

## TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

March 30, 2009

A work session of the Jamestown Town Council was called to order at the Jamestown Town Hall in the Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue at 6:30 p.m. by Council President Julio J. DiGiando. The following members were present:

William A. Kelly  
Barbara A. Szepatowski  
Robert W. Sutton, Jr.  
Michael White, Vice-President

Also present:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator  
Heather R. Lopes, Deputy Town Clerk Pro Tem  
Judith H. Bell, Librarian  
Frederick W. Brown, Building / Zoning Official  
Lisa W. Bryer, Town Planner  
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director  
Steven J. Goslee, Public Works Director  
Kenneth S. Gray, Assessor  
Michael C. Gray, Town Engineer  
Arlene D. Petit, Town Clerk  
William Piva, Parks and Recreation Director  
Thomas P. Tighe, Police Chief

Bruce Keiser began the meeting with a power point presentation. The presentation showed the proposed 2009- 2010 Budget. Mr. Keiser stated the proposed budget had an increase of 1.6%, which is the lowest increase Jamestown has had in many years. Mr. Keiser reviewed the following items:

- Revenue Sources
  - i. Property Tax supplies 83.5%
  - ii. Local Non-Property Tax Revenues supply 12.9%
  - iii. State aid/ Pass-through taxes supplies 3.6%
  
- Expenditure Distribution
  - i. School Operating calls for 56.8%
  - ii. School Capital Projects calls for 1.3%
  - iii. School Debt Service makes up 2.0%
  - iv. Town Operating calls for 34.1%
  - v. Town Capital projects makes up for 3.0%
  - vi. Town Debt Service calls for 2.8%

Mr. Keiser stated the proposed budget would adjust the tax rate to \$8.19 per thousand. The Town portion equals 35% or \$2.89 and the School portion equals 65% or \$5.30 of the proposed tax rate.

The major State revenues are assumed to remain level funded with the exception of the General Revenues Sharing funds. The General Revenue Sharing funds are expected to be eliminated which projects a decrease of \$136,846. The major state revenues are listed as State library aid; motor vehicle reimbursement; public service corporation tax; meals and beverage tax; and education aid.

Local revenues are proposed to have an overall decrease in the amount of \$99,500. The local revenues expected to remain level funded are; dog fines; finance revenues; golf course/country club rental; ambulance receipts; resident transfer station fees; residential fire/police alarms; and the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority. Areas that have a proposed increase are; recreation department receipts; interest on late tax payments; and Rhode Island TOPS Dividend. Areas with an expected decrease include; Town Clerk receipts; building inspection fees; investment income; and the anticipated new construction costs for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 (included in property tax).

Mr. Keiser stated with the proposed budget, the increase would be 1.72% or \$509,546 under the cap. Budget drivers include: salaries/benefits; public buildings; public works; and programs. These items show an increase of \$251,501. Budget reductions total \$112,500. Discussion ensued regarding the reduction in solid waste disposal being related to the Town wide recycling efforts. Discussion ensued regarding the Town of Jamestown being accepted in the program of Group Health Benefits of Rhode Island (GHBRI). As a member of this group the health benefit cost will be reduced by \$20,000.

A principal debt pay-down in the amount of \$800,000 was proposed to lower debt service. The inclusion of Police Station renovations in the amount of \$1,000,000 would place the remaining undesignated fund balance to constitute 13.75% of the operating budget. Discussion began regarding the interest rates on debt and the interest rate on the investment returns for the Town.

The Council discussed the possibility of eliminating the positions of the Harbormaster, Animal Control Officer and the Mechanic for Public Works. It was thought these positions may be more economical for the Town of Jamestown as outsourced positions. Councilor White commented that it needed to be researched to be sure this would be a money saving option and he feels Department Heads are in a better position to suggest the elimination of positions from their offices. It was the consensus of the Council that the level of service provided to the Community needs to be maintained and requirements and expectations of departments need to be defined. President DiGiando questioned whether all the current streetlights are necessary due to the cost of the electricity.

The Capital Budget Improvement request made by the Department Heads totaled \$1,058,865 and was reduced to \$635,500 for the upcoming budget. Councilor Sutton expressed concern over issues Barrington is having with Vision Appraisal and was assured by Tax Assessor, Ken Gray, he is very aware of the situation and plans to be understanding with residents concerns. Mr. Gray also stated there has not been enough sales this year to get a good feel for what is to come. Mr. Keiser mentioned that the Town of Jamestown is slated to receive \$250,000 from the economic stimulus money for improvement to local roads. It is planned to use this money to pave approximately 2

miles of roadway. Mr. Keiser stated the General Assembly has proposed to add \$.02 to the gas tax with \$.01 being set aside for towns to improve transportation and roadways. It is planned to use the \$39,000 this would provide plus the proposed \$15,000, to improve the sidewalks.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposal of a maintenance shed at Fort Getty to be used by the Recreation Department. There was a concern that the budget of \$71,000 would not be sufficient to construct a building with heat and a bathroom facility. The proposed landfill closure cost estimate totals \$820,944. This figure is in addition to \$200,000 of in kind labor from public works employees. Mr. Keiser stated this project is approximately in the middle of the list of items to utilize stimulus monies throughout the state. He has also spoken with Senator Paiva-Weed asking for her support in the legislature for funding of this project. Mr. Keiser stated the final closure plan for the landfill is on the Council agenda for April 6, 2009 for presentation to and approval by the Town Council.

The work session adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Attest:

Heather R. Lopes  
Deputy Town Clerk Pro Tem

c: Town Council Members (5)  
Town Administrator  
Town Solicitor  
Administrative Circulation