

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 16, 2015  
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM**

**OPEN SESSION**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair B. Hopping called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. with the following members present: S. Player, H. O'Flynn, C. Nylen, J. Bauman, and S. Gresh (9 p.m.) Also present were Superintendent Hart and Student Rep. Matthew DiBello.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Matt read the Mission Statement.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Hopping read the following announcements:

Executive Session will be held to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with IEA, AFSCME, and personnel matters, and will return to Open Session , after which the meeting will adjourn.

AFSCME Negotiations will take place on April 28 and May 4, 1 p.m., Payne School Conference Rm.

School Committee will meet on May 7, 7 p.m., M/H School Ensemble Rm.

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

Richard Howard, Fin Com member, had questions about the audit re special education and the reductions of teacher assistants (TAs). By definition with an IEP, there is some vulnerability and each student deserves an intelligent decision for him/her. He asked what is being done so that the students will not be hurt as a result of paraprofessionals being reduced. Families need to be trained and supported in the process so that they can effectively engage the team for the best provision for the child. Mr. Hopping assured him that there is no case of kids getting hurt. What the parents ask for is what is produced with the support and services in mind.

Dr. O'Flynn clarified that a previous SPED study of internal information reported that the percentage of TAs to certified SPED teachers needed change and the PPS Director Hegedus and superintendent support these changes. The Audit Committee has made the same recommendations. The recent CHRONICLE editorial speaking of lawyer advocacy for the families who can afford it is the wrong idea. Ipswich does not send its SPED children out of the district for the most part.

Mr. Hopping commented that every parent doesn't need a lawyer. Dr. Hegedus is working on the district's behalf, and the hope is that a plan will evolve.

Karen Donovan, President of SEPAC, spoke of their statutory role to advise the School Committee on SPED. She referred to a 2011 report and asked that it be made clear that with this new report, which she has not yet seen, she will advocate for support of and need for students' rights. She is meeting with Dr. Hegedus to make sure that student individual rights are done according to Ipswich's needs and State law. SEPAC is concerned about cuts to SPED, driven by the audit report, and

urges Dr. Hegedus to do her job appropriate to the needs of future and present students advocating for future programs. Important for everyone to understand is the fact that sometimes there has to be outside placement of students because Ipswich does not have enough programming within the district. She expressed the need for SPED teachers to be trained and certified and the remaining TAs be trained as well on new developments. She feels that there should be a workshop in September in basic rights training which Mass PAC can provide. She thanked Dr. Hegedus for taking time to work with SEPAC to protect the rights of SPED kids in Ipswich.

A SPED parent admires Mrs. Donovan's and Dr. Hegedus' work very much and asked for clarity in the matter. Dr. Hart assured the group that the budget continues to be flexible enough to support a SPED position when the need arises.

Mr. Nylén, Vice Chair of the Audit Committee, commented that cost savings in the audit were not reflecting nor singling out one program or one area but rather included food services, transportation, natural attrition of elementary teachers, and field maintenance and will result in cumulative achievement in several areas.

In discussion, Mr. Hopping stated that the full Board has not reviewed the audit report and will take up individual areas once recommendations have been studied beginning with SPED in a late May or early June School Committee meeting.

#### **SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Dr. Hart announced the receipt of accreditation of the Winthrop kindergarten.

#### **RULE OF NECESSITY**

Ms. Player moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, to invoke the Rule of Necessity so that Dr. O'Flynn and Mr. Nylén could participate in Executive Session discussion where otherwise a lack of quorum would prevent holding an Executive Session.  
**UNANIMOUS.**

#### **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Matt DiBello announced that 169 students (one quarter of the high school population) and 11 chaperones are on their way to England for 9 days to tour and perform in two concerts visiting Bristol, Bath, Stratford, and London, and presenting its world-class musicianship!

#### **A. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Dr. Hart reported that on April 8 and 10 Finance Committee, School Committee, and he reviewed budget questions for Bean Counting. A five-year budget plan was strategized and finalized for an override budget. The Long-range Financial Planning Committee voted to endorse the override request.

Curriculum teacher leaders (Compass Committee) shared curriculum units that combine Common Core curriculum with Successful Habits of Mind at Northeast Consortium in Topsfield. They provided each other constructive feedback and the

team members will bring the practice strategies back to their colleagues in their buildings.

On June 24, 25, and 26 the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) with Christina Brown will build 21<sup>st</sup> Century curriculum with Ipswich teachers. Compass team members will collaborate with CCE in facilitation.

A High School parent budget meeting was conducted to talk about what an override would bring to the district and the reverse, what a non-override would do to the district.

## **I. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS**

### **B. IPSWICH EDUCATION FOUNDATION CHECK PRESENTATION AND UPDATE ON RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO ATHLETICS PROGRAM**

Kevin Murphy and Sean Cayer of IEF presented to the School Department a check for \$10,000 from IEF, \$2,500 to go to each school for designated purposes. Mr. Nysten moved, seconded by Ms. Player, to accept the \$10,000 check from the Ipswich Education Foundation with thanks. UNANIMOUS.

Mr. Cayer reported that over \$50,000 was raised at the golf tournament held last fall at Turner Hill, and IEF was happy to outfit JV boys and girls with uniforms, tennis needs, and up to \$14,000 has been set aside for resurfacing the upper gym floor down to bare wood. Mr. Hopping thanked them for these improvements so quickly. Mr. Murphy declared needs for field hockey and soccer in the fall. The next golf tournament will take place at Turner Hill, hopefully on September 9. Mr. Murphy mentioned the \$70,000 donated by the Institution for Savings for the track refurbishment and the various other new equipment. If the override fails, varsity coach allotment of \$60,000 is cut. Dr. O'Flynn mentioned the hardship of 35 families with the athletic user fees. Mr. Hopping noted that athletics is so dependent on outside funds which is so vital to the survival of sports in Ipswich. Dr. Hart thanked the IEF and said that the international speaker, Dr. Daggett, who is coming to the district shortly was made possible by IEF.

### **C. WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE**

Russ Bardsley, Whittier Representative, spoke in appreciation for the Ipswich Education Foundation and, having just finished his first full term and being reelected to a three-year term by the School Committee, is getting involved on subcommittees. The seven-year Superintendent of Whittier is retiring and a search is on for his replacement. The facility is on the State list of MSBA to be "uplifted" with renovations, new tools, and replace the original 40-year-old cooling/heating systems. Mr. Bardsley said that the school will be offering college-prep and AP programs in the next two years because there is a growing number of students wishing to attend two- and four-year colleges to get degrees in engineering, HVAC, automotive technology, etc. Ipswich has student growth of 32% in the last 3-4 years. Next year the enrollment will be full with no room for Choice students. He explained that applicants must receive a "67" rating to be accepted. Choice students must meet the same standard and applicants may apply a second time. He stated

that the MCAS program is very intense at Whittier with a number of extra tutors for help sessions to retest. Whittier ranks sixth out of 33 schools for how many dollars are spent per student. Mr. Hopping asked him to return and to email information to keep the School Committee informed.

The Board had a discussion on the assessment rights; Board of Selectmen do, but the School Committee does not. Dr. O’Flynn offered the opinion that quorums and quotas never work and Ipswich must offer programs to keep its students. Mr. Nylen felt that there should be an opportunity to fulfill the mission of the vocational school relative to Ipswich High.

**D. AUDIT REPORT REVIEW**

Announcing that the final report will be on the website, Mr. Nylen, Vice Chair of the Audit Subcommittee gave general observations. Everybody came away very pleased by the quality of the Abrahams Group who did the audit. Initially, eleven areas covered every aspect of school operations. They did a thorough job using 160 documents (provided by Joanne Cuff and Kathy Carleton) and have given useful recommendations. His observations: (1)A feeling that this is a very efficient, well-managed school operation in the manner of accounting; (2)Took note of the previous audits, have a strong history of our accounting on the recommendations from previous audits, e.g., food services and facilities management as a couple of examples; and (3)In the end they had to look for savings and opportunities. They did identify some recommendations in three categories: cost savings, cost increases, and revenue-neutral to cost, with an overall conclusion that there was no “pot of gold” to be found.

Mr. Hopping commended the participants—93% of the distributed surveys were returned. Verbal comments made clear that they found Ipswich to be a low-funded district. If greater collaboration between Town and schools were possible, some money might be saved. Mr. Nylen added that even if bus routes were changed, it could be unlikely that savings could be made.

Dr. O’Flynn commented that it clearly was an independent audit and places where we deviate from the mean must be studied. Ipswich is average, struggling the same as other districts, and can be improved by a study like this.

The plan is to have a three-minute presentation on the audit right before Warrant Article 10 (Override) at Town Meeting.

**II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. VOUCHERS/BILLS**

**B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**1. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE**

Dr. O’Flynn reported on a plan for implementation for supporting a “turf” at the stadium: all of the local youth sports pay a \$50 fee per person to support the turf field and then be allowed to play on it.

**2. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE**

**3. COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Dr. Gresh interviewed for the music awards, STEAM/STEM to EBSCO, and the Middle School with Mr. Fabrizio and placed the articles on the Ipswich Facebook page "I Love Ipswich." He gave examples of his experiences with Facebook and Twitter, commenting that photos enhance the material. Because not everybody reads the CHRONICLE, these items are news to many people.

**4. GRANT COMMITTEES**

Ms. Player attended a brief meeting straightlining issues. Mini-grant applications are due May 8. There is a technology sign-off form now which is due the week after vacation.

**5. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mr. Hopping explained that Dr. Hart's evaluation document will be sent out with timelines from this point forward.

**6. POLICY – Mr. Nysten will set a meeting for the next week or so.**

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Hopping stated that State law requires a declaration of participation on Choice no later than May 1. Decision was made for School Committee to meet on April 28 at 7 p.m. on the sole topic of Choice. School Committee members must read the NESDEC report before the meeting. High and Middle School principals are invited to attend.

The State House of Representatives has proposed a restoration of the Circuit Breaker fund to the level it was last year (75% of previous year). Also proposed are the Kindergarten grant and Chapter 70 at \$10,000 more than the Governor's budget: 1.5% more.

Mr. Murphy, School Building Needs Chair, briefed the Board on the next process for MSBA re the Winthrop School project: the Owners Project Manager phase.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, that the School Committee (1)authorize the following individuals to serve on the Owners Project Manager (OPM) Selection Committee: Kevin Murphy, Nishan Mootafian, Sarah Player, Sheila McAdams, Jonathan Elder, and Mitchell Lowe; (2)approve the Request for Services (RFS) for the OPM; and (3)authorize the School Building Committee to advertise the RFS for an OPM. UNANIMOUS.

Frank Antonucci, from Town Hall, will be working (but wasn't officially voted) with the subcommittee as a consultant.

Dr. O'Flynn advocated that School Committee be involved in every part after the override; he, for one, needs to have input and a better understanding of what choices should be made.

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Dr. O’Flynn, to accept the Consent Agenda as follows:

Acceptance of Minutes of April 2, 2015, School Committee Open Session  
UNANIMOUS.

**IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Ms. Player moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, to go into Executive Session at 9:50 p.m. for the purpose of strategy for collective bargaining with IEA, AFSCME, and personnel matters to return to Open Session to vote the Memo of Agreement for IEA and then to adjourn. Roll call IN FAVOR- O’Flynn, Player, Hopping, Nysten, Gresh, and Bauman.

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**OPEN SESSION** resumed at 11:07 p.m.

Ms. Player moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, to accept the Memorandum of Agreement between the Ipswich Educators Association, Unit A, and the Ipswich School Committee for a three-year contract to begin on September 1, 2015 and end on August 31, 2018. UNANIMOUS.

Dr. Gresh moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, to adjourn at 11: 08 p.m.  
UNANIMOUS.

