

FINANCE COMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET PRESENTATION
MARCH 19, 2013
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

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

Finance Committee members present: M. Swan, R. White, T. Wilson, M. Feldman, J. Fay, L. Seidler, R. Howard, I. Miles

School Committee members present: J. Loeb, S. Gresh, H. O'Flynn, J. Bauman, R. Roesler, C. Nylen

Administrators present: Superintendent R. Korb, Finance Director J. Cuff, SPED Director M. Gallant, and Principals D. Dalton, D. Fabrizio, S. Conley, and S. McAdams.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

MINUTES

FY14 SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATION: DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Mr. Nylen, Mr. Korb and Ms. Cuff, with a PowerPoint presentation, began their explanations. Mr. Nylen commented on changes with a School Committee person involved more strongly in the participation of the budget presentation in an attempt at streamlining the process and leaving time for questions.

Mr. Korb reviewed the budget figures to the Target Budget Number of \$24,963,920, separating it by schools/categories and comparing it to FY13's revised number of \$22,119,990. Mr. Nylen commented that the FY14 number was unanimously voted by the School Committee on March 7, 2013.

Mr. Korb followed up with a presentation on the implementation of Common Core curriculum and the Educator Evaluation Model, major changes to national standards over a two-year period that entail countless hours of extra work by administration/teachers. The Salaries and Benefits stimulated considerable conversation about percentages of contract increases and step changes. The school system is up by 2.0 FTEs in the FY14 budget.

Mr. Korb reviewed the three district goals and how they are being implemented: professional development in Atlas (software) programming in English/Language Arts and math, "high-needs" subgroup interventions, and training in the Educator Evaluation Model, accepted by IEA, approved by DESE, and being used as a model across the Commonwealth. He praised the IEA for not simply adopting the suggested DESE template, but rather adapting it to their own observation and evaluation wording. The FY14 budget supports these new educational initiatives, establishes priorities, and recommends increased use of Choice and Circuit Breaker funds to support the initiatives and priorities.

Staffing adjustments were discussed including the return of French/Spanish at the 8th grade level for 2.0 FTE and decreasing 2.0 FTE Middle School social studies teachers, increasing the High School Assistant Principal because of evaluations and accreditation responsibilities, and increasing a reading TA at the Doyon (a long requested move), decreasing librarians and two other classroom teachers (Doyon and High School at 1.0 FTE each).

Discussion involved the heavy use of Choice (\$1,125,000) and Circuit Breaker (\$602,720) funds in the FY14 budget to provide the priorities and initiatives. Dropping numbers of Choice In and increasing numbers of Choice Out were discussed and the connection to a now 10+-year-old Middle/High School. An unknown factor, Chapter 70 monies to come before the end of FY13, will affect add backs.

Finance Committee questioned the use of Feoffees money repeatedly, and the School Committee/Administration emphasized that Feoffees funds are not a part of the Operating Budget. Dr. O'Flynn and Mr. Loeb explained in detail the long process of establishing a tight policy and the establishment of major- and mini-grants for submitting applications by administration/staff for enhancement, which are still in process. Mr. Howard commented that a strategic mistake has been made by not including a page in the budget presentation to tell the community what the School Committee is doing regarding the Feoffees money.

The group discussed the need for a substantial override for FY2015. Mr. Seidler commented that the School Committee needs to start sharing the news this year because of the need for delivering these services.

Athletics budget changes were mentioned, and Dr. O'Flynn referred to possible increases in athletic fees. Food Services is self-sustaining for the most part except for the \$50,000 that the budget is contributing for health insurance.

Capital Planning. Mr. Korb discussed the capital plan including school safety improvements, Middle/High School flooring, hot water heater, and exterior walkway repairs, and technology upgrades to augment current technology. He mentioned the SOIs for the Winthrop and Doyon Schools to MSBA. Mr. Wilson questioned the Foundation District which came about last year. Ipswich will be a Foundation District forever now, and more Chapter 70 funds will be reimbursed from the State unless students leave Ipswich by Choicing Out at the rate of \$9,000 per student.

CENTRAL OFFICE

Ms. Cuff reviewed numbers and changes including a now-centralized location for SPED salaries, purchased services, and driver. The Superintendent and Director of Administration Services are retiring and there will be monetary saving as a result.

Mr. Loeb, after comments from the Finance Committee against using Free Cash for OPEB, said that if there was going to be a change, the School Committee should know about it before Bean Counting Saturday in April.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Dr. Gresh introduced Mary Gallant, PPS Director, saying that SPED is a great program with a great reputation because of its well-trained teachers. Mrs. Gallant reviewed her PowerPoint giving increasing numbers in the district, still below State average, and her goals. She discussed out-of-district tuitions and collaboratives. She outlined her plans for SPED in Life Skills, professional development, and fund-increasing collaborations with other towns in Ipswich schools. She defined English language learners and homeless students. Mr. Schaaf asked for specific numbers involving SPED and Ms. Cuff read off the numbers in the various schools: Doyon (reduction) and Winthrop (same), with all others increased, and heavy dependency on Circuit Breaker.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.