

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING
FEBRUARY 1, 2012
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM

OPEN SESSION

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Loeb called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. with the following members present: L. Dietz, H. O'Flynn, J. Bauman, B. Hopping, R. Roesler, and S. Gresh. Also present were Superintendent R. Korb, the four principals, Finance Director J. Cuff, and Student Representative V. Paduchak.

CITIZENS' QUESTIONS

A parent asked about the proposed saving in transportation and how it would affect the EDP program. Families, she said, aren't in favor of changing the bell schedule for Middle/High School because now older kids keep the young kids in tow after school. Mr. Korb responded that studies with Salter Transportation have already taken place and, on February 9, these issues will be discussed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

School Committee meets on February 2, 2012, at 7 p.m. for Middle/High School budget presentations in the Middle/High School Ensemble Room

School Committee meets on February 9, 2012, at 7 p.m., Middle/High School Ensemble Room

Commenting on the dedicated principals of Ipswich, Mrs. Bauman read an email sent from Mrs. Forster-Cahill to Middle School parents in regard to a family of 4 in Gloucester, who were former residents of Ipswich, and were homeless, and have now been accommodated by gracious business people.

A. CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION BUDGET

Mr. Korb, in presenting his FY13 budget, stated that it does not meet the requirements of the school system, cuts almost ten more teachers, and falls short of what the community expects and deserves. The budget target is \$24,265,131. He spoke against the Finance Committee's desire to include a \$300,000 sum for OPEB and the school budget cannot continue to absorb this sum even though it is reflected in the budget. This OPEB issue is statewide and must be addressed so as not to have this burden on the back of the children. He reviewed increases in the budget of 10% for health insurance (analyses are going on), considerations of negotiated salary increases, increases in Essex County retirement and SPED costs. He reviewed budgeting considerations, adjustments to meet the target, and the leadership team's unanimous consensus for FY13 budget add backs (\$318,000). He mentioned revenue options to consider which include elimination of OPEB cost, health insurance savings through changes, kindergarten fees, reduction of one instructional day, increasing Choice openings, and an override.

Ms. Cuff reviewed the planned use of outside funds (\$1,877,072) and Federal/State grants (\$707,945) and outlined the revolving funds in nine areas. She compared the SPED budgets of FY12 and FY13, an increase of \$340,823.

Mr. Korb, in referring to the health insurance increase dilemma, spoke of meetings with the IEA President, the Town Manager and Attorney Kaitz. An analysis has been received from an independent consultant, and IEA is doing its own analysis. As soon as all figures are in, the Ipswich Advisory Committee (IAC) will meet and MIIA has been informed that they must have some numbers by February 8 to compete.

Several parents in the audience asked questions pertaining to cuts and possible sources for saving money or receiving revenue. Carl Nylen asked about a long-range view to fix the budget problems for a long time. Mr. Loeb explained that a "fix", in reality, is a 3 to 5-year period, and Dr. O'Flynn commented that health insurance and teacher salaries continually are added on at an approximate rate of at least 3% per year. Dr. Gresh urged many voices from a groundswell of the community.

B. WINTHROP SCHOOL BUDGET

Mrs. McAdams expressed, with a focus on diversity, that Winthrop is above average in all categories with a 15.9% of poverty in its population and 15% of the faculty with special professional degrees. The elementaries have no set curriculum in writing (to aid in answering MCAS open response items) and with the adoption of Common Core, this is the time to address deficiencies. She addressed slides on curriculum development and instruction refinement. Winthrop's fiscal goals of maintaining reasonable class sizes have not been realized.

NESDEC has consistently underestimated enrollment numbers. SPED has increased 2.3% over a five-year period. She noted other changes in reductions. Title I Federal and State funds were instituted in 1965 to pursue the goal of equal opportunity. The enthusiasm and expertise of Winthrop classroom teachers and specialists makes the program such a success that they presented at the State conference.

Mrs. McAdams recommended three classroom teachers, a full-time curriculum support, ongoing professional development, and instructional media resources. Mrs. Bauman questioned and Mrs. McAdams answered that teachers were needed at kindergarten, and grades 3 and 4, announcing that kindergarten this past year has achieved a Grade 1 class without any IEPs. Dr. Gresh asked about the impact on Title I if kindergarten fees were put in place, an answer postponed until February 9. Mr. Hopping asked about math materials; Mrs. McAdams replied that Common Core needs have not been met and money must be spent in developing, tracking, and piloting. To Mrs. Roesler's question of how Title I money was used, Mrs. McAdams replied that a reading specialist and a math specialist are employed. While a district-wide curriculum director is needed, there is no priority at this time.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Hopping, to take the Winthrop budget under advisement. Mr. Loeb abstained from the vote. IN FAVOR – Roesler, Gresh, Bauman, Dietz, Hopping, O'Flynn.

C. DOYON BUDGET

Announced by Mr. Korb that she has received permanent status, Ms. Conley, Principal, thanked the staff and the other administrators and especially Rene Costoplus for help in completing the budget process. She had hoped for an additional teacher, but one is being eliminated instead. Third and fifth grades each need extra teachers. Her fiscal goals for FY13 are to maintain class sizes, professional development (including substitutes), establish the new positions of reading specialist and math specialist, increase instructional materials, and library staffing and books. However, the only one realized is an increase in instructional materials which comes as a result of FRIES contributions. If restoration of positions come, she needs a fifth-grade teacher. One parent commented that the current fourth grade has severe crowding issues already.

She detailed on the second year of an elementary writing curriculum at each grade level including special education. Doyon and Winthrop received kindergarten accreditation in January of 2010. MCAS scores at Doyon continue to be consistently above State average and after-school enrichment programs have great numbers of participation. Doyon has Promethean boards, new laptops and an online program for 4th and 5th graders.

In discussion of SPED numbers being transferred from elementary to Middle school, Barry Cahill suggested that an All District slide be used to depict the system's distribution. Mrs. Roesler brought up the inequities at the elementary schools and the need for flexibility and fluidity for class size. Mr. Loeb mentioned the need to look at the policy of younger siblings automatically being admitted to the elementary school of the older sibling, and Mrs. Dietz brought up the K-2, 3-5 model. Mr. Korb promised, as did Dr. Flynn, to send all the documentation out on the demographic study.

Mr. Hopping expressed great concern that outside funding resources have become tax relief for the Town. An override was passed, and the fact remains that Ipswich has a comparatively low tax rate. When fees are charged in the areas of athletics and transportation, it gives the Town a false sense of security that things are fine. It is the responsibility of the Town of Ipswich to fund their schools. Dr. Gresh opined that the OPEB obligation to support the health care costs of retirees would be immoral to deny. The point that this large fund must be paid ultimately should be taken to the Town as a long-term cost to the Town, perhaps on a ballot. Mrs. Dietz agreed with Mr. Hopping saying that, in her opinion, the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee will not invest in the schools but wish to make the children (parents) pay for public education, and the need is to convince the two Boards.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mr. Loeb, to adjourn at 10:10 p.m. UNANIMOUS.