

**FIRE STATION EXPANSION PROJECT
PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION
May 13, 2015**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Jamestown Fire Station Expansion Project Public Information Session was called to order at 6:12 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 in the Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue by Town Administrator Andrew Nota.

II. FIRE DEPARTMENT PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION

Town Administrator Nota referenced the vote to take place at the Financial Town Meeting on Monday, June 1, 2015 at the Jamestown School, 55 Lawn Avenue at 7:00 p.m. listed on the Warrant as:

RESOLUTION NUMBER 5
BORROWING FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT PURPOSES
THROUGH ISSUANCE OF BONDS

A) Review/Discussion/Explanation

Town Administrator Nota gave an overview of the \$2,500,000 expansion project that includes \$2,200,000 for renovations, addition and upgrades and \$300,000 for a new standard fire truck. Chief Bryer, Deputy Chief Tighe, Deputy Chief Tiexiera, Deputy Chief Pinksaw, the Board of Fire Wardens and volunteers in attendance were noted. A slide show proceeded with explanation of the need for the renovation project and purchase of a new truck. The Jamestown Fire Department is a 501(c)3 Corporation.

The project summary continued. Preliminary review of the Council record revealed Fire Station expansion and renovation discussions including purchase of a new truck took place during at least 26 meetings, as well as numerous *Jamestown Press* articles. The project involves 11,700 square feet of space for renovation estimated at a cost of \$180 per square foot to house the Fire Company and EMS Division in one facility. A map of the two facilities was shown and discussed at length. The expansion and renovation was determined to be the best approach for the needs of the Fire Department. Lengthy discussion ensued.

Chief James Bryer reviewed the plan, which began 10 years ago, and explained the history of the Fire Barn; the first section was constructed in 1926. ADA compliance, need for sleeping quarters, and other needed improvements were discussed. Review of the schematics for the building proceeded. The cost for a standard truck at \$300,000 is almost half the cost of a custom truck at \$550,000 made to fit in the current station bays. A modern fire truck is larger in order to store more water to fight fires, requiring larger bays. Larger training facilities for Fire and EMS are needed.

III. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Gayen Thompson of Grinnell Street expressed concern for speeding vehicles on Narragansett Avenue.

Chief Bryer noted with the proposed renovation and expansion, no additional expansion would be needed in the foreseeable future.

Schematic first floor and second floor plans were demonstrated, including a new lobby, laundry room, separate bathrooms, shower facilities office space and training facilities. A review of Fire Department statistics by location ensued, revealing the concentration of fire and EMS calls are in the southern areas of town, which includes the downtown area. Personnel is required 24/7 primarily for EMS, necessitating expanded facilities.

Architect John Aharonian gave an overview of his findings. Shortcomings noted included training facilities, public use of the facilities, and a stairwell that does not meet code. Mr. Aharonian reviewed the architectural design and final plans, which fit in with the architecture of Jamestown.

Audience member asked if there was any way to eliminate large trucks exiting onto Grinnell Street. Chief Bryer noted other options are being reviewed and explained the need for center poles and the need for the Grinnell Street bays.

Anita Girard of Seaside Drive commented on the long bay and asked about the radio room. She was informed that moving the fire alarm system would cost upwards of \$1,000,000. Gary Girard expressed concern for land and adequate space. Discussion continued. Parking issues and concerns of Grinnell Street neighbors were reviewed.

Gary Girard expressed concern for future needs. Chief Bryer reiterated that JFD will not outgrow the renovated station; we don't have the manpower to expand further.

Town Administrator Nota explained the renovations are based on costs and demographics; municipal services are based on population. Discussion continued. Mr. Nota explained the Debt Service and Debt Capacity – 3% of the value of the Town – which is \$65,000,000. The total Town debt is \$9,000,000, well below the limit.

New Fire Station. Relocation of the Fire Station and new construction is estimated at \$5,000,000 to \$7,000,000 for construction plus the purchase price of real estate (approximately \$1,000,000) and relocation of the fire alarm system (estimated at \$1,000,000).

Review and discussion of the potential tax impact ensued. \$20,000 of expense = 1¢ on the tax rate. This year a 3¢ increase on the tax rate is anticipated. A new Fire Station option would result in an additional \$380 for the average tax bill, making this the project higher than all other projects as proposed.

Alternate siting, equipment storage at the North end for storm related emergencies, and costing were reviewed. Slides on patterns and fire calls were referenced. The EMS barn is valued at \$408,000. Discussion ensued of its value if sold and potential uses. More information will be available prior to next information session and FTM.

Other recent Fire Station renovations, improvements, expansions and building were referenced – Warwick, South Kingstown and Middletown – at a cost of \$300 per square foot. The map showing potential available properties was referenced and reviewed. The property adjacent to Conanicut Marine was discussed. Discussion ensued of Town properties and buildings, evaluation of properties, and seasonal influx of residents and visitors.

The map showing major response routes was displayed and discussed at length. The highest ratios of calls are from the southern area of town and 55% of the JFD volunteers live in the southern area. Mr. Nota stated many questions will be answered during the Planning and Zoning process and there is a great deal to do on this project. The FTM vote is only on the Resolution to borrow the funds and authorize the expansion. Chief Bryer noted in FY 2014-2015 there were no fire calls during church services.

Deputy Chief Tighe explained ISO (Insurance Services Organization) rating which sets classification rates that include requirements for location of the nearest hydrant (1,000 feet) or water supply district. Explanation of the classification system continued, with the standard requirement 80% of fire calls must be answered in five minutes. Discussion ensued of significant medical calls to multi-family buildings on Pemberton Avenue and response demographics.

IV. DATE OF UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSION

The next informational session is Monday, May 18, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. (prior to regular Town Council Meeting) at the Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers.

V. DATE OF UPCOMING FIRE DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE

The Jamestown Fire Department Open House is Saturday, May 23rd and Sunday, May 24th, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Fire Station, 50 Narragansett Avenue.

Town Administrator Nota thanked all those in attendance for coming this evening and offered to review information with any citizens by calling him at Town Hall. Chief Bryer and Deputy Chief Tighe offer to assist citizens as well with any questions they may have.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the informational session was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Attest:

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council
 Town Administrator
 Finance Director