

**FINANCE COMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET PRESENTATION  
MARCH 18, 2015  
ROOM A, TOWN HALL**

**OPEN SESSION**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Mitch Feldman, Finance Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Finance Committee members present: K. Murphy, M. Schaaf, M. Swan, I. Miles, K. Murphy, J. Clements-Skelton, R. White, R. Howard.

School Committee members present: S. Player, H. O'Flynn, J. Bauman, S. Gresh, B.

Hopping Administrators present: Superintendent W. Hart, Finance Director J. Cuff, Director of Pupil Personnel Services B. Hegedus, and Principals D. Fabrizio, S. Conley, and S. McAdams.

**B. CITIZENS' QUERIES**

Todd Wilson spoke of observations from the previous night's session, thought it was well done, but the message was frightening. He said the system is in decline with losing 18 teaching spots this year and another 12 next, cutting music, and one in four 8<sup>th</sup> graders looking for someplace else to go. The need is to look at the way this town is going; we want to bring in new families, keep them engaged and out of trouble. If he was the president of a company or a new family, he wouldn't think of Ipswich. He hopes the citizens of Ipswich think about it and take time to contemplate.

Dana Allen, Birth to 3 Director, struck with hoping that the Town and schools are working together, came again to advocate for early childhood education. She thanked everyone for support of Birth to 3, hopeful for the "Brains" in this town.

**C. ELEMENTARY FY'16 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

WINTHROP/DOYON SCHOOLS. Ms. Conley, Doyon Principal, began their collective presentation by introducing herself as did Sheila McAdams, Winthrop Principal. The norms in both schools are that the largest classes are leaving to go to the Middle School, but she has an issue with her current third grade being large at three classes of 25/25/26. She will need a classroom teacher for the fourth grade next year, but she doesn't have it. The history of staffing cuts, current cuts (2015) and projected cuts (2016) was discussed as was program cuts and supplies/materials cuts. The decision drivers are class size in the buildings, student population needs, and instructional models. Ms. Conley emphasized the \$213,256 difference down for FY16 from the FY15 Doyon total budget. She listed specific cuts in teaching staff (1 teacher, .3 TAs, and 2.83 behavior specialists) and instrumental/chorus instruction, pointing out that current research indicates that students benefit from personalized learning, differentiated instruction in individual and small-group ways and with co-teaching models.

Ms. McAdams spoke of progressive change which is happening in education. Research shows that skilled hands (Special Education teachers rather than Teaching Assistants) help more. Grant funding has helped to hire teaching staff, but Title I

funding has been going down by \$30,000 each year at Winthrop. Ms. Conley had reading, literacy, and math specialists in her first years. Winthrop has similar cuts to Doyon for FY16 with reduction of a classroom teacher, 3 teaching assistants, 1 behavioral specialist and instrumental instruction. The principals reviewed MCAS scores. Ms. McAdams mentioned that personalized learning and immediate feedback are necessary to insure growth with MCAS scoring. Mr. White questioned Common Core; Ms. McAdams reported that it works as a collective where common planning time is necessary to pull apart the common core learning. We are working with what we have and, clearly, it is not getting us where we want to go. Mr. Hopping spoke of the ramped up curriculum with Common Core: sixth-grade material is now being incorporated into the third-grade curriculum.

Mr. Feldman asked how the Feoffees fund has contributed; Ms. Conley, a member of the Feoffees mini-grant committee, replied that there is a Lego robotics program, iPads have been bought for both elementaries, Chrome books are provided to Grades 3-5, and there are Promethean interactive boards being used. Mr. Hopping added that it should be understood that, in the first two years of Feoffees funding, many of the purchases that have been made ought to have come from the operating budget. They have helped the schools to survive, but the Feoffees' money is documented for enhancement projects beyond the school budget. Feoffees funds begin to diminish with the next year, and Mr. Hopping described the percentage method the School Committee has developed for awards of the Payne (\$525,000) and Mini Grants (\$175,000) for next year. Sixty proposals came in two years ago; 47, last year.

Seventy thousand dollars is taken in as bus fees from 250 riders at a maximum fee per family of \$500. An additional \$450,000 is paid by the district budget for the bus contract.

Mr. Hopping asked Ms. McAdams to comment on her years in Ipswich. She remarked that, as a young teacher, she was given the chance "to go" and now she would like the young teachers to be able to do the same.

Matt DiBello, School Committee student representative, commented that his teachers have paid for books and they say they stay for the students. "The ship is sinking and we keep plugging holes until it will overwhelm us. It is really important to give students and teachers the resources that they need."

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.