

IPSWICH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Meeting of Monday, January 22, 2018
Ipswich Town Hall, 25 Green Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18 - 25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Monday, January 22, 2018 at 7:00 pm in Meeting Room A.

With a quorum present, William Craft called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm

Selectmen present: William Craft, Chair; Nishan Mootafian, Vice-Chair; Linda Alexson, Edward Rauscher; William Whitmore

Also present: Robin Crosbie, Town Manager; Alexys Parsons, Recording Secretary

Not present:

Abbreviations used: BOS - Board of Selectmen; TM - Town Manager

Public Information: Agenda; Meeting Packet

Welcome / Announcements

Mr. Craft announced the passing of Stella Gurynski Smith who sadly passed away right before her 100th birthday. Ms. was that last survivor of the Manning School in Ipswich and she was also a member of the Council on Aging.

The Tri-Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 24, 2018.

Citizen Queries:

None.

Update from School Building Committee

Sarah Player, School Committee and Kevin Murphy, School Building Committee were present to update the BOS on the School Building project. Ms. Player stated that recent visioning meetings have been focusing on Sustainability, Safety and Security, Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing, Exterior Design and Outdoor Materials and Special Education. The design to include some of the unique components of Ipswich and incorporate input from staff and faculty as well as community members on the diversity and history. Mr. Murphy discussed a playground would be installed that was more grade-specific to separate the different ages per request of the teachers and assessing different areas of pick up and drop off and parking around the entire building. A parent pavilion will be added in the front of the building and bio-retention basins to create a barrier/moat to prevent people from looking into windows to act as a passive security measure and bus pick up and drop off will be separate from the parent pick up and drop off location. In relation to outdoor materials, the initial perspective is to change the exterior materials to reflect a more "Ipswich" look by utilizing stone, wood and other contextual materials like the stone bridge in Ipswich that will be durable and cost effective. In regards to the entrance, plans show assessing the over-hang with a lower roofline for a more welcoming feel with a possible curve entry. Ms. Player stated that they are trying to get an idea of materials so that they can calculate a baseline of cost to stay in budget while taking in the history of Ipswich and put it into a building that will resemble the next 50 years while incorporating the last hundreds of years of history. The scale of the project has been dropped from 30 feet to 18 feet to minimize the overpowering of a large building. Designated workspaces have been created for hands on education where children can draw and build in 3D and these spaces could possibly bring back adult education. It was decided to use propane for fuel source and there will be a propane field that will be located away from the building. Propane was chosen over geothermal due to the cost being about \$2.4 million more, plus maintenance and it was decided to be too costly. It was noted that the HVAC system is quiet, efficient and has good climate control with very low air movement with great indoor air quality that is standard in most school systems.

Sustainability elements consist of waterless urinals, low flow toilets, bio-retention basins and outdoor learning with gardens (growing of food and direct access to the nearby woodlands). Mr. Whitmore inquired what the plan for the electric is, and if they are planning to go solar and in response Mr. Murphy stated that the ELD has been apart since day one and the roof will be PV ready so that we could transition to solar if needed that could possibly be an energy source for the Town and school. Mr. Rauscher inquired about timing and scope of the project and in response, Mr. Murphy stated that they would need until after May to have full design and layouts. Next steps include a meeting scheduled on Wednesday, January 22, 2018, submitting the Special Education design specifics to MSBA for approval (as a special approval through DESE (department of elementary and secondary education) is required), working with all project managers, special educators, and Dr. Blake (superintendent) and is currently collecting more information for design to determine and approve the Special Education design, send current designs to cost estimates for the interior designs, deciding on the total budget and determine who pays what (Town and MSBA).

Mr. Craft inquired if the architects are savvy enough to not low-ball presentations and utilize high cost and if they are working within Town's budget with these designs and in response, Mr. Murphy stated that yes, they are staying within Town's budget and that all materials are highly maintainable and close to indestructible. Ms. Alexson inquired if the SBC has an inclusive cost projection and in response Mr. Murphy stated that total projected cost is \$68 million. It was noted the Town's obligation would be 52%-53% and that the reimbursement from MSBA is now a pay-as-you-go system. When submitting the bills within 60 days of receipt, MSBA is bonded outside of the Town and payment for the new school will not take place until after the middle and high school are paid off and the new school building project to start payment in 2021.

Mr. Murphy stated that this is a community project and the more participation and input from the community the better. It has the potential to add growth and bring other businesses to Town. Mr. Whitmore inquired if the Town can get a major public meeting with a large scale information on a night prior to Town Meeting and in response, Ms. Player stated that Dr. Blake made a presentation about this at a Rotary meeting and is trying to present and execute on a smaller scale. SC is hosting open houses with the new schools as well as having a Q&A at the IPAC meeting a few weeks prior to the Town Meeting. It was suggested that the BOS have a meeting in the elementary school and also schedule tours so that people can see the condition of the current building. Ms. Alexson mentioned utilizing ICAM for virtual tours for people that may not be able to make it down to the schools, which has been brought up and will most likely be posted to the Town's website for viewing.

Interview of Interim Town Manager Candidate(s)

Sarah Johnson, Finance Director, was present to be interviewed by the BOS for the interim TM position. Ms. Johnson stated that there needed to be a correction in her resume as she was not Valedictorian of her college but had collaborated with all graduates who had High Honors. Ms. Johnson stated that her studies in school focused on five main courses including strategic leadership, strategic management, municipal finances, legal, and Human Resources and has twenty years of municipal finance experience mostly in the Weston area and the North Shore. Ms. Johnson noted that she has a good network of finance, vendors, leadership and various other resources to turn to if she were to have any questions. Ms. Johnson has strong communication skills and relationships with multiple board members, she is energetic and spent many hours in many communities and splitting hours between offices when possible. Ms. Johnson noted that she is already present on the property because of her other position at Town Hall and should something arise she could be easily contacted. Ms. Johnson noted that she is very happy with her finance director position and wants to help in the interim position and has volunteered to work diligently with other candidate if she is not selected for the role.

Ms. Alexson noted that this time of year is the busiest for Ms. Johnson at the finance office and inquired how many hours would she have to dedicate to the interim TM position and in response, Ms. Johnson stated that realistically, she could dedicate another twenty hours per week. Ms. Crosbie stated that the job of the interim is to keep the wheels moving, as the new TM will be responsible for implementing changes and working with the BOS. Mr. Rauscher asked Ms. Johnson if she was drafted to apply for this position and in response, Ms. Johnson stated that Mr. Engle approached her for interim TM role. Mr. Whitmore stated that at the Mass Municipal Conference (MMC), he asked the consultant (Mr. Lynch) about his take on interim TM and advice given to Mr. Whitmore from Mr. Lynch includes to either hire one of the department heads or look for someone with experience in management of another town that could serve as a

potential substitute down the road after a permanent hire has been made and Mr. Lynch also mentioned the staff needs to be able to operate on a shortfall and not always just run and fill the void if short staffed.

Mr. Rauscher recommends voting against the appointment of Ms. Johnson in fear of the timing with budget season that could significantly impact her departments. Mr. Mootafian stated that Ms. Johnson has done a great job as the CFO and is a model employee for the Town but agrees with Mr. Rauscher as there is so much going on between now and May with the school and other budget items and noted that the Board could be underestimating the issues that could affect the finance department. Mr. Rauscher stated that the Board has not discussed term for the interim TM and recommends trying to pick a type of guideline for a timeline (i.e. 2 months, 3 months, etc.). Mr. Craft noted that the Board has a team in place that should be able to support this exercise and would be good for the Town to see a potential leader being elevated and would vote in favor of Ms. Johnson. Ms. Alexson mentioned that she has not worked with Ms. Johnson and has concern with adding twenty hours to her work week with an unknown timeline is an issue. Mr. Rauscher stated that the two motions made last week were premature as neither candidate had been interviewed and the public should have an opportunity to view candidates as well.

Vote: Ms. Alexson moved, and it was seconded to invite Mr. Engel to the next meeting for a formal interview. The motion passed 3-2.

Mr. Craft stated that Ms. Johnson is a viable candidate in which the Town will benefit from her in the interim position. Phil Goguen, Kingfisher Road, agrees with the Chairman about Ms. Johnson as she operates at a high level and is extremely qualified and stated that she should not be penalized the opportunity because of a timing issue with the Town Meeting and budget season upon us and would like to see her as the TM and finance director and she should have an assistant under her doing the grunt work and recommends the BOS should consider her as the TM.

Vote: Mr. Whitmore moved, and it was seconded to also invite for interviews, the two outside interim TM candidates suggested by the consultant. Motion failed for a lack of a second.

FY19 Budget Overview Presentation:

Ms. Crosbie and Sarah Johnson, Finance Director were present to discuss the proposed budget. The three main objectives of the new budget include: Maintain Existing Service Levels (i.e. keeping employees, maintaining drain cleaning and current services), Meet Mandated and Contractual Costs and Fund Increased Solid Waste and Contractual Costs.

Concerning Maintaining Existing Service Levels, it was noted that there was a \$99,002 deficit that included adding another DPW worker and 60% of the \$99,002 is labor and the balance includes benefits, insurance, ongoing costs, and software maintenance. Ms. Johnson stated that she has met with some departments about trying to find some cuts.

Meet Mandated and Contractual Costs includes labor settlements and benefits.

Funds Increased Solid Waste and Recycling Costs includes a \$235,406 net increase as this is a cost the Town is incurring because of China closing its borders to accepting recycling waste. The Town is still utilizing JRM as they are the lowest estimate and was noted that this waste issue is going to only get worse before it gets better. Ms. Crosbie stated that she is waiting on the Town's insurers to come back with the final insurance numbers and are anticipating a 9.5% increase.

FY 2019 Revenue Highlights include: overall increase in available revenue (\$1,979,585) as the Town is expecting less revenue in building permits and new growth because there aren't any big projects coming up this year as the projected revenue is \$23 million and the Town only received \$21 million this past year. The estimated increase in state aid is \$0.00 in Budget (Governor will propose a 3.5% UGGA (Unrestricted General Government Aid) and 2.5% Chapter 70 – actual to be appropriated after state budget is adopted).

Budget narrative includes: what we do overall, including data about each functional category, what we did/will do in Fiscal Year 2018 and what we will do in Fiscal Year 2019 and lastly, including highlights of budget challenges and changes. Major Fund and Reserve Balances: 2018 - Free Cash (\$1,686,753), Stabilization Fund (\$1,750,049), OPEB (\$3,864,964), Waste/Water (\$866,249), Water (\$566,262), Open Space (\$149,489), Capital Stabilization (\$176,093) and Education Stabilization (\$2,008,861). Mr. Mootafian inquired where the Open Space line item increase come from and in response, Ms. Crosbie stated that there was a gap in employment so the revenues were not drawn down and the revenues come from a cell phone tower hotel and motel taxes.

General Government: Increase in elections and registration for state mandated early voting. This is about \$16,000 for early voting (for primaries and the state election) and the state legislators are currently working on a bill that may provide aid for this. Public Works is a big focus of most of the Town's issues that includes maintaining pavement management plan and sidewalk improvement plan as last year the Town put \$55,000 into sidewalks and in 2016 the Town put \$150,000 into the pavement management plan. Fuel prices adjusted downward to reflect trends. Funds to replace trees (Tree Health Survey Plan) which is a \$4,000 budget and Ms. Crosbie mentioned to Rick Clarke that she will find another \$3,000 to aid this program. The pay-as-you-throw plan to cover increased costs and lost recycling revenue because of the changes in China and how our waste contract ends June on 30th and the Town will need to make up the revenue not received as the Town is losing \$10 per ton of reimbursement. Recommended option to address waste issue is Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) which include an average household increase per year of \$60 including, \$2.00 per bag, \$10 bulky item pickup. This is concluded as fair as households will only pay for what they dispose of and this should encourages waste reduction. General funds still subsidizes \$606,255 of the costs (tax revenue subsidizes most of this) but Mr. Rauscher would like to address these numbers sooner than later with the TM and Finance Director. Benefits and Other items include the General Fund that has an estimated increase in health rates of 9.5% (not final yet as the TM is awaiting the Town's insurer's final numbers), worker compensation is up 15% overall, due to claims history (based on a number of claims by the Town, utilities and the schools), retirement assessment increased by 6.9% and lastly the decrease in debt service. Other budget items include: OPEB funding within general fund budget at \$70,500, Capital Stabilization fund within general fund at \$165,025 and will appear as articles on the warrant.

In summary, the proposed General Fund Town budget is presented upon conservative revenue estimates and no new state aid. Funding includes OPEB and Capital to appear as warrant articles as these are now in the operating budget and increase in solid waste and recycling to be covered by a PAYT plan.

Discussion of Stipends:

Ms. Crosbie presented to the Board, information concerning stipends. It was noted that stipends were created between 2008 and 2011 and were created because raises were not being offered during that time. Mr. Rauscher requested the Board include his email full of questions about the different stipends to avoid outside discussions (must be included in tonight's packet and future packets).

Mr. Rauscher moved and it was seconded to add Mr. Rauscher's emails in tonight's packet. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Craft inquired if any stipends were added since Ms. Crosbie started as TM and it was noted that the assistant animal control officer received stipends for being on call on the weekends and also the retirement stipend was added as well. Mr. Rauscher mentioned that in his email, he inquired if there are any other discretionary spending/payments for directors of departments and in response, Ms. Crosbie stated that there were salary adjustments when comparing to comparable positions in other towns and that there is no reason for a stipend unless it is above and beyond the employees job description. It was inquired if there are there "slush funds" that were used to give an additional payment over the past 18 months, and Ms. Crosbie responded that only when adjusting someone's salary in between contracts those funds would be used. For example, a member of the council on aging got her master's degree and is currently supervising volunteers and bringing in additional services so it was asked to adjust her pay. Ms. Alexson inquired from last year's stipend list about the following: Chief records access officer and the septic management program in 2017, Tax title stipend (which has not been voted on by the BOS) and also inquired what the average percentage has been on tax foreclosures and in response, Ms. Crosbie stated that last time, it was 1% of a sale. Ms. Alexson stated the Board

needs to decide on Northridge Road as it is going to auction in the spring and suggested the BOS should invite the treasurer collector to come in and discuss this stipend. Mr. Mootafian stated that if department heads are giving away any kind of fund (stipend, raise etc.), the BOS should be informed. It was noted that the Public Safety Director was a stipend position for a while and most stipends come from a union negotiation or otherwise an established salary that has already been created to prevent from stipends down the road. It was noted that hourly workers should not be entitled to stipends because their overtime will affect this in calculating their stipends and that wages and stipends are what overtime is based upon and in the end, the Town will end up paying more when adding a COLA which is another reason to get rid of stipends. Ms. Crosbie stated that the stipends came when raises were not being offered and finding away to manage your employment and COLA.

Review of Draft BOS Goals:

Mr. Craft stated that he went thought and tried to populate and update the BOS goals and made modifications including:

1.E: moving the Appointment of Interim TM from 1/22 to 1/29.

Modification to goal #5 by adding the Great Marsh Costal Adaptation Plan.

Added Hazard Mitigation Plan by Task Force as it should be included on the list.

Voted to harmonize parking patterns by spring. Police Chief Nikas is currently working on plans.

Ms. Alexson stated she attended the MMC workshop on Managing Downtown Parking and noted that she learned great ideas on parking plans and mentioned that certain towns had already performed this by conducting studies and noted that there are possible grants for these studies. Ms. Alexson to provide more information.

Mr. Craft stated that he is getting information on the Strategic Plan/Town Development Plan and believes this should be kept on the front burner to solve before the new TM is selected. Ms. Crosbie stated that there is currently \$30,000 set aside for Phase 1. For total expenses (including the schools) will be approximately \$70,000. Mr. Mootafian believes that this is the time to perform this.

Ms. Alexson stated that in the Town's Charter, that annual Town Meeting is required to be on a Tuesday but would still like to propose a Saturday meeting in the fall, so that all residents can attend if they would like to. Mr. Craft suggested that Ms. Alexson speak with the Town Moderator as he has the authority.

Ms. Alexson stated that under the "Quarterly Updates from Departments", that Pony Express should be removed from that list, as it is a committee rather than a department.

Ms. Alexson suggests to move all cash operations to the Treasurer's Office for one location in Town Hall where all the money is coming into the Town is handled instead of other departments/locations. Mr. Craft suggests to table this conversation until more information is gathered.

Town Manager's Report

Ms. Crosbie's last day will be February 2, 2018.

Ms. Crosbie attended the MMA Conference last weekend.

New Business:

Ms. Alexson and Mr. Whitmore attended the MMA Conference this past weekend. Ms. Alexson and Mr. Whitmore attended workshops covering topics such as Marijuana Regulations, Chart of Accounts (accounting), Managing Down Town Parking, Economic Development, Hiring A New Town Manager and Social Media Do's and Don'ts.

Mr. Whitmore suggested to the Board about weekly BOS meetings. Mr. Whitmore proposed to have one meeting full of presentations and a separate meeting for voting. Mr. Whitmore states that he believed that this could reduce the timing of BOS meetings.

Old Business:

None.

Miscellaneous and Correspondence:

None.

Ms. Alexson moved, and it was seconded to adjourn at 9:38 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

Alexys Parsons
02.05.18