

Ipswich School Committee

Thursday, August 22, 2024

MS/HS Ensemble Room

134 High Street, Ipswich

7:00 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

DF called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM

Present: Kate Eliot (KE) Mat Perry (MP)
 Sasha Sopic (SS) Dianna Freehan (DF)
 Jen Donahue (JD) Jenny Connolly (JC)

Also Present: Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools (BB)
 Tom Markham, Director of Finance and Operations (TM)
 Charlie Quimby, High School Student Representative (CQ)

2. Reading of the District Mission Statement

CQ read the district mission statement.

3. Announcements

- The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 5th at 7:00 PM in the MS/HS Ensemble Room.
- The Elementary School Building Project Working Group is meeting at 5:30 PM in the MS/HS Guidance Conference Room on Wednesday, August 28th.
- Opening Day for all staff is Monday, August 26th.
- School begins for all students in grades 1-12 on Wednesday, August 28th.
- Kindergarten begins on Tuesday, September 3rd.
- There is no school on Friday, August 30th.

4. Special Acknowledgements

The new Chair and Vice Chair were welcomed.

5. Public Comments¹

DF began by reading the statement on public comments located at the bottom of the School Committee agenda.

Sarah, *Ipswich resident*: Encouraged the School Committee and community to think positively about NORESKO.

6. High School Student Representative Report

Students are prepping for the beginning of the school year. CQ asked about the status of the Yellowstone field trip that was approved by the School Committee, but not funded through a Paine Grant.

7. Presentations

A. Update on Town Hall Pumping Station

¹ Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority. While the Committee and/or administrators will not typically respond during Public Comment, the Chair, as presiding officer of the meeting, may choose to if s/he seems it expeditious. Further, should the Chair believe that an issue falls outside the purview of the School Committee, s/he may request that citizens direct it to the appropriate person or body so that the matter is given proper consideration. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per person and a total of 15 minutes, overall.

Rachel Belisle-Toler, Ipswich Water Resource Manager, presented an update on the Town Wharf Pump Station and the location of the new pump station on school-owned property at 25 Green Street. After the boring testing, the site at 25 Green Street was deemed suitable and the project has now entered into the next phase which includes an intensive locational archeological survey. The School Committee was asked to approve the archeological survey. There was also a discussion regarding the grant funding for the project, the location at 25 Green Street, the timeline of the project, and when it would appear before Town Meeting.

- Motion to approve the archeological survey at 25 Green Street was made by JD and seconded by SS. *The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

B. Tri-Board Recap and Next Steps

a. Strategic Plan Presentation

The Strategic Planning Committee, as well as other town committees are looking for the School Committee to provide numbers for an elementary school building project(s). The School Committee should be comfortable with the assumed cost that is included in the Strategic Plan. SS added that it is helpful for the town to know and understand long range goals. It will be important to share that the estimated cost of a school building project included in the Strategic Plan is directional and not precisely accurate. JD felt the Tri-Board discussion in August was “putting the cart before the horse”. The Elementary School Building Project Working Group had not met and Ipswich won’t hear about MSBA approval until December. It is important, JD said, for the School Committee to discuss the project before soliciting the opinions of the other boards. DF added that the School Committee has a general idea of cost, but should do due diligence as a committee to gather more information. DF also added that the Strategic Plan should include a “do nothing” cost which outlines the cost of maintenance to the current school buildings if no school project moves forward. The School Committee plans to meet for a retreat to discuss the elementary school building project(s).

b. NORESKO

Members expressed support for the NORESKO plan, noting that it was forward-thinking. DF encouraged members to forward any additional questions relating to NORESKO to her and to be prepared for a discussion/to take a position on the issue at the next School Committee meeting as part of the vote of the STM Warrant.

Beth Meyers, from ICAM, spoke to the Tri-Board about audio/visual for town committee/board meetings. There is no amplification system in the MS/HS Ensemble Room and there was a discussion around moving the School Committee meetings to Town Hall. BB is going to work with the Performing Arts Center Director to explore options for amplification in the Ensemble Room.

C. School Committee Meeting Calendar Review/Approval

- Motion to approve the School Committee calendar as presented was made by SS and seconded by JD. *The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

D. Vote Member as Authorized Signatory for School District Warrants

- Motion to nominate KE as the signatory for school district warrants was made by MP and seconded by SS.

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously

E. Building Inspection Review

Members of the School Committee met with each building principal ahead of school opening to do a walkthrough of each building. Results of those inspections were shared. Members shared that the schools felt ready for the opening of school. BB highlighted the work that was completed over the summer in each school.

F. Discussion on Special Town Meeting Warrant

Members of the School Committee did a preliminary review of the Special Town Meeting warrant articles ahead of their discussion and vote at their next meeting in September. Members were encouraged to watch the Planning Board meeting regarding Article 8: 3A Multi-family Overlay District.

G. Finance Update

TM outlined the closing of the FY24 budget and the FY24 end of year report, noting the FY24 closed as planned. The FY24 revolving, gift, and stabilization fund balances were reviewed. TM answered questions regarding the HS student parking passes and preschool tuition costs. There was a brief discussion on Title 1 funding.

8. Superintendent's Administrative Report

BB shared the meetings and scheduled events he participated in the time between meetings. BB shared an update on the Interim Building Administrator position at the Paul. F. Doyon Memorial School, reviewed summer professional development opportunities, shared a hiring status update, and discussed the Extended School Year program that took place this summer. BB also discussed details regarding the implementation of the cellphone ban at the high school.

9. Subcommittee, Working Group and Liaison Reports

- **Turf Field Liaison:** The group met to further discuss the field house project and the use of the Paine Grant funding approved for the project. The group is moving forward with sewer design and will continue to discuss fundraising for the additional funding needed to complete the project.
- **Wellness Committee:** The committee continues to work on the Wellness Policy for the district.

10. New Business*

- Motion to appoint SS as a member of the Audit Committee for the 2024-2025 school year was made by KE and seconded by JD. *The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

11. Vouchers and Bills

All were reviewed and signed.

12. Consent Agenda

- Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented was made by DF and seconded by KE. *The motion passed unanimously in favor.*

13. Executive Session:

- Motion to enter into executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purpose:(3)To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining was made by DF and seconded by JD.

Roll Call

Motion passed unanimously

14. Adjournment