund schools with preschools in them. She said that it is more difficult to project the number of preschool students each year, especially when a lot of families opt for private preschool.

Ms. Cannon said that given the fact that Ipswich has preschool and there is no indication that the district would not offer preschool, it would be short-sighted to not include those numbers regardless of MSBA's policy on it.

Ms. Eliot said the School Committee would not be disregarding preschool students. In this case, for these enrollment projections, Dr. Blake wanted to compare K-5 numbers with K-5 numbers.

Ms. Cannon said she understood and that it all felt arbitrary. If the School Committee is having larger conversations about the elementary school buildings, preschool numbers need to be included.

Dr. Blake said that the size of the project will be determined by MSBA down the line. He was not looking to give a number on how big a school would be because there are a lot of other factors that determine that.

Mr. Poirier agreed that Dr. Blake's analysis on the enrollment projections were what he tried to explain to the School Committee at the last meeting. There were 15-20 students missing from the projections. He also agreed with Ms. Cannon that it would be useful to determine how many students the district needs to accommodate in one, two, or more buildings. Mr. Poirier explained that if you look at a total enrollment projection of 774 and add 20 students, that gets to 794 and then you have a preschool enrollment that same school year (2026/27) of 52. We know that this year, the district had 60 preschool students and there is talk of adding a 4th section. Mr. Poirier asked if the School Committee should consider adding 80 students to the projected enrollment, bringing the total to 874.

Ms. Eliot asked for clarification on the 80 additional students. Mr. Poirier said the 80 students represented the 60 current preschool students and an additional 20 students that would represent an additional section of preschool.

Ms. Freehan asked for clarification on whether those 60 preschool students are present all at once. She said she understood that preschool students are on staggered schedules.

Dr. Blake said the program currently has 60 students enrolled, but not all 60 students are in the building at the same time each day.

Ms. Eliot clarified that the 80 preschool students would be added to a projected K-5 enrollment of 727, not 774.

Mr. Poirier said the projection would be 774 plus 15. He was corrected by Dr. Blake who said there would be an additional 20 students, bringing the projected total enrollment to 794.

Mr. Poirier recognized that there is always going to be a new building in town and suggested that the School Committee pick a date to determine enrollment projections.

Dr. Blake said for the projects that have yet to begin, it could be a while before the district sees any students. There is no exact science when determining enrollment projections. The rest of the enrollment projections are stable or declining.

Mr. Poirier asked if the number, 747, that Dr. Blake recommended at the beginning of the discussion, was a realistic expectation of what the School Committee should plan for when talking about a building(s) project.

Dr. Blake said that the enrollment projection for the 2026/27 school year for K-5 is 727 students. The recommendation would be to add an additional 20 students to that projection to account for residential construction projects that have not started. That would bring the total of K-5 students to 747.

Ms. Eliot said it was important to look at the bigger picture historically. The historical enrollment data is trending down and even in the projected enrollment data, the 2026/27 school year seems to be at a peak. There is then a decrease in enrollment over the next 5 years after that.

Mr. Poirier added that the study states that the best projections are 3-5 years out.

Ms. Donahue asked why the School Committee was looking at the K-5 enrollment projection of 727 and not the 774 projection that includes preschool.

Dr. Blake said that the numbers that were being compared in the study only included K-5. Preschool numbers were not in these projections. The MSBA also does not include preschool numbers in their calculations for space.

Ms. Cannon felt that when talking about configuration and location, the School Committee could use the enrollment number of 750-800 students, give or take any given year. That number could include preschool without being too detailed or "nit-picky".

Dr. Blake reassured the School Committee that they can settle on whatever enrollment number they would like. He was answering a question from Mr. Poirier from a previous meeting.

Mr. Poirier said that the clarification he wanted was to at least help determine a range for enrollment projections.

Ms. Cannon suggested using the numbers that NESDEC provided in the enrollment projections. There are a lot of factors that can make it difficult to narrow in on an exact number for preschool or K-5 enrollment.

Ms. Freehan said that overall, the number the School Committee is looking at is pretty close to the number that was included in the original projections.

Ms. Eliot felt it was worth pointing out that all the students in the projection would still fit into the school from the last project had it come to fruition.

Ms. Freehan said that information validates the projections used during the last project.

Ms. Donahue talked about including preschool classrooms as part of a new building project. She said there are currently two classrooms at Winthrop housing preschool and one classroom at Doyon, with the potential for another.

Ms. Freehan felt that was an important point to discuss at the School Committee's upcoming workshop.

It was decided that a vote on enrollment projections was not necessary.

D. Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group SOI Submission Discussion and Potential Vote

Mr. Poirier said the Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group met on Tuesday. Members expressed concern that department heads have not had time to meet with the new Town Manager and the new Town Manager has not yet assessed department needs. With that, the working group decided to extend the deadline to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) for the use of the public safety buildings until January 31, 2023. Mr. Poirier felt that with this new timeline, there was no longer an urgency to submit an SOI on or before November 15th.

Dr. Blake said he spoke with Ethan Powers during Town Meeting about the process of submitting an SOI. He shared that the SOI is a simple form and not an in-depth process.

Ms. Eliot said that originally, the School Committee thought they would need to decide at this meeting whether it would submit an SOI for the public safety buildings because the deadline for submission was November 15th. With the extended deadline, a decision and vote is not required at this time.

Ms. Freehan asked for clarification on who owns the land where the fire station is located.

Mr. Poirier said that questions came up as part of the discussion at the working group's last meeting. They believe the lot is combined with the Winthrop School lot and is a single-use lot that has historically had two features operating on it. It is assessed as general municipal land.

Ms. Freehan then asked if the School Committee could move forward with plans for the fire station if the land is not owned by the district or could the district put restrictions on the use of the land if it comes to be if the district owns the lot.

Mr. Poirier then said there was a conversation about the community gardens. There have been conversations about moving the community gardens from the site of the new public safety building to Bialek Park; however, people are waiting to see what the school district is thinking about in terms of using that space.

➤ *Motion to table the discussion on an SOI submission to the Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group was made by Jeff Poirier and seconded by Ms. Cannon. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

E. Elementary Building Project Working Group: Workshop Planning, Listening Session Recap

Prior to starting the discussion, JP asked the Chair if public comment could be reopened. Public comment was limited at the beginning of the meeting due to timing constraints. The Chair declined to reopen public comment.

Ms. Eliot started by sharing that the Elementary Building Project Working Group met the night prior. They discussed the workshop and came up with the meeting agenda.

Ms. Freehan outlined the framing questions for the scheduled workshops. The plan is to start the conversation by discussing things that the School Committee feels they can agree on. Eventually, the conversation will discuss sites and configurations. She hoped that everyone on the committee had time to review the listening session data from the first round of listening sessions and the data from the last project. Ms. Eliot was going to pull pertinent data, which was already identified by the Elementary Building Project Working Group, into an easy-to-read document. There was also a document shared to the group that outlines area school building projects.

Ms. Eliot talked about the various sets of data that the School Committee has. The School Committee was still waiting for the final report from the second round of listening sessions and the listening sessions for teachers/staff. Dr. Blake was going to follow-up

with the Logue Group to get a timeline on when that information would be available. At the very least, Dr. Blake will have the Logue Group provide the School Committee with the results of the teacher survey.

Ms. Donahue expressed concerns about the School Committee workshop not being recorded. She said she shared those concerns with Mr. Stevens after the last meeting when the idea was presented. She felt the School Committee has done a good job so far being transparent and recording meetings. If we have the technology to do so, she would feel more comfortable with the meeting being recorded.

Ms. Eliot said that it was her understanding that past School Committee workshops have not been recorded. They are always public meetings and posted in accordance with Open Meeting Laws. No votes or decisions will be made and there will be a robust recap of the workshop at the next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting. There will also be minutes of the meeting. By not recording the meeting, School Committee members can be a little more candid through some tough conversations. Ms. Eliot said the decision to hold a workshop outside of a regularly scheduled meeting was to have the ability to dig into one issue for 2-3 hours in a round table format. She felt the workshop was a good idea as a format.

Mr. Poirier added that the decision to not record the meeting was made by the executive committee.

Ms. Eliot responded that the Elementary Building Project Working Group had also discussed the format of the workshop.

Ms. Donahue said that not recording the meeting was concerning. She talked about the difficulty of taking notes, while also trying to listen to the information presented, during the listening sessions she attended. She acknowledged that there would be hard decisions that have to be made.

Ms. Eliot reiterated that decisions would not be made at the workshop on Monday. There will be discussions, but the School Committee can not and will not be making final decisions or taking any votes at the workshop. Any decisions would need to be made at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Tim Goodrich, High Street: Was looking at the agenda for the workshop on Monday. He highlighted the framing question that said “Are there any options we can rule out?”. He felt that was a big decision the School Committee would be making that night.

Ms. Eliot clarified that there will be discussions about the decisions that need to be made and again, stated that no decisions will be made at the workshop.

Mr. Poirier agreed that if they have the technology available, then the workshop should be recorded.

Mr. Poirier asked if there would be other materials presented at the workshop than what is currently available in the folder.

Ms. Eliot talked about the information on the district website from the last school project. The Elementary Building Project Working Group had identified some documents from that list that could be relevant to a potential SOI submission this time around. Ms. Eliot was going to pull some of that information into one document for ease of accessibility during the conversation on Monday.

Ms. Freehan also put together a spreadsheet that was shared with the group, highlighting different school building projects that were approved by the MSBA.

Dr. Blake confirmed that he will contact the Logue Group ahead of the workshop to get, at the very least, the teacher survey data.

Ms. Donahue again stated that she felt it was not a good idea to not record the meeting. It does not feel transparent. We have received feedback from teachers, parents, and citizens that this process feels different and it feels better. Having been part of the last 75 meetings of the School Building Committee, many of which were not recorded, I think that led to a feeling of lack of transparency and frustration during the last project.

Ms. Eliot said she would discuss the topic again with Ms. Stevens. She felt there was some value having members of the School Committee be able to speak candidly without feeling like everything is going to be rehashed and misinterpreted. The public can

attend the workshop. Having the ability to have candid conversations, without decisions being made or votes taken, can help move the process forward.

Ms. Donahue agreed with Ms. Eliot and said she looked forward to these candid conversations, but for transparency's sake and the School Committee's own ability to go back and reflect on the discussion, the meeting should be recorded.

Dr. Blake shared that he received a message from the MSBA notifying districts that they are temporarily suspending the Accelerated Repair Program. He read the following statement from the press release:

The Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA") Board of Directors, at the October 26th meeting, reviewed and supported a staff recommendation to temporarily pause the MSBA's Accelerated Repair Program (the "ARP") and not accept ARP Statements of Interest ("SOIs") in 2023. The ARP provides funding for the repair or replacement of roofs, windows, and boilers in schools that are otherwise structurally, functionally, and educationally sound.

Mr. Poirier said he read the statement and thought 1. Does this affect us at all and 2. Does this potentially affect the pool of applicants who are now being funneled into the Core Program, making it more competitive? Overall, he didn't think this news disrupted any of the plans that the School Committee has given the condition of the buildings and the urgency we have.

Dr. Blake said the only concern he has with this news is if the district got into a situation where they needed to replace a boiler or a roof. The district is not limited in options on how to proceed should we need to.

Ms. Eliot felt it was unsettling that they put the program on hold for one year. Could they then add an additional year or not bring the program back at all? She then confirmed that the Core Program is still open.

Ms. Donahue said that fortunately/unfortunately, this program does not pertain to Ipswich. Ipswich was not looking at applying for an accelerated repair.

Ms. Eliot then asked for any feedback on the last of the listening sessions.

Mr. Poirier was hoping to hear from more voices. He thought that maybe more people felt comfortable taking the survey. He hoped the survey was well utilized.

Ms. Eliot agreed that she was disappointed in the participation. Even with smaller groups, she acknowledged that there was a lot of good discussion.

F. Vote on Authorizing Change in Procurement Cards

Dr. Blake presented a recommendation from the Director of Finance and Operations to change the district's current vendor for credit cards from Visa to the Bank of Montreal p-Card program, a MASBO/ASBO sponsored P-card program.

Dr. Blake said the new system would operate in the same manner at the current credit card system, but with added benefits that included:

- Ability to make payments through ACH, which allows us to process payments faster and avoid late payment fees & having to overnight checks
- Better customer service
- Better internal dashboard to control access/credit limits/restrictions on certain purchases
- Better visibility and ability for tracking purposes by each card
- The District receives a 1% rebate each year based on total purchase, which would be about \$350

Dr. Blake clarified what the terms "p-card" and "ACH" were for members. He then outlined the various ways the district utilizes the credit card system.

Mr. Poirier suggested that the statement "The School Committee authorizes the Ipswich Public School's Director of Finance & Operations to execute a p-Card program agreement on its behalf" on the motion include the superintendent as someone who could execute the agreement.

- *Motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Issuance of Individual Procurement Cards that states: “WHEREAS, Ipswich Public Schools School Committee has the authority to enter into an agreement with the Bank of Montreal for purchasing cards;*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the School Committee of the Ipswich Public Schools that the Director of Finance & Operations and/or the Superintendent are authorized to enter into an Agreement with the Bank of Montreal to secure Procurement Cards for each authorized employee of the school district under such terms and conditions as approved by the School Committee.

*The School Committee authorizes the Ipswich Public School’s Director of Finance & Operations and/or the Superintendent of Schools to execute a p- Card program agreement on its behalf.” Was made by Ms. Cannon and seconded by Mr. Poirier. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

G. Budget Calendar Review

Dr. Blake reviewed the Budget Calendar for the FY24 budget. This calendar follows a similar timeline in years past and includes meetings between the administrative team, Director of Finance and Operations, and the Budget Subcommittee. The budget will be presented to the School Committee in February and then to the Select Board in March.

H. Policy Review/Approval

Ms. Freehan reviewed the following policies, highlighting any edits made by the Policy Subcommittee:

- CHCA: Approval of Handbooks and Directives
- CHD: Administration in Policy Absence
- CL: Administrative Reports
- CM: School District Annual Report
- JB: Equal Educational Opportunities
- JBB: Educational Equity
- JC: Attendance Areas
- JCA: Assignment of Students to Schools

- *Motion to accept the policies as presented was made by Ms. Cannon and seconded by Ms. Freehan. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

8. Superintendent’s Administrative Report

Dr. Blake reported on his schedule since the last School Committee meeting. His report included:

- Town Meeting
- Participation in the listening sessions for the staff
- Administrative Team meetings with a focus on educator evaluation calibration exercises and problems of practice consultancy
- Discussions about the ongoing staffing issues and lack of substitute teachers
- Ipswich Education Foundation meeting
- Northshore Education Consortium Board of Directors meeting- discussing FY24 budget and facilities issues
- Clean School Bus Initiative meeting to discuss the electrification of the school bus fleet
- Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion workshop through the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents
- FY24 budget discussions with the Director of Finance and Operations
- Attendance at the Probability Fair the the middle school
- Meeting with the director the the Extended Day Program to address some concerns regarding some current programming and schedules
- Monthly meeting with the Ipswich Educators Association president
- Attendance at the Elementary Building Project Working Group
- DEI Team meeting- spoke with the the education director for the “No Place for Hate” initiative

9. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports

- **Communications Subcommittee:** Ms. Eliot shared that she has received a positive response to the newsletter. There are also people registering for the newsletter distribution list.
- **Athletics Subcommittee:** There is a meeting scheduled for the end of November.

- **Mutual Concerns Subcommittee:** There is a meeting scheduled for the end of November.
- **Policy Subcommittee:** Topics from this meeting were previously discussed.
- **Elementary Building Project Working Group:** Topics from this meeting were previously discussed.
- **Birth to Three Liaison:** Ms. Freehan says the program numbers have been increasing. Birth to Three continues to expand their program offerings to meet the needs of the community. They have
- **Ipswich Education Foundation Liaison:** Ms. Eliot was unable to attend the last meeting. She did express appreciation for the collaboration between the IEF and the school district in working to ensure funding.
- **Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grant Committee:** The committee met on October 26th and approved all but one grant. Grant applicants were going to be notified in the coming week. Ms. Cannon said it was difficult to see some grants that could have been a collaboration between the two elementary schools limited by a lack of space at Winthrop School.

10. New Business*

No new business was presented.

11. Vouchers and Bills

All were reviewed and signed.

12. Consent Agenda

- *Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented was made by Ms. Eliot and seconded by Ms. Cannon. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

13. Adjournment

- *Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Cannon and seconded by Ms. Donahue. **The motion passed unanimously in favor.***

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM