

Town of Ipswich
Special Town Meeting
Tuesday - June 27, 2017 - 7:00 PM
WARRANT

ESSEX, ss

To the Constable of the Town of Ipswich in said County:

GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify the inhabitants of the Town of Ipswich qualified to vote in Town affairs to meet in the Performing Arts Center of the IPSWICH MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL, 134 High Street in said Ipswich, on TUESDAY, THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF JUNE, 2017, at 7:00 o'clock in the evening, then and there to act on the following articles, viz:

ARTICLE 1 – Feasibility Study Funding for the Combined Elementary School Requested By: School Building Committee

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate or transfer from available funds, including, without limitation, the Stabilization Fund, an amount of money to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee for the purpose of paying additional costs of a feasibility study for the potential replacement, renovation or repair of the Winthrop Elementary School currently located at 65 Central Street in Ipswich, including study and schematic design for a potential consolidated elementary school at the Paul F. Doyon Memorial School site on Linebrook Road, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, for which feasibility study the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in connection with the feasibility study in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town, or take any action relative thereto.

Summary: The Town is requesting \$250,000 to complete additional engineering and site evaluations relative to locating a new elementary school at the Doyon.

The School Building Committee (SBC) has spent the last several months studying the Winthrop site for the Elementary School Project. While the Winthrop site is a viable option, there have been continued difficulties with off-site parking and the scale of the building to the site. Recently between the results of Town Meeting and comments from the Board of Selectman and Finance Committee at an April 2017 Tri-Board Meeting, the School Committee has voted to locate the Elementary School project at the Doyon site.

The Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) for the Winthrop site was submitted and approved by the MSBA in January 2017. When the SBC stopped the project prior to Town Meeting, the Schematic Design was approximately 50% complete and was scheduled to be submitted to the MSBA in June 2017. The Owner's project manager, PMA contacted the MSBA to discuss changing sites. The MSBA will require a revised PSR be submitted indicating that Doyon is the new site. Once the PSR is submitted, the Schematic Design can continue. The MSBA requires a site survey and a Phase Two Environmental Study for Doyon be included in the revised PSR.

When the SBC stopped the design process, there was approximately \$143,000 remaining in the original contract with the architectural design team. The estimated costs for the Doyon survey is \$26,950 and the estimated Phase Two Environmental Study costs is \$23,640. The SBC is proposing to use the \$146,730 remaining for the added Doyon site survey, the added Phase Two study and submission of the revised PSR to the MSBA. Additional monies are required to revise the Schematic Design documents for the Doyon site. The majority of work is associated with the required new site plans, utility plans and revising the proposed building for the Doyon site. The estimated additional service costs to complete the Schematic Design for the Doyon site is \$199,590. The SBC is recommending that a 25% contingency be included as a safety measure since the proposed new fees are estimates. This requires a 2/3 majority vote to appropriate from stabilization.

To see if Town Meeting will recommend that the School Committee amend its proposal to the Massachusetts School Building Authority to build a school on the Winthrop site, no greater than 490 students, and identify and commit funding to refurbish the Doyon School.

Summary:

Two Schools, One Strong Community

On May 30, 2017 the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) informed Town officials that there is the opportunity to reconsider a two-school configuration at “no harm” to the town or the application process. The School Committee and superintendent should take full advantage of this opportunity by immediately submitting a new Doyon Statement of Interest to the MSBA. Taking decisive action at this critical juncture will ensure that the Town receives an MSBA grant that will pay for approximately 45% of the cost to rebuild the Doyon neighborhood school for 355 K-5 students.

We propose a two-phased approach to rebuilding both of our exceptional neighborhood schools.

Phase 1 - Concurrent improvement to Winthrop and Doyon neighborhood schools

- Complete the current MSBA grant process by rebuilding a 420-490 student school on the Winthrop site. This creates immediate, positive impact on Doyon by relieving its overcrowding and reducing its student enrollment to 355.
- Complete capital expenditures for Doyon’s immediate needs and begin planning Doyon’s rebuild with a future MSBA grant that will cover an estimated 45% of the project’s cost.

Phase 2 – Complete the MSBA grant process for Doyon and preserve it as a neighborhood school with an enrollment of roughly 355 students

Under this plan both schools will receive improvements in a systematic, multi-phased approach that offers less immediate financial burden to the taxpayer. More than 20 towns have received funding from the state for either new construction or complete renovation projects on two schools in the same district within five years of each other, many within one to two years. State funding decisions are based on the structural and environmental needs of the buildings, not on whether a town has already received funding for a project. This Citizen's Petition is being introduced as a result of the School Committee's elimination of a plan for a centrally located, consolidated school for 775 students. Citizens were not informed until a School Committee meeting in late May that the school would not be built at a central location, a criterion that had existed from the start of the project.

Why are two neighborhood schools right for Ipswich?

Right for our town—politically and financially feasible

- Passing a large combined elementary school with a 2/3 super majority vote is very difficult. The most recent town to attempt it, Amherst, voted the project down three times and is now out of the MSBA process. With staunch opposition to all of the proposed sites for a single school, Ipswich faces probable failure at Town Meeting and the polls. We aim to provide an alternative option that is passable at the polls.
- A two-step, multi-phased project will result in a smaller immediate tax increase. Increases would be spread out over the course of the project rather than being assessed all at once.
- The large combined school model will mean the end of the culture at both Doyon and Winthrop which has taken years to cultivate. Removing a school from a central location in town is to remove an essential source of charm, character and vitality from the town.

Right for our students—equitable and effective

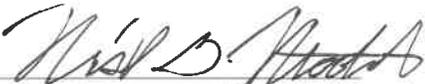
- Students are more successful in small schools. A smaller grade-level group with multiple-grade continuity provides students with a small community of diverse classmates in which students, families, teachers and administrators get to know a relatively small group deeply over time. This builds a sense of familiarity, security, understanding and acceptance.
- Academic achievement of students with learning disabilities, and of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, are disproportionately harmed by increases in school size. The large proposed school is likely to have measurably negative effects on the experience of students within those populations. A smaller school creates greater equity for these students.
- Forty percent of Ipswich students live within one mile of downtown, and many depend on a centrally located school for accessibility: parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, after school activities, social and community-building activities, meetings with specialists and a host of other events that strengthens the connection between home and school. These students too deserve a fair chance at success and a happy elementary experience. A smaller school creates greater equity for these students. Ipswich is a very large town geographically and locating a single school on one end of town would significantly affect travel time for many students on the other end, which would in turn impact quality family time.

And you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting at least one attested copy in each precinct in the Town at least 14 days prior to the time for holding said meeting in a newspaper published in, or having a general circulation in, the Town of Ipswich.

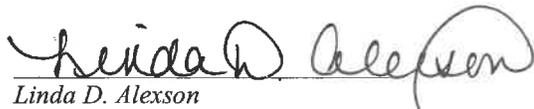
Given unto our hands this 8th day of June in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Seventeen.

TOWN OF IPSWICH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

William M. Craft, Chairman



Nishan D. Mootafian, Vice Chairman



Linda D. Alexson



William D. Whitmore

Edward B. Rauscher