

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
IPSWICH TOWN HALL, ROOM A
25 Green Street
TUESDAY, Mar. 15, 2016, 7:00 PM
Accepted June 14, 2016**

FINCOM Members in Attendance: Mitch Feldman, Chairman, Walt Hartford, Michael Schaaf, Jamie Fay, Richard Howard, and Ingrid Miles. Kevin Murphy arrived at 7:08 pm, Rob White at 7:13 pm and Janice Clements Skelton at 7:25 pm.

Call to order at 7:05 pm with 6 (six) members present. The Chair announced that ICAM was recording, and Cindy Quinn, the Minutes Secretary, was present.

Others in Attendance: .Supt. William Hart, School Committee members Carl Nysten, Hugh O’Flynn, Barry Hopping, Sarah Player, and Jen Bauman; Jean Emerson (SC Secretary), Dave Dalton (High School Principal), Dave Fabrizio (Middle School Principal), Beverly Hegedus (Dir. of Pupil Personnel), and Tracy Wagner (Dir. of Teaching and Learning). Charles Whitten arrived at 9:31 pm.

Abbreviations used: FINCOM Finance Committee, BOS Board of Selectmen, TM Town Manager, SC School Committee, FTE Full-Time Equivalent, FAQ Frequently Asked Questions, IPS Ipswich Public Schools, SHOM Successful Habits of Mind, SPED Special Education, STEAM Science Technology Engineering Art Math, STEM Science Technology Engineering Math

Documents used:

- Agenda 03/15/16 and Minutes from 3/1/16
- Ipswich FY2017 School Dept. Budget in 3-ring binder from Supt. Hart
- FinCom IPS FY17 Budget Presentation, 31 pages
- Central Office FAQ FinCom, 3 pages
- IHS page and demographics, 6 pages
- Middle School Fact Sheet, 5 pages
- Elementary Narrative March 2016 FinCom, 1 page
- Gift Funds—Quarterly Report FY 16

CITIZEN QUERIES: there were no citizen inquiries. K. Murphy arrived.

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

I.Miles moved to accept the minutes from 3/1/16, and it was seconded. The vote was 7-0.

BUDGET PRESENTATION: DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Supt. Dr. Hart started with an overview of the schools utilizing the IPS FY17 Budget Presentation. (R. White arrived.) He showed a video where teachers and students are involved in the following areas: STEAM, STEM, technology, coding, and out of classroom experiences. Some of the other areas covered were SHOM, Common Core standards, collaboration, and critical thinking skills.

In the budget, there is not a lot of deviation, but science, math, and language arts are important. (J. Clement-Skelton arrived.) There is a shift to co-teaching and licensed professional positions

with a reduction in the number of support positions. With more co-teachers, secretaries, custodians, and guidance counselors at the various levels, there is an increase of 8.5 FTE. Some teachers received training to be a co-teacher.

Supt. Hart introduced Tracy Wagner, Dir. of Teaching and Learning, who reviewed the accomplishments of the operational audit in FY16 and the tasks for FY17. She focused on the technology, teacher leader positions, curriculum time, professional development, and making curriculum connections across the district. Over time, the greatest impact will be on the standardized test scores. While the state is revising educational standards, she mentioned that Massachusetts has not adopted all of Common Core yet.

Supt. Hart explained some of the budget drivers including health insurance, which is up 10-12%, sick leave buyback, OPEB, and Medicare, but the fixed cost expenses are flat. Public grant funding has decreased, and the FinCom requested data on public and private grants.

With declining Choice enrollment, Choice funds are dropping. This does not include Choice students that are going to other schools. Supt. Hart commented that Choice decisions for next year will be made soon, and C. Nysten added it is a 2-part decision on the number of students to accept and how to use the funds. There was a conversation about the number of openings. The trend for Choice out students is that the numbers are declining, but the schools received more calls about Choice in openings.

For the Circuit Breaker account, the revenue and expended funds are one year behind the expenditures. New students moving into the district impact the expenditures immediately and Dr. Hegedus talked about the system receiving 62-75% of the cost for those who attend outside the IPS. Dr. Hart indicated that costs increase if the population changes or additional services are needed. Out of district placements add to the cost.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Director of Pupil Personnel, Dr. Beverly Hegedus, spoke about the growth in SPED expenses, but there is a small increase for FY17. There is a balance between the numbers and being equitable as well as following mandates and communicating to the parents. She explained the role of the Registered Behavior Technician, the process, and the components of the training. There is new trainer for Crisis Prevention Intervention in the schools, and those costs are down. Other new initiatives are LIPS, which is a structured phonics program and YACHT for post-secondary students to develop life skills.

For the SPED programs, she indicated that the numbers of students are stable, but due to a decrease in the overall school population, the SPED percentages are higher. With improved professionalism in the department, she is building more confidence and trust. Sped teachers are working with other teachers in the classroom, and it benefits all the students. Beverly summarized the mediation process and early intervention program. She will try to obtain information on the Birth to 3 program forecasts.

BUDGET PRESENTATION: High School

HS Principal Dave Dalton offered his three goals on innovations with pathways, increased support for all students, and the transition to a year-long school. He outlined some of the different pathways and gave an example of the trip to Costa Rica last year. After posing a problem, the students handled some real world problem solving and presented a solar project at the school, designed robotics, and developed warrant articles for plastic bags and Styrofoam.

Some computer programming, music and engineering, global studies classes and design thinking pathways have been added.

The dialogue turned to scheduling. According to Supt. Hart, the full year schedule will allow teachers to have common planning time, but Dave Dalton indicated there would be an impact on additional books and other supplies. A block schedule has fewer transitions, but there are gaps in some studies especially math and language arts. (C. Whitten arrived.)

Dave continued with budget reductions and reallocations. Discussion centered on the students who are not doing well and how the school would support them with the Response Intervention Team (RIT) and academic assistance. Sometimes a student would be pulled from an elective for a tutorial class to provide support and encourage success.

In order to deal with the social and emotional issues, the High School has budgeted for a School Adjustment Counselor position in FY17. Michael asked Dave for the dropout rates. New AP courses and training for teachers use some of the Feoffees monies. Dr. Hart noted that the AP program is a success with higher scores and additional students taking the classes. College acceptances have risen.

For the Athletic program, Dave described that gate receipts and user fees are at \$200,000, but the budget book is not showing all the numbers. There was a conversation on the cooperative user fees for sports, time for the rink, time for the pool, and other related items. Other types of fees, such as music and bus, were discussed.

There was a question about salaries. Dave maintained that 8th grade parents receive information about the colleges where the students are accepted, and he will review some of the statistics on how many seniors get into their 1st and 2nd choices. After the override, Supt. Hart outlined how the schools are in the newspaper, and there are more communications with parents. For the revolving funds, H. O'Flynn reported that they are in the file on Gift Funds—Quarterly Report FY16.

BUDGET PRESENTATION: Middle School

Dave Fabrizio, Middle School Principal, commented on the 3-year struggle with the budget cuts and its effects on the learning environment. Next, he recapped the changes and collaborations, which lead to new ways of learning such as Skyping with a scientist in the Arctic. He updated the committee on some of the improved project assistance classes, the intervention program (RTI), co-teaching, and professional development.

In response to a question about the transition from Middle to High School, Dave remarked about the enhanced plan where both schools are working on the transition. Tracy Wagner explained how teachers at both levels are writing curriculum to provide better alignment. In fact, teachers at all levels are working on the curriculum. Dave confirmed that Tracy is providing support as the curriculum leader throughout the system and connections with the staff.

He detailed his survey results of the eighth graders who left the system. Many of those were looking for a trade or a more rigorous program. During the past year, the schools have spent the time to build more demanding curriculum units, and the Supt. went on to say how the challenge is to inform people about this.

At the Middle School, there is three years of data on the students who do not do well. Dave says the staff identifies some students immediately, and he hopes to track the data better next year.

Working with them socially and emotionally helps to bring them along, so they can have a chance. The RTI program is not about the content, and Tracy added that curriculum pieces do not work so well for a struggling student.

NEW BUSINESS

Mitch received a correspondence about the minutes of the Long Range Financial Planning committee. The PowerPoint format may qualify as minutes if L. Seidler has the date, the attendees, a summary of what happened, etc. Town Counsel has approved them.

Michael, the FinCom representative to the Electric Light Dept. (ELD) subcommittee, has filed a potential conflict of interest document because he owns a solar installation. When the ELD was discussing rates, he did not participate.

Kevin informed the FinCom that the bids for the turf field have come in, and the work could begin in May. The contract is not signed yet.

M. Schaaf moved, and R. White seconded, to adjourn at 10:53 pm. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by

Cynthia D. Quinn, Minutes Secretary