

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION
April 9, 2015

I. ROLL CALL

Town Council Members present:

Kristine S. Trocki, President
Mary E. Meagher, Vice President
Blake A. Dickinson
Michael G. White
Thomas P. Tighe

Others in attendance:

Andrew E. Nota, Finance Director
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director
James Bryer, Fire Chief
Donna Fogarty, Library Director
Michael C. Gray, Public Works Director
Edward E. Mello, Police Chief
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

II. CALL TO ORDER

The Town Council Budget Work session and Hearing for FY 2016 for review of the Capital, School Department, and Operating Budget is called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers of the Jamestown Town Hall at 93 Narragansett Avenue by President Trocki.

III. TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

- A) Town Council Budget Work Session and Hearing for FY 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016); if needed
- 1) Capital, School Department, and Operating Budget review and discussion
Town Administrator Nota reviewed the budget process. A slide presentation proceeded with a summary of budget changes due to reductions and updated revenues, including adjustments for Blue Cross reduction, workers compensation, police retirement and website enhancement. The School Department budget reflects increased State Aid that raised revenue and cost reductions.

Council discussion included Public Health revisions. A comparative analysis will be done for public health entities for future budget cycles in order to more effectively allocate funding. The information gained by the reports from public health agencies at the last session was helpful. Discussion ensued of the Thundemist request and reallocating

funding for former New Visions (merged with Newport County CAP). Council will reallocate the New Visions funding as follows: \$500 to Thundermist, \$500 to East Bay Community Action, and \$500 to Visiting Nurses of Newport County.

A summary of budget revisions was distributed and explained by Finance Director Collins. Town Administrator Nota reviewed the budget by category as it stands.

Operating Budget:

Town Council, Town Administrator, Probate Court, Elections & Town Meetings, Legal Services, Town Clerk & Records, Planning, Zoning, Personnel, for Total General Government of \$2,250,923, a reduction of three quarters of 1%.

Town Council members are in agreement.

Finance:

Finance Office, Tax Assessor's Office, Audit for Total Finance Department of \$321,694
Town Council members are in agreement

Public Safety:

Police (reduction of 1.9%) at \$1,638,832, EMA (\$10,000 from Police \$5,000 Telephone and \$5,000 from Salaries). Discussion ensued of the cost for Telephone and VOIP, which also includes internet. VOIP should realize savings.

Fire Protection:

Fire Protection, EMS Services, for 3% increase for fire protection and EMS \$87,600 increase for implementation of ALS, and Protective Services is total of \$2,726,681. For an increase of 4.8%

Town Council members are in agreement.

Public Works:

Administration, Engineering, Highway Division, Snow Removal, Waste Removal, Street Lighting, Cemetery and Parades, Public Buildings, and Tree Management totaling \$1,816,659 for a 3.46% increase. Discussion. Waste Removal includes the cost of GZA monitoring/reporting.

Town Council members are in agreement.

Public Welfare:

Public Welfare, Public Health up by \$1,500.

Town Council members are in agreement.

Animal Control: \$20,000; The Tick Task Force allocation may be adjusted after their meeting.

Library, increased by 4.65%, Parks & Recreation 2.87% increase; Debt Service includes the \$20,000 adjustment for \$943,672. Miscellaneous adjusted to \$61,200, Capital Improvement Fund with web enhancements \$1,254,000, decrease of 11%.

Total General Budget is \$10,436,547, an increase of 1.49% for expenditures
Total School Department Budget is \$12,563,341, a \$90,000 decrease
Total Town and School Budget is \$22,999,818 for a 1.54% increase for the total budget.
Town Council members are in agreement

Discussion ensued of large expenses for Electrical service (\$100,000), ALS, personnel, contracted salary/wage increases. Adjustments helped mitigate increases. Capital budget changed by \$10,000 for website enhancements. Councilor Dickinson commented on providing the best services possible for our residents. Discussion ensued of working with universities working with town departments and interns to facilitate projects inexpensively. We need to look at how we migrate information to the website.

Capital Budget. Discussion of playground upgrades ensued. The town would have grant opportunities for the improvements. Discussion of a large RIDEM grant for improvement to the entire Lawn Avenue project ensued. This may be an opportunity in the coming year.

Transfer Station Improvements. Mike Gray reviewed additional funding for improvements.

Bike Path. Councilor Dickinson suggested paving of Summit Avenue in place of the Bike Path design and engineering services at \$50,000. Originally TIP money was anticipated to fund the Bike path project; being realistic, the Town will have to fund the project. Designing it can be done less expensively doing it locally as opposed to TIP funding with Federal government regulations tied to TIP funding. Discussion continued. It is important to get the design done and have permits in place, then focus on funding to build the connector. Councilor Dickinson asked if this is a priority, noted the Reservoir is owned by the Water and Sewer ratepayers, and we need to reach out to them in order to proceed, as property is not town property. Town Administrator Nota commented on access for Public Safety and Water and Sewer with the Bike Path project. Lengthy discussion ensued of having control and restricting access over the dam and protecting it. Reservoir protection and Bike Path discussion continued. The decision must be made if this is a community priority. Councilor White access to East Shore Road and being in favor of this with previous Councils.

2) Open Forum

Donald Richardson of Davis Street commented he hasn't seen a design and asked where the Bike Path would go. He was informed it would go below the dam.

Councilor Dickinson commented on upcoming projects in addition to the Bike Path, where the money comes from, and asked to put this off until we know who owns the property and if ratepayers are okay with having people access the area. Vice President Meagher stated North Road is being repaved with new drainage as it is needed. Lengthy discussion ensued. Discussion ensued of widening North Road, the Bike Path being separate from North Road improvements, water quality improvements, drainage, and the necessity for improvements. The desire was to get the connector completed in three years.

Jerry Scott of Racquet Road asked what items are priorities. He was informed the engineering and design for the Bike Path connector.

Councilor Dickinson commented on paving that would provide more bicycle access. Discussion ensued of increases to ratepayers creating animosity with bike riders. Vice President Meagher stated the bike riders are school children who want to connect to other parts of the Island, not just North Road. The dam needs to be protected, and a connector could protect it by providing an alternative to going over the dam, which is dangerous for the ratepayers. Total reconstruction for Summit Avenue is \$79,000. How many people are affected by every dollar spent? Discussion ensued that it is unlikely TIP money will be available. Discussion of realignment of funding ensued.

Chief Bryer commented on the engineering study being beneficial to the ratepayers and the community and for protection of the reservoir. Discussion ensued of the Goals and Objectives. Councilor Tighe commented this project if approved and this project falls under this. It is also referenced in the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Works Director Gray stated the reservoir property is not for recreation. Paving or overlaying of Racquet Road, Starboard Street and Summit Avenue discussion ensued. Discussion ensued of a compromise leaving the \$50,000 for design and engineering work. Once done, the town could decide if this is publicly supported and we want to go forward.

Adjustments will be made for the April 20th meeting for Council vote. Discussion ensued of funding the cost of the Bike Path and the other major projects proposed – PAC, golf course, fire station. The desire is for the Bike Path whether for serious bikers or school children seeking access to other parts of town.

Generator and Fuel Tank. Chief Mello submitted applications for EMA grants for 50% reimbursement of the projects. Priority for the generator is Town Hall, but it is portable and can be used at other locations. The gas station closure and power outages caused by severe weather conditions prompted review of fuel capacities on the Island. Diesel fuel capacity for the town is sub-standard. Discussion ensued of moving a fuel tank to the Highway Barn. The new 6,000 gallon tank for the Police Station would afford a larger

storage capacity for town vehicles and use. This would provide 6,000 gallon diesel capacity at Public Works and 6,000 gallon gasoline at the Police Station. The one-time \$50,000 expense would cover our needs for emergencies. A 50% matching grant has been applied for, which may cut the expense in half.

Discussion of fuel needs and costs based on averages was discussed. It is difficult to predict as each incident varies. Chief Mello commented on the importance of the diesel storage capacity during emergencies. Councilor Dickinson commented if the town is in a serious situation, the town can take fuel by eminent domain. We cannot rely on the State to take care of us. Discussion ensued of town-owned generators.

Fire Department Capital expenses. Councilor Dickinson inquired on the difference between SCBA bottles and oxygen and air packs. Chief Bryer stated they are the same. The capital item is for new equipment, and the operating budget line item is for repairs. Councilor Dickinson asked how the radio and pagers is different from alarm and radio. Chief Bryer explained the alarm and radio is at the Station and pagers are worn by Fire personnel. Discussion ensued of pager difficulties.

Discussion ensued of the lagging RI economy and asking voters to fund multiple projects. Discussion ensued of debt service. Town Administrator Nota explained the first year is interest only and it is included in the debt service as a placeholders for the Fire Station, fire truck, and PAC referenda. If it fails, there is additional funding available.

Discussion ensued of Police Overtime for details for events in town. As outlined in the Goals and Objectives, a fair and equitable detail fee would be developed and charged. Discussion ensued of what Rotary pays for the bike race details. The rotary would pay for staffing estimated at \$3,000 but not for cruisers. Discussion continued. The \$3,000 allocated for the bike race will continue until a policy is adopted.

Jerry Scott of Racquet Road asked why the entity paying for the details can't pay the FICA as well. He was informed this is not an option. Discussion continued of hiring flaggers, police details, community service officers, and collective bargaining and contractual obligations.

Don Richardson of Davis Street commented on the bike race, which raises money for charity, and use of volunteers. Councilor Tighe commented on State mandates and liability that makes it impossible to use volunteers.

The next meeting is April 20th. In summary: no cuts or additions to the Capital Budget; an additional \$500 to three public health agencies; final discussion of the budget will be at the April 20th meeting at 7 pm; there may be adjustments for grants, School adjustments, or Tick Task Force adjustments.

Discussion ensued of Jerry Scott's letter regarding design costs for the Fire Station. Mr. Scott will be provided with information on the project.

Don Richardson asked what is in the emergency fund. He was informed \$50,000. There are unreserved fund balances of \$4,500,000 for town and school combined. Usually 20% is kept in unreserved that may also be used.

President Trocki thanked those in attendance for their participation.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the budget work session was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Attest:

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council
 Town Administrator
 Finance Director
 Town Solicitor