

## **TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

March 26, 2015

### **I. ROLL CALL**

The following members were present:

Mary E. Meagher, Vice-President  
Blake E. Dickinson  
Michael G. White  
Thomas P. Tighe

Town Council members absent:

Kristine S. Trocki, President

School Committee members present:

Cathy Kaiser, School Committee Chair  
Julia Held, School Committee Vice Chair  
Sarah Baines  
Melissa Mastrostefano  
Bruce Whitehouse

Also in attendance:

Andrew E. Nota, Town Administrator  
Christina Collins, Finance Director  
Carol Blanchette, Superintendent  
Jane Littlefield, Director of Finance  
Ken Duva, Director of Student Services  
Nate Edmunds, Lawn School Principal  
Carole Melucci, Melrose School Principal  
Samira Hakke, Director of Technology  
Lewis Kitts, Director of Buildings and Maintenance  
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

### **II. CALL TO ORDER**

The work session of the Jamestown Town Council for review of the School Department Operating Budget and Capital Budget for FY 2015-2016 was called to order by Vice President Meagher at 5:27 p.m. in the Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers of the Jamestown Town Hall at 93 Narragansett Avenue, Jamestown.

### **III. TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

- A) Joint Town Council and School Department Budget Work Session and Hearing for FY 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016) School Budget
- 1) Review and Discussion

Superintendent Blanchette gave a PowerPoint presentation of the School Department Operating and Capital budget, beginning with the Mission Statement and the FY 2016 budget goals. Review of cost fluctuations since adoption of the budget were noted, which include Health and Dental insurance premiums, Electricity, Transportation, and Out of District Tuition Rates. Proposed staffing realignment was explained (no budgetary impact).

Proposed FY 2016 Operating Budget. Proposed budget is \$11,687,876, an increase of \$103,985 or .9%. Major costs include contractual obligations, salaries, benefits; mandates and regulations; tuitions, transportation and plant operations. Budget breakdown follows:

Lawn School	\$3,478,871
Melrose School	\$3,900,842
System-wide	\$1,093,240
Out of District	\$2,919,075
Retirees	\$ 272,769
Contingency	\$ 23,079

Projected Enrollment:	Melrose School	284
	Lawn School	221
	High School	157

High School Tuition summary:	General education	\$1,726,453
	Special education	\$ 252,370
	Career and technical	\$ 259,421
	Out-of-district special education	\$ 398,479
	Charter schools	\$ <u>33,962</u>
	TOTAL	\$2,670,685

Increase of \$118,652; Tuitions = 22.85% of total FY 2016 budget

Student Services. Budget reflects commitment to high standards, quality programs, regulatory compliance, and fiscal responsibility (Special education represents a \$154,673 budget decrease).

Key Budget Factors include: Federal and State regulations, IEP requirements, Special education salaries and benefits, and out-of-district tuitions and transportation. Out-of-district tuitions is impossible to predict. Special Education out-of-district placements are:

Pre-K – Grade 8	1
Grade 9	0
Grade 10	1
Grade 11	0
Grade 12 through age 21	<u>1</u>
TOTAL Anticipated	6

Proposed FY 2016 Capital Budget as follows:	Melrose School	\$68,000
	Lawn School	\$63,200
	Technology	<u>\$27,160</u>
	TOTAL Capital	\$158,300

Conclusion. Major unknowns are funding from Federal and State grants, out-of-district transportation, energy/fuel, military enrollment, and new students services. Revenue assumptions are:

State Aid	\$456,252
Pre-school tuitions	\$ 43,600
Medicaid reimbursement	\$100,000
Impact aid	<u>\$ 65,000</u>
TOTAL	\$664,452

FY 2016 Anticipated local appropriation needed:	\$10,746,155
FY 2015 Actual	\$10,659,308
Increase of:	\$ 86,847 (or .81%)

Superintendent Blanchette thanked the Town Council for their support.

School Director of Finance Jane Littlefield noted the department's zero based budgeting and increased State. North Kingstown High tuition for next year is not known at this time.

Town Councilor Dickinson stated he is very pleased with what he has heard this evening, commented the high school enrollment trend is lowering, was hoping for level funding, and has not had time to digest the new information. Chair Cathy Kaiser noted revenues are down, other than the State aid increase of \$56,000. The growth in the Reserve Fund was noted and discussed. Per Ms. Kaiser, OPEB will use up the reserve funding. The school department is uncomfortable reducing the high school expenditure, and noted the \$160,000 shortfall in last year's high school tuition.

Town Administrator Nota commented on the constant struggle surrounding the use of undesignated reserve funds. Discussion ensued of using the School Department's undesignated reserve funds to offset the budget increase, the Town's regular use of undesignated reserve funds to offset the budget, unreserved fund use policies, and OPEB expenses. School Committee Chair Kaiser does not want to use undesignated reserve funds to offset school operating expenses. School Committee Vice Chair Held commented on using undesignated reserve funds for capital improvements Lengthy discussion ensued. The Ten year capital plan and roof and boiler replacements were reviewed.

- B) Open Forum
- 1) Scheduled to address. None
  - 2) Non-scheduled to address.

Mary Lou Sanborn commended the School Department's efforts and thanked the School Committee. Discussion ensued of technology grants that may be available.

Discussion ensued of budget direction and endorsement. Council members commented the direction is to keep going in the same direction; they have done a great job over the years. The newspaper letter stating school facilities are under used was disputed by school staff and administration. Discussion ensued of the undesignated reserve funds for an Island community and school district are higher due their vulnerability. The tax increase was lowered to 1.5% due to higher State aid and lower health care costs than anticipated. The next budget work session is April 2, with a follow-up session on April 9, if needed, with a vote for budget approval by the Council on April 21. Councilor Dickinson noted he is happy with the process and that transportation costs seem out of control. Discussion ensued of the Governor's proposed budget.

Council Vice President everyone for attending this evening.

#### IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the budget work session was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Attest:

  
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to:     Town Council  
                  Town Administrator  
                  Town Solicitor  
                  Finance Director