

FINANCE COMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET PRESENTATION
MARCH 20, 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: M. Swan, R. White, T. Wilson, M. Feldman, J. Fay School Committee members present: J. Loeb, L. Dietz, H. O'Flynn, J. Bauman, R. Roesler Administrators present: Superintendent R. Korb, Director of Finance J. Cuff, SPED Director M. Gallant, and Principals.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

M. Wertz, of Citizens for Ipswich Schools, explained its recent organization.

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Loeb, School Committee Chair, introduced the budgetary process with a history of the past five-year cuts and reductions. Mr. Loeb spoke of Central Office cuts in personnel, professional development, technology, and capital projects and continued with enumerating the high, middle, and two elementary school cuts. The School Resource Officer was picked up by the Town. Mr. Korb interjected that the perception exists that the schools will always find a way to be able to restore programs and positions. These positions and programs have never come back.

Mr. Loeb further explained the Foundation Aid District status that has been designated for Ipswich by Chapter 70 and the "good news" it brings. He reviewed the funding considerations studied and rejected.

Mr. Korb reviewed the revenue estimates for the Town and schools, gave the total available school funding at \$24,168,012, and outlined the budgeting considerations such as negotiated compensation increases, increased health insurance costs, losses of grants and outside funds along with the OPEB \$300,000 obligation. Savings in health insurance increase, retirements (8 teachers and 2 administrators) and OPEB rejection were reviewed as well as cuts that remain. Finance Committee members suggested cutting part-time hours, asking that the IEA take a lower percentage of salary increase, and agreed that legislators need to make changes. Mrs. Roesler spoke of comparing the municipal employees to the school personnel, all of whom are Town employees. If the schools have to give up one day without pay, why aren't the Town employees asked to also give up one day? Mr. Loeb explained that 50% of the teachers are on the top step and those who aren't are moving up by paying for their better education themselves. Mr. Fay accused the School Committee of reinstating six teachers by eliminating OPEB funding. Denied by the School Committee because the last item zeroed out was the OPEB line, Mr. Loeb reviewed the many items that still haven't been funded including technology and professional development, capital improvements, a 1.0 FTE Pupil Personnel Director, a Director of Instruction/Assessment, reading/math specialists at Doyon, Middle School social studies

teachers (2), High School science teacher, library teaching assistants at Doyon and Winthrop, and extension of hours for Middle School library.

Ms. Cuff reviewed pie charts of Budget Salaries and Benefits, non-salary expenses, and Special Education, and delineated \$1,877,072 of revolving funds. Mr. Fay suggested that the carry-over each year of Circuit Breaker funds is too great, and Ms. Cuff responded that unexpected expenses (in SPED and others) are covered by this reserve. She gave rationale on how grant money totaling \$404,945 is spent. A per-pupil spending chart was reviewed showing Ipswich, at \$11,369, in 8th place of 9 north shore communities. Ms. Cuff showed where revenue-generating initiatives have saved over \$200,000 in the past 5-6 years in Medicaid, transportation costs, grounds/maintenance contract, and fees for bus transportation and High School parking. Collaborative efforts in six areas have been accomplished with the Town. Finance Committee members questioned the numbers in "Choice" and the pros and cons of the issue. Capital projects from Phase II through Phase IV, while not funded, were listed by priority and reviewed in detail.

Mr. Schaaf questioned the technology issue, and Mr. Korb answered that some funding is budgeted for repair, private gifts and foundations have provided some funds, and it is hoped that Feoffees money will be forthcoming for a thoughtful, five-year plan in place for technology and professional development which Mr. Fay asked to see. While more "virtual" courses will be offered at the High School in FY13, the infrastructure is constantly failing because of old and unsuitable connections.

Finance Committee questions regarding Choice, Powder House influx of students, Little Neck residents, and all-district fixed costs were answered as much as possible.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.