

**TRI-BOARD MEETING
FINANCE COMMITTEE, BOARD OF SELECTMEN, SCHOOL COMMITTEE
IPSWICH TOWN HALL, ROOM A
25 Green Street
THURSDAY, May 12, 2016, 7:00 PM
Accepted by 10/3/2106**

FinCom Members in Attendance: Mitch Feldman, Kevin Murphy, Walt Hartford, Jamie Fay, Michael Schaaf, Rob White, and Richard Howard. Ingrid Miles and Janice Clements Skelton were absent.

BOS Attending: Bill Craft, Nishan Mootafian, Ed Rauscher, Charlie Surpitski, and Judy Field.

School Committee Members in Attendance: Carl Nylén, Jennifer Bauman, Sarah Player, Feruza Krason, and Chub Whitten. Hugh O’Flynn and Barry Hopping were absent.

School Building Committee: Chub Whitten, Sara Player, Nishan Mootafian, and Kevin Murphy.

M. Feldman called the meeting to order at 7:11 pm with 17 (seventeen) members present. ICAM was recording the meeting.

Other Officials in Attendance: Town Manager Robin Crosbie

Other Guests: Paul Queenie (OPM PMA Consultants)

Abbreviations used: FINCOM Finance Committee, BOS Board of Selectmen, TM Town Manager, SC School Committee, ATM Annual Town Meeting, CMRi Construction Methods at Risk, FY Fiscal Year, MSBA Massachusetts School Building Authority, OPM Owner’s Project Manager, SBC School Building Committee, and STM Special Town Meeting,.

Documents used:

- Agenda 05/12/16
- PowerPoint from K. Murphy of the SBC.
- PowerPoint from J. Fay.

CITIZEN’S QUERIES

A citizen wanted the group to think about the site decision and was concerned about the schools obtaining enough support from the community.

REVIEW OF BUILDING COST AND IMPACT ON TAXES

Kevin Murphy presented the six (6) possible projects, the building costs and what the MSBA wants to know. Using his PowerPoint slides, he went through Winthrop with 420 students, Winthrop with 775, Bialek with 490, Bialek with 775, Doyon with 775, and Doyon with 775 plus a land purchase.

He went over the construction methods, cost estimates, and separate construction sites with access roads. When construction happens very close to a school, they would use construction Methods at Risk or CMRi for both the Winthrop and Doyon (without the extra land). This would

involve extra costs, and the contractor would collaborate with the OPM and the owner to design this.

Paul Queenie, the OPM, explained the process for having the contractor on board before construction begins in order to help resolve issues and define the risks. Kevin updated some of the estimates from the previous meeting containing the Doyon numbers with and without the land purchase, the gas line, and various options at each site.

There was a discussion on the status of the land near the Doyon School, and the Town Planner will be meeting with Mr. Harris to go over terms. Four plans have been submitted to the MSBA; all of them were for 775 students for Winthrop, Bialek, Doyon, and Doyon extended. The Bialek figures included \$1.5 million for fields.

Next was the tax impact for the various choices with a 30-year bond beginning as the High School/Middle School bond ends. Another chart showed the Doyon option with the costs estimates for just repair, an addition, and a new building. Another chart had the present day value of the construction costs. The next graph displayed the effect on the existing property tax rate and the proposed school-exempt bond through FY 26. There were some bumps when a new bond begins and some downward trends when some other bonds retired.

Construction would start in FY19 and 20, but the first bond does not appear until FY21. If the Doyon School were rebuilt separately, then some of the spikes would be later. There were some other diagrams to demonstrate the tax impact for 20, 25, or 30-year bonds. As part of the description, the Doyon classrooms would be 30 square feet larger and the storage spaces would be outside the classroom. By working on the Doyon later, Kevin described how this would add to the costs, possible lessen the reimbursement from the State, and escalate construction costs. The information was based on 23 students in a class. There was a conversation about state reimbursement and the Doyon remodel.

Robin Crosbie pointed out that some building repair monies are in the capital budget within the levy limits, but it is less than \$500,000. Some items would bring the Doyon up to code and other would replace a roof or gym floor. This would not cover a major renovation.

Jamie Fay wanted to have a conversation about how people view the options and to highlight the issues. After the SBC examined the school building project for 18 months, he noted that they have gone in a different direction from the original plan to replace the Winthrop. Using his PowerPoint, he reviewed the advantages and challenges at each site and the 20-year financial plan.

He suggested the one-school option of 775 students at Doyon. Another choice was new construction at the Winthrop and some repairs to the Doyon in order to keep two schools. He went over the costs and the Town's share for those two options and the cost per household for 20 years. Not only are there the construction figures, one would also consider the operating costs, maintenance and capital plans for the school. Other factors included busing costs at the Doyon, loss of Title I monies, and some other items. Carl Nysten made it clear that the Title I might shift to a different school.

There were more comparisons of Winthrop and Doyon schools on the debt service, operating costs, and combined figures, which did not account for rebuilding the Doyon in the future. Jamie went over some of the non-financial concerns such as walking, busing, reusing the Winthrop as a

public safety area, equity for students and taxpayers, and quality education. Another concern would be the override.

The architect says there are many issues at the Doyon but some renovations are needed to address accessibility issues, storage spaces, and the cafeteria. Chub believes Winthrop plan for 420 students is a good choice, but for a larger number of students, Bialek Park would be best. Bialek would also provide a bigger community meeting space. If the new school fails, then the idea of a public safety building fails.

Even with putting \$700,000 into Doyon, it might fix some things, but it does not buy the educational items. Town Manager, Robin Crosbie, mentioned that the Town is making improvements to accommodate technology, but it is not redoing it. She listed the items on the capital plan.

Richard summarized the comments of the SBC for the past several years, the advantages, disadvantages, the playgrounds, the playing fields, and asked for a reconsideration of the Winthrop site. A parent brought up the social context of networking with students and parents and their involvement with the school. Dan MacAlpine from the Ipswich Chronicle noted some concerns about the \$700,000 over three years for Doyon when it might cost millions. Another issue is what will happen at Doyon when they need to be the new school versus building one bigger school now.

The capital plan would deal with accessibility matters. Jen Bauman disagreed with some of the points from Jamie's remarks and indicated out that someone moving to Ipswich would want a state-of-the-art school over one that is 60 or more years old. A few years ago, the School Committee did a SOI (Statement of Interest), and Sarah discussed some of the problems with the elementary schools. This is an opportunity to fix elementary education. In 10 or 15 years, there would be increased costs to build a new Doyon, and the SC needs to look at one new school now.

Wanting two schools, Rob supported a new Winthrop with grades 4 and 5 at the Doyon. There was a discussion about passing the one larger school at Town Meeting, the Conservation Commission, and Statehouse followed by a conversation about the stress caused by more transitions. Bill Craft spoke about attending many meetings where there has been little opportunity to ask questions about the issues and he gave some history on the SBC.

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON GRADE CONFIGURATION

The dialogue changed to the current SBC and how the MSBA requested the committee consider both elementary schools. While preferring neighborhood schools, the SBC kept hearing about equity and fairness for the students. Bialek Park is the largest green space in the center of town, which could be a problem. Some believed that building at Doyon, even with the land purchase, would be going in the wrong direction, and the group is looking at the various factors that would work for Town Meeting. The conversation turned to what is available downtown, having complete research, and looking at other sites. If the schools are combined, then the other location could have fields.

Michael moved the FinCom support the SC decision to build one school for 775 students.

Richard seconded the motion. During the discussion, the favorable reasons are the smaller cost over time, using one site for public safety purposes, selling one site if needed, and capitalizing on the State reimbursement. Further dialogue was concerned with choosing the site, building consensus, and talking about traffic, open space, legislation, and other factors. The vote was 4-3

in favor of the motion with Walt, Michael, Mitch, and Kevin in favor, while Richard, Jamie, and Rob were opposed.

Richard continued with concerns about keeping the school downtown with an enrollment of 490, which would make a better educational model. The Town cannot afford a larger school now. While the two schools are only two miles apart, Sarah went on to say how the culture begins once one enters a school, and Carl mentioned how Doyon parents have come to meetings. The Town has proved it can have successful schools, but Carl noted that the schools could consolidate and have one facility to love.

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON SITE OPTIONS

At this time, Mitch announced that it would not be helpful to vote on a site while the SBC is still gathering information. The process, according to Carl, is to ask for opinions from the boards. Nishan preferred two schools with a different configuration, but would back the one school. One parent encouraged the SC to work on the Winthrop. Looking at \$60 million cost for about 30 years or more, Ed had a problem with the switch from doing just the Winthrop to one larger school. The Town could make repairs to Doyon, and Bialek Park is not the right site. For financial reasons, he would make a motion at the BOS meeting to support building one school for 420 students.

Providing some personal history on his educational career in the Ipswich schools, Charlie believes the teacher made the biggest impact. He was worried about switching to a larger school and utilizing Bialek Park. Bill recommended a smaller school considering the override and turf project. The location and size of the school are not independent of each other, and it would not be easy to sell this to the voters. Then there are the traffic and congestion problems. The BOS would probably back the larger elementary school if all other matters have been resolved.

Richard moved to only support the new school in the downtown area. There was no second, and the dialogue continued with a reminder that the State suggested building one larger school. Having more information on the Doyon School problems would be helpful. The Town needs time to have more discussion in order to arrive at the best decision. Even though a small percentage of parents have children in school, many more benefit from a new building, and the boards have to sell the idea to everyone. It will be the people and not the building that is important.

NEW BUSINESS: no new business

It was moved to adjourn at 10:00 pm. It was seconded, and the vote was unanimous for the FinCom, SC, and BOS.

Respectfully submitted by

Cynthia D. Quinn, Minutes Secretary