

FINANCE COMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET PRESENTATION  
MARCH 22, 2012  
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM A

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: J. Fay, T. Wilson, M. Swan, I. Miles, R. White, M. Feldman  
School Committee members present: H. O'Flynn, L. Dietz, R. Roesler, J. Bauman, S. Gresh, V. Paduchak  
Administration present: R. Korb, J. Cuff, M. Gallant, C. Burke, four Principals

CITIZENS COMMENTS

S. Jewell asked for a presentation of OPEB details before the Tri Board meeting next week to be able to understand his own situation when retirement approaches. Mrs. Dietz referred him to the school website for that information.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Korb spoke about Cheryl Forster's 28 years in the school system, her principalship for 17 years, and her importance as a tremendous part of the administration team. Dr. O'Flynn spoke on behalf of the School Committee in praise of the two principals who are retiring.

Mrs. Forster-Cahill began by thanking N. Tougas, A. Hopping, and J. Cuff for help with the budget and to Mary Whitmore who always made sure that she had a corsage to wear on budget presentation night because she cares. She thanked her faculty with whom she has served since 1995.

Mrs. Forster-Cahill reviewed the changes in which she has been involved during this time period, the faculty, building design recognition (Model School), the student achievement recognized by MCAS scores, and by 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills of digital-age savvy, inventive thinking, effective communication, and high productivity by faculty and students. She emphasized faculty partnership and co-teaching. Over a three-year period, the budget shows an increase of 9.6% with increases in five new SPED tuitions and therapies and decreases with two core teachers, one TA, and principal retirement. She showed enrollment numbers, stimulus money gone, cuts made in programs, and the "whittle-away" effect endangering Common Core, mapping, and ATLAS with insufficient administrative personnel and no technology or professional development. She spoke of the very successful after-school program and the need for \$18,000 from the Recreation Department or an assignment of funds from somewhere.

Finance Committee members discussed enrollment numbers which Mrs. Forster-Cahill said are on a roller coaster. Forty-four eighth graders (double the usual number) have applied to other high schools. Reasons for doing so were surmised and, because Ipswich High schoolers are given fewer elective options because of lost personnel and

programs, classes are also larger. The two social studies teachers from the Middle School budget being cut were a priority for Mr. Wilson.

#### HIGH SCHOOL BUDGET

Mr. Cahill cited 26 years as a principal, 17 of which have been at Ipswich, and he reviewed expenses in the building, once again giving thanks to the Greenough family for their \$200,000 to the high school budget over an 8-year period. When the high school was new and attractive, the students "choiced" in and/or remained in Ipswich. Those 40 applicants who wish to leave may be an indicator of change. Accreditation is coming soon and a substantive change mandates a report to the accrediting committee that the school automatically goes on warning. With 21 sections gone, that amounts to 400 slots that don't exist for students anymore. Dr. O'Flynn stated that erosion at the high school is real and more discussion resulted. Victor, as a graduating senior taking online courses in the school's media center, complained that other activities in the library disrupting those on the computers is a major problem along with the fact that the internet goes down and he has lost as much as a week of online class at his scheduled time. His second point is that the high school should be #1 in importance when looking to keep exemplary schooling and selection without the necessity for students to look elsewhere for electives and technology. Mr. Cahill and Mr. Korb advocated as the necessary, but expensive, beginning for upgraded technology with an expert consultant.

Steve Filosa, Pingree teacher, encouraged the Finance Committee to take bold action and favored an override and a move to repeal Proposition 2½. Mr. Feldman agreed that an override is the solution for now and that leadership and ability to articulate is ultimately the driver here that could change the situation with the schools for a period of time.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.