

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2012
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM**

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Loeb called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. with the following members present: L. Dietz, J. Bauman, H. O'Flynn, S. Gresh, R. Roesler, and B. Hopping. Also present were Superintendent R. Korb, Finance Director J. Cuff, and Principals C. Forster, B. Cahill and S. Conley.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Loeb read the following announcements:

No Executive Session will be held this evening.

Schools will be closed for winter vacation February 20 – 24.

Policy Subcommittee will meet February 27, 5:30 p.m., Payne School

Feoffees Working Group will meet February 28, 7:30 p.m., Middle/High School
Guidance Conference Room

School Committee will meet March 1, 7 p.m., Middle/High School Ensemble
Room for the Public Hearing on the FY13 Budget

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Scott Jewell, Middle School Tech Ed teacher, presented a sheet he had worked out showing budget line item numbers of SPED expenses from Winthrop and Doyon students transferring to Middle School in FY13, resulting in an increase at the Middle School. He asked for a detailed answer to the question of the \$193,821 difference. Ms. Cuff explained that tuitions vary according to the placement and that she would provide Mr. Jewell with the numbers.

I. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

A. ATHLETIC FIELD STUDY COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

Ken Swenson, reporting from the Field Study Committee appointed 6 – 7 years ago to study public spaces for expansion of athletic fields, informed the Board that it is moving forward with the concept at the Doyon field and at Mile Lane. It is thought that Mile Lane fields could expand with two more fields. Mr. Swenson requested permission from the Board to make a formal plan for Mile Lane, cost it out, and seek out funding sources, being aware of the needs of the neighbors and obtaining the blessing of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Hopping questioned the cost; Mr. Swenson replied that while there are some funds available through the Field Study Committee, the range of \$5,000-10,000 needed is not available immediately. To Mrs. Roesler's question of the current lease of soccer fields, Mrs. Sue Markos replied that it expires in June, 2013, and effort is made every day to extend the lease.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Hopping, to approve the request for permission to make a formal plan for additional fields at Mile Lane. At the suggestion of Mr. Howard (Finance Committee), Mr. Korb proposed that a more visible product (than the current one) could be put on the website. UNANIMOUS.

Lisa Manzi, Doyon teacher, spoke of the natural field, woodland, and stream which provide every grade with invaluable visitations to observe animal adaptations and tracking, plants and seed dispersal, soil, and water habitats right behind the Doyon School. Mr. Loeb assured her that a layout on the property is all that has been done and a discussion of the natural resources for the science program at Doyon has taken place.

D. BUDGET REVIEW

Mr. Loeb changed the agenda order in order to get a clearer view of the budget numbers currently available.

Ms. Cuff detailed a green handout enumerating the base operating budget times a 2.75% increase, dated 12/15/11, and the changed numbers per 1/27/12. With known budget changes and OPEB numbers increased according to a new actuarial study, the reduction to the FY13 budget is currently -\$39,158. She said changing numbers get better every day. Mr. Korb commented that conversations have not taken place with the Finance Committee, but he was heartened when the actuarial firm said that Ipswich is among the very few Massachusetts communities considering OPEB payments which are not mandated. The Governor says that it should be addressed on a state-wide basis and the actuarial supported that. In addition, Mr. Korb said, we have become a foundation-aid district. He suggested that the Finance Committee be approached for a moratorium to fund OPEB for this year.

C. KINDERGARTEN FEES

Mr. Korb, in referring to an email received from Roger Hatch, Chief Financial Administrator of School Finance at DESE, which gave statistics that the Ipswich district could lose the entire foundation budget increment of \$3,501 per pupil in the future if kindergarten fees were assessed, recommended that kindergarten fees be taken off the table.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mrs. Dietz, to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to have the proposal to charge full-day kindergarten fees taken off the table. School Committee members expressed their feelings against the fees. Mr. Hopping urged a meeting in the future with Mr. Hatch and Mr. Wulfson in the same room regarding the Chapter 70 formula.

B. ALTERNATE BELL SCHEDULE

After preliminary discussion necessitating a decision that must be made now in order to involve the IEA union in collective bargaining and the need for a bus schedule before transportation bidding specifications go out, the results of a survey of parents at the Middle/High School (62% response) with the highest acceptance rate was one that started Middle/High School at 7:30 and ended at 2:06. Sue Markos wondered if a one-way bus pass could be used for arriving at school in the morning OR being transported home in the afternoon, but not both ways. Ms. Cuff offered the possibility of those types of tickets when the round-trip ticket pass process has been completed after the first few days of school. She said that bus passes will be issued in June, 2012, for the fall session.

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Dr. O’Flynn, to adopt the 5-5-3 Option A model of a bell schedule: Middle/High School start at 7:15; end at 1:51
Doyon start at 8:00; end at 2:25
Winthrop start at 8:45; end at 3:10

After discussion, with Mrs. Bauman, Mrs. Roesler, and Mrs. Dietz voicing opposition to funding OPEB, vote was IN FAVOR – O’Flynn, Hopping, Gresh; OPPOSED – Dietz, Bauman, Roesler, Loeb. (4/3 OPPOSED).

Mrs. Roesler moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, to remove the bell schedule savings from the budget, adding \$100,000 to the transportation line item. After discussion, vote was UNANIMOUS.

Discussion continued with the bell schedule change and the need to have a schedule before going out to bid on a new bus contract. Mrs. Bauman moved, seconded by Mrs. Dietz, to start the Middle/High School school day at 7:45 a.m. and end at 2:21 and continue the elementary times as they exist in 2012. UNANIMOUS.

Jeff Krieger, IEA President, spoke passionately about teachers, 40% of whom are Ipswich residents, in the long-range view of the school system. The schools are doing a remarkable job with the resources they have. The fact is the “cost drivers” are 86% of the budget which is the classroom and specialist teachers, and Ipswich’s ranking (in the Per Pupil Expenditure {DESE} handout from IEA) is 222nd of 315 school districts. He said that the schools are taking a beating and implored the School Committee to put forth a budget that takes care of the students. He wants to see the Board of Selectmen work with the School Committee. Mrs. Dietz agreed and expressed the irony that at a time when social studies is needed more than ever to understand civic responsibilities, we are cutting social studies teachers. It is not an expense problem, it is a revenue problem, she said. Mrs. Roesler commented that it is time to focus on supporting our positions, between now and March 1.

D. BUDGET REVIEW (continued)

Mr. Loeb’s direction to the administrators when they meet on February 28 is to see tiers within the add-backs so that the School Committee can make a decision in terms of (a) OPEB, and (b) specific items, preferring to have a substantive debate during the public hearing.

Dr. O’Flynn moved to reject OPEB outright and not fund it. When no second was forthcoming, he suggested having OPEB as an override to fund its entirety. After some discussion, Mr. Loeb moved, seconded by Mr. Hopping, that the School Committee direct the Superintendent to inform the interim Town Manager that the School Committee is planning on proposing an operating override at a \$2.1 million level for the purpose of paying OPEB and request the interim Town Manager to place this item on the draft Warrant for Town Meeting. UNANIMOUS. Mr. Hopping asked that the Town Treasurer provide a number showing the taxpayer impact on a \$2.1 million override. Ms. Conley suggested that the PowerPoint presentation made at the Long-Range Financial Planning Committee meeting be put on the school website.

E. FEOFFEEES OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Mr. Loeb announced that there will be two appeals filed: (1) Notice of Appeal with the Probate Court; and (2) Petition filed with the single Justice of the Appeals Court seeking a stay of the judgment pending the appeal (1). This second appeal is on a much faster track and responses will be filed in a week or so. Mr. Loeb asked for and Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Dr. Gresh, to authorize School Committee counsel to work at the Appellate Court to defend the Settlement. Mrs. Roesler felt that expenses would be duplicated and Mr. Sheehan (Feoffees' attorney) could do the job alone. Mrs. Dietz and Mr. Loeb argued that without counsel the School Committee would be looked upon as not having acted appropriately and is on a different level from Feoffees' arguments. IN FAVOR – Gresh, Dietz, Loeb, O'Flynn; OPPOSED - Hopping, Bauman, Roesler.

Mr. Loeb reported that at least two “public record” requests made at the Feoffees Subcommittee meeting have already been responded to. Mrs. Roesler argued that the history of the Feoffees of Little Neck should go into the archives as the property of Ipswich rather than the property of Casner & Edwards.

II. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS**A. VOUCHERS/BILLS****B. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS****1. IPSWICH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE**

Victor Paduchak is visiting Pennsylvania State.

2. ATHLETIC SUBCOMMITTEE**3. ATHLETIC FIELD STUDY COMMITTEE**

Mr. Korb reassured Ken Swenson that he would continue to work with the Study Committee and that he felt that there is reasonable land at both Doyon and Mile Lane for future athletic fields.

4. AD HOC TOWN/SCHOOL COLLABORATION COMMITTEE

No response has come from the Superintendent's letter.

5. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

Mrs. Bauman suggests monthly meetings on Monday evenings at 7 p.m. for the next three months.

6. COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Dr. Gresh will work with Karen Cecilio regarding School Committee profiles and tonight's handouts.

7. DAY CARE CENTER SUBCOMMITTEE**8. FEOFFEEES SUBCOMMITTEE****9. LONG RANGE FINANCIAL PLANNING**

10. NORTH SHORE COALITION FOR SCHOOL FUNDING –take off the agenda.
11. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
12. POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
13. PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE
14. SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEPAC)

15. OTHER
Mrs. Roesler thanked Greg for the letter regarding the Manning Fund.

IV. CONSENT

Mr. Loeb moved, seconded by Mr. Hopping, to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:
Acceptance of the Minutes of February 1, 2012, Open Session
Acceptance of the Minutes of February 2, 2012, Open Session
UNANIMOUS.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Loeb moved, seconded by Mrs. Roesler, to adjourn at 10:40 p.m. UNANIMOUS.

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED IN OPEN SESSION:

Change in FY13 Revenue Projections
Impact of Imposing Kindergarten Fee on Chapter 70
Alternate Bell/Bus Schedule
Ipswich MS/HS Start Times
Known Budget Changes since Jan. 27
Per Pupil Expenditures – DESE