

**Ipswich Tri-Board Meeting**  
**FINANCE COMMITTEE, SELECT BOARD & SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Ipswich Town Hall, Meeting Room A**  
**Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 7:00PM**

With a quorum in attendance meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Finance Committee Members present: Michael Dougherty, Walter Hartford, Robert White, Jamie Fay, Michael Schaaf, Joe Bourque, Christopher Doucette, Emilie Smith

Janice Clements-Skelton was absent

Select Board Members present: Tammy Jones, Linda Alexson, Kerry Mackin, William Whitmore.

Sarah Player was absent

School Board Members present: Charles “Chub” Whitten, Jeff Poirier, Kate Eliot, Pavica Kneedler, Hugh O’Flynn, Greg Stevens, Emilie Cannon

Other Officials in Attendance: Anthony Marino, Town Manager, Police Chief Nikas, Bob Weatherall, Chairman of the Public Safety Facility Committee, Jean Emerson Public Safety Facility Committee Member

Abbreviations used: FINCOM Finance Committee, SB Select Board, TM Town Manager, SC School Committee

**1. Citizens Queries – Michael Dougherty, FINCOM Chair**

- Caroline Britt- In October of 2020 the Select Board, acting as sewer commissioner, voted to approve a proposed 490-foot extension of the sewer on Jeffrey’s Neck Road, which is 10 feet short for it to be approved by town meeting. It projected to serve a new construction single family home, and there are planning issues which need to be addressed. The pertinent issues are:
  - The building envelope for the new home runs at about 12-16 feet elevation, base flood elevation for that flood zone is 13 feet, which will increase in the future.
  - The development is inconsistent with the recommendations of the Community Development Plan and the Hazard Mitigation Plan.
  - Will dig up 490 feet of Jeffrey’s Neck Road that is in good condition, regularly used by bicyclists and with road patches it will push them off the shoulder and into the travel lane.

Is there any way this can be reconsidered based off public interest?

Michael Dougherty defers the question to the Select Board and Town Manager Anthony Marino. Mr. Marino responds that he will have to check with town counsel if that can be turned around or not and will get back with an answer.

**2. Meeting Minutes Review & Vote for dates: 6/8/21 & 7/13/21**

- *Minutes for June 8, 2021*  
Joe Bourque- Motion Moved  
Jamie Fay- 2<sup>nd</sup>  
9-0 Motion passed
- *Minutes for July 13, 2021*  
Joe Bourque- Motion Moved

Robert White- 2<sup>nd</sup>  
9-0 Motion passed

### **School Committee and Select Board call their meetings to order at 7:18pm**

#### **3. Public Safety Facility Proposal**

Michael Dougherty asks the Public Safety Facility Committee to give a brief overview of bulleted agenda items.

Jamie Fay, FINCOM and Public Safety Facility Committee Member-

#### **Essex Facility Tour, Project Scope/Cost & Dispatch**

- Had a great turnout of almost 30 people.
- Essex had a lot of the same issues and struggles our town is having.
- Advocated to have a construction manager at risk, bring them on board early and will help with ways of saving money
- Their space is 24,000 sq. feet,
  - Essex is half the size of Ipswich,
  - Does not have a full-time fire department or range of services.
- Ipswich is purposing 29,500 sq feet.
- Lessons on processes, space that will be needed and on the right track.

Michael Dougherty asks if anyone else would like to express their opinions either by zoom or in person:

Charles “Chub” Whitten, Chair of School Committee mentions that he went to both Beverly & Essex’s tours and after touring Ipswich’s police and fire stations he doesn’t believe that the condition report of the police station should not say “good”, it should say deplorable and needs replacement. The difference between Essex and Ipswich is that Essex is all call firefighters and they have 24,000 sq. feet and we have 29,500 sq. feet with 19 full time firefighters. Just by having Beverly’s new police station it makes surrounding areas and schools safer. Another impressive take-away was the heating and ventilating system at Beverly, it’s much more cost effective and cheaper to run over the lifetime of the building.

Pavica Kneedler, School Committee Member, mentions she didn’t go to Beverly’s tour but went to Essex’s and wanted to point out that just 1400 sq. feet of that is the garage, so it breaks down to 5,000 sq. feet per department, and the rest is for parking vehicles

Walter Hartford, FINCOM Member adds that what struck him was the size and sq. footage Essex has compared to what Ipswich has currently. What has given comfort is knowing and seeing the size of Essex and knowing what we are requesting base on capabilities.

Christopher Doucette, FINCOM Member after looking at Chief Nikas’s spreadsheet, it has been presented that these building are necessary, which I agree with, and the location is ideal. A concern I have is efficiency in building. Are we building something that make sense years down the road? Looking at the spreadsheet I see Charlton and Ashland, which are both similar in scope, programs, town size & time frame. The issues I have is the cost per sq. foot for these three projects, ours is 913 per sq. foot, and there about 20-22% less than our cost. Has this been investigated? How can this be accounted for? Bob Weatherall Chairman of the Public Safety Facility Committee asks when the budget numbers listed in the spreadsheet will be pinned down? The number that we are working with was produced by a professional estimating company, our number is budget.

Chief Nikas adds that the other two towns are bid numbers and Ipswich’s hasn’t gone out to bid yet which will be next year. When it goes out to bid, costs can come in under. Also, by sharing space, like conference room, gym etc., we cut down on the space by not having two separate spaces for the same thing. It will be addressed with cuts that have been made. We are not building any indoor parking like

Essex. Due to the area the new building will be built on, instead of bringing fill in to even it out, we will build underneath so it's not part of the "lay out" of the building but it gives more space without adding more money or space to the project.

Michael Dougherty, FINCOM Chair, asks Mr. Weatherall to review what the basics of this project is going to consist of like price, sq. footage, what will be housed, and the basic "soup to nuts" of the project. Mr. Weatherall answers that the new building will be 29,500 sq. feet of floor area that will house police, fire, animal control, shellfish and harbor at an estimated cost of 27.5 million. When we go to town meeting, the warrant article will give a list of important things voters should know, like we are using a professional estimator's number for what our program should cost, we are setting a ceiling for the voters. We must put a number in that is honest. Michael Dougherty, FINCOM Chair, brings up the new site of Pine Swamp Road and the concerns from residents in town who remember when the combined middle school / high school was built, there were some wetland concerns, and after several years of settling you are seeing the side effects of that. How will this building be different from the middle school/ high school and how will it not run into the same issues? Mr. Weatherall answers that the town owns several acres, and we knew there is some wetland, our architect did an onsite overlay for assurance that this project could be built, and everything associated with this building.

#### Tri-Board & Zoom participants questions or Concerns:

Mr. Weatherall is asked what he would like to see in this new building, which he answers he would like there to be enough quality that in 100 years it's still in good condition. I hope to get a great variety from multiple architects, and we can pick what will best fit the town's needs.

Kerry Mackin, Select Board Member, asks Mr. Weatherall to what extent of renewable energy was factored into the design, and energy sources in the future to make it as renewable as possible. Mr. Weatherall answered that the intentions are to build a conscientious building that is efficient in its use of energy, not expensive to operate, and is respectful to the planet. This building will be powered by electricity, which we will buy from a company that we own. It will be heated and cooled by either air source or ground source heat pumps, it won't be powered by fossil fuels because we will not do that in our municipality buildings anymore.

Robert White, FINCOM Member, asks Mr. Weatherall if he could give a feel for what the space is going to be used for. We have 6 fire trucks, ambulances, cruisers, harbormaster trucks, are they inside or covered? Do the chiefs and deputy chiefs all have offices? Some metrics about what this space looks like. Chief Nikas fields this question. There will be 4 double depth apparatus bays, all frontline equipment will be kept within the 4 bays Chief Nikas then breaks down size-wise office space, detention space, etc. Police vehicles will be kept outdoors, and most areas will have a half sell[?] which is outside to footprint of the facility.

Jean Emerson, Public Safety Facility Committee Member, expressed that no one has mentioned the under part of the fire station, there will be space where the boats will be stored inside. If there is ever a rescue on the river, there is no quick access right now and she is thrilled with the set up.

Michael Dougherty, FINCOM Chair, addresses another topic on the agenda: Dispatch. Mr. Dougherty mentions that there have been talks about the pros and con of either going or not going with a regional dispatch. This meeting is not to discuss that, that is a select board topic, but how does having or not having communications affect the scope of this project regarding sq. footage, shared space, etc. Is this a large or minimal impact? Chief Nikas answers that in regard to emergency communications, it will not change the footprint of the building at all because you still need a common area; radio equipment, need to have the building staffed. It's still an area that would need to be there.

Michael Schaaf, FINCOM Member, asks how much space is allocated to dispatch? What is the capital cost, apart from the building, for installing equipment? Chief Nikas responds about 510 feet. The town

has about 100,000 to 150,000 invested in radio equipment. We are trying upgrade the equipment and disband anything old because there are dead spots in town we are trying to fix. The actual outfitting would be minimal compared to the cost of the building and wouldn't come until the design of the building. Items we use now will also be brought over as well, like generators, computer and communication systems.

### **Fall Town Meeting/Ballot Box**

Michael Dougherty, FINCOM Chair, asks what the game plan is for the subcommittee for fall town meeting and Ballot Box questioning. What should the public anticipate for a timeline for town meeting, a vote at the Ballot Box. If everything is approved, a timeline for shovels in the ground. Mr. Weatherall responds that over the next six weeks they will be moving at an incredible pace.

We are leading at an intense pace with the next six weeks or so. We are holding public forums for information on September 7th, 15th, 21<sup>st</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup>. We are working on fact sheets on items or questions that come up often can be answered on that sheet. Michael Dougherty, FINCOM Chair, asks Anthony Marino, Town Manager, how will the information about these public forums be distributed. Through mailing, social media, etc. It is very important to get the dates, times and locations out to the public. Both Mr. Weatherall and Chief Nikas answer that it won't be on the Town Manager to take care of that, and they will take care of it via social media; write something up in the paper, will go out on the Council on Aging monthly newsletters; as well as on the website. The ballot vote will be after the October meeting and if that were to pass, we would look for public support. Successful vote means we can start looking at proposals for architecture; we select one and start the design process and aim for late 2022 to start building.

Charles "Chub" Whitten, Chair of School Committee bring up that the School Committee unanimously recommended support of the last public safety building, prior to town meeting, just wanting to make that clear. Also, we endorsed and supported the work of the Strategic Plan Working Group which outlays all our projects in town. This is very important to have a Strategic Plan report published before town meeting, so the community knows what projects are before us.

Michael Dougherty, FINCOM Chair, addresses all boards regarding being on board with one another and not going to town meeting being at odds with one another. Tammy Jones, Chair of the Select Board mentions that there has been a lot of work to try to create a building and plan that will be a safer place for the 14,000 people of Ipswich. She asks if a member of the

Select Board would make a motion in support of this building project.

Motion to support

Linda Alexson: Moves to support

Kerry Mackin: 2nd motion

Motion passes unanimously from the Select Board, and has full support of this project going forward

Chub Whitten School Committee Chair

Voted at the last warrant hearing, and it passed unanimously in support

FINCOM

Motion to support

Jamie Fay: Moves to support

Joe Bourque: 2nd motion

Motion passes 6-2 in support of this project going forward.

Any discussion prior to the vote:

Robert White, FINCOM Member, knowing what Essex spent and Beverly spent, and we know it's not comparing Apples to Apples but for us to endorse something with a 7-Million-dollar delta makes it a little tough. Tammy Jones adds the cost per person for the purposed building here VS Essex's building, Essex has about 4,000 residents and an on-call fire department vs our 14,000 residents and full-time fire department. It's up to FINCOM to see that its 5 years of careful work to put this together. Mr. Weatherall also mentions it's not health to compare Essex's safety faculty to Ipswich's. It's a good base to get ideas off, but we can't use them as the comparison for what we want to do. This is 5 years of hard work and we need clarity sooner than later.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTED TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY PROJECT.

Michael Dougherty, FINCOM Chair, thanks everyone for participating in this discussion and if we need to meet again before the special town meeting, we could. Any new or old business that needs to be addressed in front of the Tri-Board?

Anthony Marino, Town Manager, due to the increase in cases and due to the Delta variant, the meeting is being changed to Saturday October 16, 2021 so it can be held outside on the football field without a tent. This is due to the estimated turn out of about 1,000 people.

School committee motion to adjourn:

Motion moved by Chub Whitten

Seconded by Pavica Kneedler

Passes unanimously

Select Board motion to adjourn:

Motion moved by Tammy Jones

Seconded by Linda Alexson

Passes unanimously

FINCOM motion to adjourn:

Motion moved by Michael Dougherty

Seconded by Joe Bourque

Passes unanimously

Meeting Adjourns at 10:06pm