

**IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 26, 2009
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL ENSEMBLE ROOM**

**OPEN SESSION
CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. J. Arsenault, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with the following members present: E. Traverso, B. Hopping, J. Loeb, D. Ross, and H. O'Flynn. Richard Korb, Superintendent; Joanne Cuff, Finance Department; Principals McAdams, Cooper, Forster-Cahill, and Cahill; and Matthew Roberts, Student Representative, were also present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Arsenault read the following announcements:

There will be Executive Session to discuss two strategies: in collective bargaining and in pending litigation matters

School Committee will have a regular meeting and the Public Hearing on the Proposed 2009-2010 Budget, March 5, 7 p.m., Middle/High Ensemble Room

School Committee, Finance Committee, and Board of Selectmen will meet on March 10, 7:30 p.m., location TBA

CITIZENS' QUESTIONS

RULE OF NECESSITY

Mrs. Ross moved, seconded by Mr. Traverso, to invoke the Rule of Necessity so that five members of the School Committee would not be disqualified to discuss matters pertaining to collective bargaining. UNANIMOUS.

I. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

A. FY10 BUDGET – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Korb provided updates. The deficit number is down because of decreases in insurance but it is a fluctuating number. Ipswich is due to receive \$708,000 of the stimulus package from the Governor: Title I, \$155,000, specifically dedicated and no supplanting, to be awarded in the '09 and '10 budgets, and expected to be out within the next 14 days, and IDEA (Disabilities Act), \$553,000, which would be a one-time amount falling within the parameters of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Assn.) Mr. Loeb requested that a \$5,000 sum be set aside from this new money in FY10 for a federal audit. Mr. Traverso asked if the \$371,000 increase in the Title I budget could be applied for planning a new program for Title I; Mr. Korb replied that guidelines will specify how the money can be spent, and he assured Mr. Traverso that Mrs. McAdams and he intend to look at the issue.

Ms. Negri, Town Accountant, is concerned about the Town's loss of revenue. The stimulus package is now 81% for governance and 19% for general use, including public safety. The question of whether a vote must be taken on March 5 when the public hearing takes place is being referred to Town Counsel. The budget numbers are a moving target, and Mr. Loeb asked to let the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen know that budget numbers will be tweaked, even to the three dates when Finance Committee will be

hearing the budget (March 23, 24, and 25). Mr. Howard, Finance Committee member, asked for, and Mr. Korb approved, the sending out of the budget to Finance Committee members.

Mr. Korb announced changes as a result of School Committee suggestions at budget presentations. First, administrators addressed the MCAS support issue and the district-wide suggested increase that will be \$5,000 at the Middle, High, and each of the elementary schools. Mrs. McAdams commented that she has asked for help before from the "Friends" group to augment budgeted monies for MCAS support. Dr. Cooper commented that they usually need more than \$5,000.

The second issue was with the Fine Arts Director Jerry Dolan, who referred to a Salem News article where instrumental music cuts in 4th grade last year in a nearby city have resulted in failure as a fee-based program. Cost for the 4th grade program is \$35,000.

The Policy Subcommittee is gathering data on fee-based programs and activities. There is no desire to cut bus transportation figures further.

SPED clerical time currently is 20 hours a week for each of the program managers at the elementary level and at the high school. Mrs. Forster-Cahill detailed the extremely successful model at the Middle School (keeping out-of-district costs at a minimum) where the Program Manager is very competent and performs at the highest level with recordkeeping and classroom work. Both Principal and Program Manager attend IEP meetings with parents. Dr. Cooper, explaining the philosophy of site-based management and no single best way of working this, commented that when something works, we stay with it. Doyon's Program Manager has more expertise than anybody else in the building. He reasoned that a new SPED Director will be reduced more than the current one (.6 to .5 FTE) and a new Principal is coming to Doyon as well. Mr. Korb did not recommend using the Program Managers in any other way than currently being used.

Mr. Korb announced that the administrative team (superintendent and principals) has stepped forward and accepted that there will be no increases in salaries in FY10. The SPED Director will be reduced from .6 FTE to .5. The administrative assistant position at the Middle School was discussed as a possible reduction to .6 FTE, but Mr. Korb did not advocate for the reduction.

B. FEOFFEES TRUST DISCUSSION

Mr. Richard Allen, Attorney for the School Committee, was put on speaker phone at 8:30 p.m. Four Finance Committee members, J. Fay, W. Craft, R. Howard, and M. Swan were present.

Mr. Fay feels that the membership of the Feoffees should have their primary responsibility to the children of Ipswich, that the system of self appointment was probably not the best, and that maybe the current members could submit their names for consideration.

Mr. Allen and the School Committee reviewed the suggested changes by the Finance Committee. The Committee went along with Mr. Allen's recommendation that the name of the trust not be changed (p. 1). On page 2, the Committee agreed to the changes including 7 Feoffees appointments by: the School Committee (2 persons); Board of Selectmen (2); Finance Committee (2); and Town Meeting (1). In addition, Mr. Allen added under (c) Term of Service, the standard for **cause** "that the Feoffee has engaged in a breach of fiduciary duty or has failed to carry out duties with reasonable judgment, skill, care or prudence."

The School Committee reached consensus on p.3, (d) that a representative Feoffee be required to report annually in person at a meeting of the three appointing boards, (e) conflict of interest paragraph spelled out by Mr. Allen, and (g) deletion of the tie breaking rule.

Consensus was reached on p. 4, (d) on appointing authorities and p. 6 (a) Other applicable requirements as suggested by the Finance Committee and reviewed by Mr. Allen.

Mrs. Arsenault asked for discussion of issues in the structure and makeup of the new Feoffees within the trust. Finance Committee members Fay and Howard expressed opinions that the life membership expected by the current Feoffees is not acceptable. Mr. Allen commented that the Feoffees' position is not known and there is a theme of tradition and history. Mrs. Arsenault set March 11 at 7:30 p.m. as a meeting date with the Feoffees and the attorney and the recommended negotiating team of Dr. O'Flynn, Mr. Hopping, and herself. Mr. Craft opined that, with the School Committee and Finance Committee in agreement, a strong influence can be put forth in meeting with the Attorney General and Probate Court, and a difference can be made in helping the children of Ipswich.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Hopping moved, seconded by Mrs. Ross, to go into Executive Session at 9:55 p.m. for strategy in collective bargaining and strategy in pending litigation. Roll Call Vote: Ross, Loeb, Hopping, Arsenault, O'Flynn, and Traverso.