

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
FY16 SCHOOL BUDGET OPEN HEARING  
MARCH 5, 2015  
MS/HS ENSEMBLE ROOM

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Hopping called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Present were H. O'Flynn, J. Bauman, S. Player, F. Krason and C. Nylen (at 7:15). Also present were Superintendent Hart, Finance Director Cuff, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Hegedus, all four Principals, and M. DiBello, Student Representative.

READING OF DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Matt read the Mission Statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Hopping read the following announcements:

Executive Session will be held this evening to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with IEA after which the meeting will adjourn.

Policy Subcommittee will meet on March 9, 5:30 p.m., Payne School Conference Room

Athletics Subcommittee will meet on March 17, 6 p.m., M/HS Guidance Conference Room

School Committee will meet on March 19, 6 p.m., Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall.

Budget presentations with the Finance Committee will take place as follows:

March 17, 7:30 p.m., HS/MS budgets, Room A, Town Hall

March 18, 7:30 p.m., Doyon/Winthrop budgets, Room A, Town Hall

March 19, 7:30 p.m., Central Office/Special Education Department, Room A, Town Hall

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Mr. Hopping asked that comments pertaining to the budget be held until the hearing has been declared open. There were no other comments.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Hart acknowledged the Hall of Fame Award for 2015 to Gerald Dolan for his instrumental music leadership. He will be feted for his 30 years on March 20, 2015, and Dr. Hart invited all who might wish to attend the ceremony.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Matt reported on events: Jazz band visits to Doyon and Winthrop to stimulate interest in music in the Ipswich schools; Jazz band heading to District competition March 10; Middle School production of Guys & Dolls this weekend; participation of French students in the National French contest to rank them against

others across the country on March 4 (results usually reported during Honors Night).

BUDGET OPEN HEARING SESSION 3/5/15

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#### A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Dr. Hart reported that the School Committee presented the FY16 Target Budget at the Ipswich Tri-Board meeting on February 24. (He presented it on Powerpoint a little later).

He launched his "Subs with the Superintendent" on February 27 with 10 Middle School students for a one-hour lunch meeting to listen to students and understand issues that they feel are important to the school system. Also, they shared their exceptional Middle School experiences—this student time being the highlight of his week.

He commented on the CHRONICLE article (3/5/15 edition) which detailed the interview of the four school principals on school budget cuts this year.

His Rotary Polar Plunge has been postponed again to April 11 in support of polio eradication.

### I. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

#### A. OPEN HEARING AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED FY16 SCHOOL BUDGET

Mr. Hopping referred to the Public Hearing on the FY16 Budget Open Session and Mrs. Player moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, to declare the Hearing Open at 7:12 p.m. UNANIMOUS.

Dr. Hart presented a Powerpoint on the Ipswich Public School Department Target Budget. He remarked that, when he first became Superintendent, he was amazed that the teachers were able to do so well with the constraints, but now it is a significant challenge being faced. Money wasn't spent on technology, professional development, or in maintenance of the buildings. The structural deficit of the budget shows that revenue is coming in at a little more than 3%, while a normal, well-managed school budget grows by 4½- 5%.

Budget drivers are: health insurance with a \$500,000 increase over the last couple of years; special education costs (academic challenges in 2010 of \$4 million and in 2016 of \$5-6 million). Comparative-sized schools in the northeast region pay much more per pupil than Ipswich except for Georgetown (where the Town picks up a substantial amount of special education costs). The summative impact is that Triton has \$2.4 million to spend on per pupil costs; Masconomet, \$3.1 million; the State average, \$4.2 million; and Hamilton-Wenham, \$6.4 million per pupil spending while Ipswich is under a million. Feoffees grants are doing a lot of what should be in the operating budget. Just some of the Payne Grant awards in FY14 were curriculum development, technology infrastructure, and district-wide professional development—all usually included in operating budgets.

He detailed cuts to professional positions, teaching assistants, supplies and materials for the four schools in his 2014-15 Review. They impact classroom teachers, class size, the Middle School model, and supplies that teachers need. Over

19 positions lost impacting the school system of only 1900 students. He reviewed each school's loss of music programs. Winthrop has more high-risk students, meaning more students work with individual teachers or teaching assistants than ever before. The Middle School is due to lose 1.0 FTE teacher and 3.0 teaching assistants. The High School will phase out French instruction. The graphic design program will be cut impacting over 75 students. Project Adventure and drama will be eliminated at the high school. Varsity coaching positions (\$66,000 in salaries) are being examined for the possibility of family sports fees to accumulate an additional \$100,000. The elimination of the academic support teacher will affect success rates of a number of students. Central Office will lose a technology specialist needed to maintain the \$1.5 million of Feoffees funds spent for technology. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services will have to spend time on clerical tasks as .25 of her clerical support is being eliminated). There will be no professional development funding.

Mr. Hopping asked for comments or questions.

Matt DiBello spoke up as the appointed high school student to represent his concerned fellow students. He said the student population cares about their education and a lot of them have been very pleased with their education over the last few years. But there have been more and more cuts which have left the infrastructure heavily damaged. Supplies have been cut to almost nothing. Despite these cuts, some departments need music and art—all departments need supplies. Teachers are paying out of pocket for necessary supplies, and he did not think it is their responsibility.

The sports program will be hit pretty hard because the current fee of \$600 per student is going to rise. In the gym, banners on the walls tell about all the years that Ipswich has won championships. Sports will dwindle with less and less participation whereas a huge percentage of kids now participate and that loss would take a lot out of the high school experience. A well-rounded experience of sports, music and drama is needed.

When Mr. Dolan began, there were less than two dozen instruments at the high school. Today the band has 150 students, chorus has 90, and orchestra has 70 because of the two years of elementary music and such an outstanding staff in Ipswich. With cuts in the elementary and secondary schools, one of the shining stars of Ipswich will slowly deteriorate. It is an exemplary program now. The drama program's technical department and the people who deal with the sets are like a family. This is an opportunity for some kids where they spend six hours after school each day and would be a devastating hit to the Middle and High Schools.

The French program is amazing, much like the music program. Dr. Ladd has built it up so that 26 seniors out of a class of 155 are taking French, in a four-year program because of the exemplary curriculum. AP French students took second place in a French oratory contest.

With all these reductions, we become an average school, he concluded. He received a rousing round of applause!

Mr. Dolan, Fine Arts Director, citizen and taxpayer, spoke about the cuts to fine arts, naming chorus at the elementaries, drama at Middle/High School which used to include a speech class for all students, and digital photography. These short-sighted cuts will weaken the quality for students. Neuroscience studies show that study in the arts improve cognitive skills and improve all parts of the brain, lighting up both sides of it. Skills and functions connect with emotions and the ability to think and reason. Young brains are quite pliable. After age 9, we work with what we have. Why are we cutting programs for our young students? The STEAM curriculum is in, yet we are cutting in the lower grades. He said he would hate to see the tradition of excellence in the Fine Arts program, which changed the culture of our community, disappear, and he implored everyone to explore all areas of funding.

Dana Allen, Director of Birth to Three Family Center, mentioned the CHRONICLE article (3/5/15) and introduced two mothers who expressed their emotional pleas for continuation of the program which gives them support for their babies' development, socialization, basic needs for survival, and the ELL program. Ms. Allen commented that this Center is another piece of our school community.

Paul Meneghini, six-year resident, who sought out Ipswich as a system with quality arts and music education, urged music cuts, if at all, from the top (high school) down. Otherwise, the jewel program of the schools will go to nothing.

Ann Armendariz has an 8<sup>th</sup>-grade son whose strong negative feelings about the impact of last year's budget with the social studies and Spanish curricula cut to 90 days prompted her to speak. She commented that her son had been inspired previously.

Eric Duback, High School senior, spoke of the "extra bits and pieces" provided from the Winthrop School and on and his preparation of six years for music college where he has been offered more scholarship money than any other kid has received in the history of that school!

Mike Laddin, a six-year resident, said it is not just about the schools, but about the community that we want to live in. His family came because of the Fine Arts program and Ipswich residents aren't aware of how it is viewed outside.

Kerry Zagarella, Ipswich Education Association Exec. Board Chair, announced a unanimous vote by the union to support the override. Mr. Hopping reminded that the appropriated budget is being voted at the Public Hearing and the override budget, which has not been finalized, is not being voted tonight.

Greg Chmura, 1982 graduate of Ipswich High School and current head of the Science Department, commented that the vast majority of seniors go to college these days, yet the budget in science is half of what it was when he was a high school senior. Resources came with the building in 1999 but have constantly fallen. He appealed to the community for support.

Trina Schell, IMADA president, remarked that the proposed budget cuts into all three of the Fine Arts: music, art and drama. Known as the arts district, she asked that all work together to preserve the arts in Ipswich.

Erika Turner spoke of home ownership as the biggest investment and house values reflect that. She encouraged the people who worry about tax bills going up to realize that if great schools continue, homes will increase in value. Common core, STEAM, etc., come at a cost. Her daughter, who plays the French horn, spoke urging support for the music program.

Bob Hickey, Ipswich High School graduate and English teacher, has three big concerns: struggling children in the district who are out placed special education students at greater cost; class size that compounds over time, and the loss of what the district is best known for-- the culture pockets where students find acceptance. The current proposed budget doesn't provide the basic needs for Ipswich children.

Abby Dixon, 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Doyon, pleaded for the music program restoration because it means so much to the kids and the smaller ones who look forward to learning an instrument.

Formerly from Chicago, a woman resident wants people to know that it is worth advocating for one's children and everybody has the right to speak for them.

David Osgood (senior), artist and developing musician, said he definitely wouldn't have these abilities if it wasn't for Ipswich. He found himself through the clubs offered and to him, Fine Arts is the heart of the schools.

Kathy McMahan, Middle School Assistant Principal, called herself optimistic as a young elementary teacher and technology specialist but said the word is hard to hang onto now. Everybody needs to help, she said.

Two Ipswich High School junior girls pleaded to keep the French curriculum, as developed by Dr. Ladd, as an important part of school.

Mr. Hopping asked David Dalton (High School Principal) and Sheila McAdams (Winthrop Principal), both longtime employees in the schools, to express what

brought them to the system, what kept them here, and what they are feeling now. Mr. Dalton began at the high school in 1985, coinciding with Mr. Dolan's arrival. It was an average curriculum helped along with Supt. Thompson's visions. In 2000 with the new building and technology, it thrived, but in 2009 atrophy began to take place and "we are coming apart." When she began, Mrs. McAdams commented the community supported us, and we were always making it better. Over time, the resources in the school community have dried up. This is the same community where the kids who have graduated had thrived in the schools, and she expects them to pay it forward with support, and she hopes that she will see it again.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Player, to close the hearing at 9 p.m.  
UNANIMOUS.

#### C. VOTE OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE ON FY16 PROPOSED SCHOOL BUDGET

Mr. Nylén moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman to vote the FY16 Target Budget at \$24,085,807. UNANIMOUS.

Mrs. Bauman moved, seconded by Ms. Player, to vote the Bonded Debt Service figure at \$2,534,775. UNANIMOUS.

### II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### A. VOUCHERS/BILLS

#### B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Athletic Subcommittee – March 17 meeting.
2. Budget Subcommittee
3. Communications Subcommittee
4. Grant Committees – Mini-grant meeting for applicants: March 10, 3:30,  
A. Laroche classroom
5. Operations Subcommittee – mid-cycle review by Dr. Hart in April
6. Policy Subcommittee – March 9 meeting to review Choice Report and Exec.  
Session Minutes for release
7. New Business

### III. CONSENT

#### A. Consent Agenda

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Ms. Player, to accept the Consent Agenda items as follow: Acceptance of Open Session Minutes of 2/4/15 and 2/5/15.

Acceptance of Open Session Budget Workshop 2/12/15 and  
2/19/15.

Acceptance of donation of \$500 from Mr./Mrs. Metsisto to Doyon  
School.

Acceptance of donation of \$1,000 together with a \$500 matching  
donation from Crabtree McGrath Associates, Inc. to Doyon School.

Acceptance of donation of \$789 from FRIES to Winthrop School.

Acceptance of donation of \$1,000 from Novartis to Winthrop School.  
UNANIMOUS.

**IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Ms. Player, to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:11 p.m. to discuss strategy in preparation for collective bargaining with IEA after which the meeting will adjourn. Roll call in favor: Krason, O'Flynn, Player, Hopping, Nylen, Bauman.