

FINANCE COMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET PRESENTATION  
MARCH 21, 2012  
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM A

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Michael Schaaf, Fin Com Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

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

School Committee members present: J. Loeb, L. Dietz, H. O'Flynn, J. Bauman, R. Roesler, S. Gresh, V. Paduchak

Administrators present: Superintendent R. Korb, Director of Finance J. Cuff, SPED Director M. Gallant, and four Principals.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

J. Donohue, upset that audience members weren't given time to speak last night, asked to speak after presentations and was granted the request by Mr. Schaaf.

DOYON BUDGET

Mr. Loeb, School Committee Chair, mentioned that Barry Hopping is presenting his own budget in Newburyport these nights. He introduced Sheila Conley who presented her Doyon budget, thanking J. Cuff and R. Costoplus for their help in its preparation. She began by showing enrollment projections and the need for an additional classroom teacher for Grade 3 and 4 for next year (one of these is included in the budget). She gave her fiscal goals for FY13 and then showed the reality of most of them being unfulfilled. Budget use of funds shows 29% for SPED salaries and 6% for SPED expenses. She reviewed all the areas where outside funding provides salaries and operating expenses. She noted changes because of the library closing, three retirements, needs for specialized behavioral therapy, and funding for preschool. She proudly listed the accomplishments in 2012 of year 2 of the writing cohort, math with technology, Kindergarten accreditation, good MCAS scores, after-school enrichment and leadership programs. To Mr. Wilson's question regarding Kindergarten accreditation, one of the Kindergarten teachers explained standards for progress, portfolios for demonstration, classroom observation, and a report. Mrs. Swan questioned the changes needed for "Common Core" and was told that a needs assessment is taking place now. Mr. White questioned an increase of 20% for the summer program and was told that the student population needs teaching assistants for behavioral issues. Ms. Conley was asked to and did share her educational history.

WINTHROP BUDGET

Mrs. McAdams thanked the parents and staff for preparation of the budget and detailed the diversity of the school population – 88 children of the 21% of families in apartments in Ipswich are located in the Winthrop School. Ipswich has 15.9% at the poverty level. Fifteen percent of the staff holds multiple degrees.

Winthrop is showing lagging indicators and needs better service delivery and curricular cohesion. Her fiscal goals include after-school support about which she asked the Finance Committee. Mr. Schaaf said that support with the Recreation Department funds is not a given. Kindergarten, pre-K, and preschool have significant need for smaller classes. Mrs. McAdams explained the co-teaching model and the way SPED and ELA/math specialists are in the classroom at one time with the classroom teacher, thus achieving student progress in the moment. She is concerned about non-SPED remedial support in a summer program to prevent the lapse of educational growth during the school year. She credited Mary Gallant for teaming with other systems which are then charged and partnered with Ipswich SPED students during the school year and summer. She was concerned about the lack of library media instruction. While an updated phone system for Winthrop is budgeted because most of the phones don't work, she depends upon parent contributions for a walk-in cooler, technology, and a playground (which is more like a desert currently) in FY13.

Mrs. Miles asked for the horizon for Common Core; Mrs. McAdams answered that reading, writing, and math come over the next year and more over the next three years. Mr. Feldman asked the dollar figure and Mrs. McAdams gave \$5,000 as a reasonable number for non-SPED remedial work in the summer. Mr. Fay asked about pre-school numbers. Mrs. McAdams said services apply to that age group alone and while four-year olds fill the class, three-year olds sometimes do not, and there is stiff competition with private endeavors locally. Mrs. Roesler urged the Finance Committee to watch the Recreation Department funding numbers because the schools provide after-school time that is fun and a good use of kids' time at no cost. Mr. Schaaf spoke of Circuit Breaker funding, and Mr. Loeb defended the reserve for move-ins, out-placements, and SPED, recalling that Selectman Jim Engel had suggested this whole plan years ago. Mr. Schaaf and Mr. Fay felt that there is significant carryover each year. Mrs. Roesler asked for Finance Committee support if the chance was taken to restore positions from the Circuit Breaker funds and then there was not enough money to finish the year's budget. Mr. Loeb and Dr. O'Flynn disagreed with taking Circuit Breaker funds and reiterated that Feoffees money will be used for technology and professional development, not the operating budget.

Audience members asked for direction from the Finance Committee on where to go from here. The phrase "preference for education" in the Ipswich community was used again because parents and others fund and/or volunteer with support.

Mrs. Roesler checked cars in the commuter-rail parking lot and found 168 cars with Ipswich beach stickers and 162 cars with no identification for Ipswich and other-town identifications. She proposed a fee for parking as a revenue source. Dr. O'Flynn asked if extra snow/ice money would be available to the schools, whereupon Mr. Schaaf replied that at least \$50,000 was already allotted to the Veterans.

Audience members spoke of (1) concerns that the whole community is affected when cuts are made in schools for the long term, (2) whether the Finance Committee will continue to address education as a priority, (3) how property taxes are set and assessments made, (4) override to come from parents with or without Finance Committee support, and (5) the municipal policy to upgrade technology every five years and if it could include the schools.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.