

**IPSWICH SELECT BOARD**  
**Meeting of Saturday, April 6, 2019**  
**Ipswich Town Hall | 25 Green Street**

Pursuant to 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 Select Board was held on Saturday, April 6, 2019 at 8:30 am in Meeting Room A.

With a quorum present, Nishan Mootafian called the meeting to order at 8:35am.

Board Members present: Nishan Mootafian, Chair; William Whitmore, Vice Chair; Linda Alexson; William Craft; Edward Rauscher

Also present: Finance Committee; School Committee; Dr. Brian Blake, Superintendent of Schools; Sarah Johnson, Finance Director; Eileen Page, Recording Secretary

Not present: Anthony Marino, Town Manager

Abbreviations Used: UGA, Unrestricted General Aid; FY20, Fiscal Year 2020; FinCom, Finance Committee; ADA, Americans with Disabilities Act

Public Information: Agenda

**Citizen Queries**

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) would like, during each presentation, to be told where the money for budget increases will be coming from.

**Revenue & Projects**

**STATE UPDATE**

Representative Brad Hill appeared before the Triboard to provide an update on State revenue and projects. The entire State budget will be released on Wednesday, April 10.

Chapter 70 funding will see an increase of \$33,000.

Unrestricted General Aid (UGA) will see an increase of \$44,000 in FY20 based on the Governor's estimate.

Rep. Hill reported that many recommendations made by the Foundation Review Committee will not be helpful to communities like Ipswich, with most funding being designated towards low-income school districts. Rep. Hill will be meeting with the School Committee more extensively to discuss special education funding. Currently, \$33,400 can be allocated in the FY20 from State funding.

State-owned land line item will be decreased by \$6,600. Rep. Hill and Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) have been working closely to keep the last two fiscal years level-funded.

Chapter 90 will be level-funded at \$200M for infrastructure needs.

Senator Bruce Tarr reported that the region has recently joined the Northeast Coastal Coalition, which looks at addressing the needs for adaptation in reaction to climate change. He reported that Massachusetts has led the nation in identifying and utilizing natural resources in the fight against climate change, specifically the current attempts to elevate Great Marsh to combat rising sea levels, and finding culinary uses for the invasive green crab species in an effort to not just control the population, but create economic opportunity.

Senator Tarr conducted a survey of communities asking what their funding priorities were, and reported that the majority of communities are seeking Chapter 70, UGA, and special education funding. With regard to the Foundation Budget Review Commission, Senator Tarr and Rep. Hill are advocating that the budget be reviewed

every 3-5 years. Funding for schools is based on enrollment, but even as enrollment declines, costs are going up. Student population is becoming more complex in terms of its needs, particularly social and emotional. Senator Tarr believes that while the Commission looked at the adequacy of the formula, it did not properly address equity.

#### TOWN UPDATE

Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) reported that State Aid has remained level-funded. Some expenses incurred by the Town from Veterans aid have been reduced as Veterans take advantage of SHINE counseling.

Miscellaneous Receipts have increased by \$2,000.

Motor vehicle excise tax is projected to bring in about \$2M in FY20, but Ms. Johnson warned that Ipswich is seeing a decrease in new vehicle purchases.

The Overlay budget has been raised by \$100,000, with funding brought in primarily through the tax levy. Revenue from tourism, Water and Wastewater remain the same.

#### Review of Municipal Budget FY20/21

Janice Clements-Skelton (Finance Committee, Chair) presented five “ongoing horizontal needs” that the FinCom has identified:

1. Need for improvement in GIS capabilities
2. Lowering carbon footprint in terms of paper records in the Town and Schools
3. Facilities needs assessment from School Dude Solutions
4. Identifying and utilizing cross-functional labor between departments
5. Public demand versus staffing capabilities

Mr. Mootafian agreed that cross-functional labor would be beneficial to the Town.

Mr. Whitmore suggested that the needs of the Town sometimes outweigh the staff available. He stated that he can appreciate the value of cross-functional labor, but that it may not be realistic when the day-to-day workload of employees is considered. He would like to consider the value of hiring temporary employees for project-based work and utilizing interns.

Mr. Craft agreed with Mr. Whitmore, and does not want to dismiss the value of short-term contracts funded by grants.

Ms. Alexson asked that the Triboard consider what they would like an affordable housing portfolio in Ipswich to look like. She suggested that the payment in lieu has become more of a rule than an exception, and noted that housing developments have been mostly crowded into one section of town.

Glenn Gibbs (Director of Planning and Development) was present and provided a more detailed description of the rules and regulations surrounding Affordable Housing Trust Fund payments.

#### Review of School Budget FY20/21

Joanne Cuff (Director of Finance and Operations, Ipswich Public Schools) presented that the School Committee has balanced a budget of \$33,575,000 for FY20. \$380,754 will come from the stabilization fund, and \$1.9M will come from revolving accounts such as fees, circuit breakers, and the school choice program.

The turf field replacement fund currently has a balance of \$3,091 and has made \$21,866 in revenue over the last three years. The current projection to replace the turf field is \$300,000, and money has been designated to the marketing and scheduling of field rental to assist in raising the funds for replacement.

Mr. Whitmore asked if other fields may be available to local teams for rental now that soccer teams practice exclusively on the Pony Express fields. Barry Hopping (School Committee) expressed concerns about student transportation.

Mr. Craft asked why the fund has a balance of \$3,091 when it has made \$21,866 in revenue. Hugh O’Flynn (School Committee) explained that the assistant to the Athletic Director has a portion of their salary paid from the fund. Mr. Craft asked if there was a detailed business plan in place to help build up the fund using outside sources, and suggested that it be included in the Capital Plan as a liability if the money for replacement is not raised. Mr. O’Flynn responded that the turf group has more information on a business plan.

**FY20/21 Capital Budget and Use of Free Cash**

All three boards have reviewed and approved the capital budget.

**SCHOOL DUDE ASSESSMENT REPORT TIMELINE**

Chris Rais (Facilities Director) reported that the Dude Solutions assessment is still in progress, and a report is expected to be ready for his review by late June. He encouraged the Triboard to be patient as he sorts through their findings and designates high and low risk projects to be presented to the Boards. Mr. Rais is in the process of hiring a roofing contractor to address leaks and vulnerable areas. He suggested that once the Dude Solutions report is available and projects are prioritized, outside funding may be available through grants.

Ms. Alexson noted line items for bathroom upgrades at the Winthrop Elementary School. Mr. Rais clarified that these would replace out of date toilets with models that use less water, new hand dryers, new flooring, and bring the bathrooms up to ADA compliance.

**FY20/21 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Sarah Johnson (Finance Director) stated that while it was too early to determine an exact Free Cash estimate, the budgeted funds were on target but tight as of the end of March 2019. She cited “floating pieces” that may influence the final number, such as a possible property sale on the Neck and money coming in from the settlement of the fire truck lawsuit.

Phil Goguen (4 Kingfisher Road) asked if each line item in the budget would include what the percentage increase to the taxpayer would be for funding. It was clarified that while an overall increase announcement will be made, the budget has not historically reflected tax rates line by line.

**Review of Annual Town Meeting Warrant**

**GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE: ARTICLE 45-17, SECTION 2**

Craig Saline (Government Study Committee) summarized the Government Study Committee’s Article that will clarify language in the Town Charter to better describe the Select Board’s roles and responsibilities. The language would primarily designate leadership to come from the Select Board, with the Town Manager, Finance Committee, School Committee, and Planning Board assisting in developing a long-term strategic plan. The Committee seeks to define these roles in the Charter versus the bylaws because they identify the Charter as the first line of Town legislation.

Barry Hopping (School Committee) suggested changing “the leadership role” to “a leadership role”.

Discussion followed about the language and intent of the article.

Mr. Whitmore raised concerns that this change may be in response to the failed school bid. He feels this is more of a bylaw change. Mr. Saline stated that the change is influenced by a variety of capital programs.

Ms. Alexson noted that the Article appears more as an instruction manual than a list of Select Board responsibilities, and that many of the duties listed are already being carried out. Mr. Saline responded that the Government Study Committee is seeking to provide a detailed explanation to citizens of what the Select Board is held responsible for.

Mr. Craft expressed that he is unsure about what problem a Charter change would solve.

Mr. Hopping asked if the Select Board has finalized the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Mr. Mootafian explained that it is closed, but not yet voted upon, and could still be reopened. Mr. Hopping then asked if Article 17 was

something the Select Board wanted included, as it seemed unready for public presentation. Mr. Mootafian responded that the Board will be voting on the warrant on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and will have conduct further discussion at that time.

Gary Champion (Government Study Committee) stated that this charter change would be in line with the best practices of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the Massachusetts Selectmen Association, and the Association of Town Finance Committees. Mr. Champion stated that he believes that if the language had been in the charter 10 years ago, a new school would be under construction now.

**New Business**

None.

*Vote: The Select Board voted unanimously to adjourn.*

*The Select Board adjourned at 12:00pm.*

*Respectfully submitted by Eileen G. Page  
04.11.19*