

**FINANCE COMMITTEE/SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING
MARCH 25, 2010
TOWN HALL, MEETING ROOM A**

**OPEN SESSION
CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. J. Fay, Finance Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. with the following Finance Committee members present: R. Howard, L. Seidler, J. Skelton, M. Swan, M. Schaaf, W. Craft, R. White, and T. Wilson. School Committee members present were Chair J. Loeb, B. Hopping, L. Dietz, and E. Traverso. Superintendent R. Korb, Finance Director J. Cuff, and Principals C. Forster-Cahill, B. Cahill, and S. McAdams were present as well.

Mrs. Skelton asked if it would be possible to post a “wish list” so that private interests might be able to donate technology equipment. Mrs. McAdams said that computers for families are good, but without internet access, not as valuable.

C. SECONDARY SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mrs. Forster-Cahill, Principal, using PowerPoint, reviewed her school’s accomplishments in both physical and mental areas, in service and in academics, in activities and non-bullying, in adventures and initiatives. She and B. Cahill attend the North Shore Principals Roundtable meetings which occur every month. She reported great MCAS scores in language areas and math, comparing Ipswich to the North Shore and to the nation. She presented her budget numbers (an increase of \$134,837) and increase in FTEs (2.61) because of the SPED budget (up \$162,172) and showed cuts to the whole Spanish program, the library assistant, .5 of her assistant principal, and changes because of retirement of personnel. She lauded the co-teaching model and gave a history of the SPED numbers. She bemoaned the loss of the SRO and spelled out the grant, stimulus, and Choice monies (none in FY10), leaving \$37,000 for materials, or 39 cents per day for each student.

She mentioned her desire to get information literacy into the curriculum and the need for middle-school-age students to move; hence, physical education. She said that new computers are being built out of salvaged parts with technical assistance.

The loss of Spanish caused questions, and Mrs. Forster-Cahill said that discussions have been going on for months and will continue through the summer. She said that the Middle School has a summer program and summer camp. Because some of the children need a nurse on site, they are thinking of consolidating. Mr. Seidler asked what she saw here years from now, and Mrs. Forster-Cahill said they are treading water, hoping it will be better. Mr. Loeb said without a change in revenue it will be worse.

HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. B. Cahill, Principal, began with the building operations shared by both schools and the lower budget figure due to electricity and gas savings due to the expected wind turbine and the loss of the SRO. He praised the high school’s art awards, participation in athletics (62%), art (55%), and music (44%), the National Honor Society membership of 24 and National Merit Finalists (2) and Commendation (1). MCAS results are high in the Advanced/Proficient category for language (92%), Math (88%), and Biology (78%). He showed outside funding sources and a

net increase in his budget of \$170,858, with an increase of 1.17 FTE (behavioral specialists) and staff reductions of 1 FTE teacher, 1 FTE teacher assistant, .5 FTE library assistant, and the SRO. The athletics program is barely hanging on with current fees, gifts, and gate receipts.

Finance Committee members questioned the low textbook funding. Mr. Cahill commented on current information necessary for science and history in particular and that Ipswich is not yet ready for “Kindle”. He explained the virtual online program, teacher supervised, where 25 slots are provided for a semester in a rigorous program for students to study independently and receive a grade at the end, preference given to seniors. In addition, a student can request independent study with a faculty member who writes up a course (80 currently going on – non contractual).

Choice monies are pooled, not distributed to the school where the choice students attend. While originally 50% of the new choice money in a year stayed in the building, it has been eliminated now.

Mr. Seidler asked and Ms. Cuff answered that, while the district was below it last year, we are over the foundation budget this year. Mr. Fay asked about the PAC facility. Mr. Hopping answered that there is study currently and research in other communities for generating revenue in athletics, cafeteria, classrooms, fields, and gymnasiums.

Mr. Loeb thanked the principals for their presentations to the School Committee and revised editions to the Finance Committee. Also, he thanked Paul Bedard and Joanne Cuff for their work and expertise. He stated that the budget is one the School Committee is not proud of, it does not show growth in the 21st Century, but only survival, and the hope is that there is enough revenue to support it.

Mr. Howard questioned a Town Meeting Article in regard to the Feoffees. Mr. Hopping stated that it is critical that Town Meeting be given an update. Mr. Traverso questioned the continued association of three members of the Board of Selectmen with the current Feoffees. This whole matter will be taken up at the Tri Board meeting on April 1.

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.