

FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING
June 1, 2009

The annual Financial Town Meeting was opened by Town Council President Julio J. DiGiando at 7:10 p.m. The following members were present:

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

also present:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator
Peter D. Ruggiero Town Solicitor
Arlene D. Petit, Town Clerk
James Donnelly, Town Moderator
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director
Fred Pease, Town Sergeant
Dr. Marcia Lukon, Superintendent
Jane Littlefield, Business Manager

as well as School Committee members:

Catherine L. Kaiser, Chair
William (Bucky) Brennan
Julia Held
B. J. Whitehouse

JAMES A. DONNELLY, TOWN MODERATOR

The Town Moderator addressed the 102 registered voters (eventual number) in attendance and reviewed the general rules for the Town Meeting. Mr. Donnelly encouraged the audience to comment and ask questions when discussion is called for.

CATHERINE KAISER, SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR

School Committee Chair Kaiser read a prepared statement outlining the steps taken by the school administration and school committee in their preparation of a budget that is both financially and academically sound.

Ms. Kaiser acknowledged the leadership of their administrative team, and especially thanked Superintendent Marcia Lukon, who guided the school committee in keeping the district's educational priorities squarely in focus throughout a challenging budget year.

Ms. Kaiser asked for support in passing the school budget.

JULIO DIGIANDO, TOWN COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Town Council President DiGiando reviewed the overall budget for the fiscal year 2009-2010.

Council President DiGiando reviewed the changes to the town budget.

On the revenue side the losses amounted to \$261,836. These losses were offset by \$249,529 in new revenue, for a realized loss of (\$12,307). The breakdown follows:

Losses:

General Revenue Sharing	(\$136,836)
Investment Income	(\$ 50,000)
Real Estate Tax Stamps	(\$ 50,000)
Building Permits	(\$ 25,000)

Growth:

Tax Revenue for New Construction	\$249,529
----------------------------------	-----------

The Town will realize \$303,481 in savings on the expenditure side of the budget by paying down debt service and a reduction in the costs of health insurance. The cost saving breakdown follows:

Debt Service	\$283,481
Health Insurance (Town)	\$ 20,000

Increases to the expenditure side of the budget in the amount of \$175,886 are as follows:

Contractual Salary Increases	\$72,300
Nonunion Salary Increases	\$10,086*
Electricity Rate Increase (40%)	\$38,500
Funding for Teen Center	\$45,000
Funding for Senior Center	\$10,000

*No nonunion employees making over \$50,000 received salary increases.

Council President DiGiando stated that the June 2008 fund balance for the Town of Jamestown is \$3,850,686, which is 18.6 percent of the \$20,731,219 operating budget for 2008/2009. The proposed budget has a drawdown on that fund balance in the amount of \$716,114 for the following allocations:

Pay-off Fire Apparatus Lease	\$285,000
Police Debt	\$211,114
DPW Equipment	\$220,000

With the above-mentioned drawdown, the remaining fund balance would be \$3,134,572, or 15.12 percent of the operating budget.

There is an additional proposal for a \$200,000 drawdown on the fund balance to complete improvements at the police station. This reduction would leave a fund balance of \$2,934,572 or 14.15 percent of the operating budget.

**PRESENTATION OF BUDGET FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE ELECTORS
OF THE TOWN OF JAMESTOWN**

The Town Moderator called for the voting on the total 2009/2010 general budget.

MOTION TO APPROVE the 2009/2010 Total Town Budget:

It was moved by Councilor White, seconded by Councilor Szepatowski to approve the 2009/2010 total Town budget in the amount of \$8,373,981.01.

The Town Moderator called for discussion on the motion.

Susan Little, North Main Road, stated that the retained earnings are from taxes that were paid. Ms. Little also stated that at the budget work sessions the public was never given a chance to speak. Ms. Little opposed a process that did not allow all taxpayers to participate in until the Financial Town Meeting.

Rosemary Woodside, Skysail Court, asked about the salary increases in the budget, in particular the Police Chief.

The Town Administrator stated that there has been a change in the way the salaries are presented. This year the salary line includes the longevity payment.

James Keller, Blueberry Lane, asked for an explanation on what a longevity payment is.

The Town Administrator explained that longevity pay recognizes long term service. An eligible employee who has at least five years of total service receives a lump sum payment annually.

Jerome Scott, Walcott Avenue, asked how a taxpayer could access line item breakdowns. Mr. Scott stated that he wants to look into why there is so much overtime pay in the police department.

The Town Administrator noted that some of the overtime is due to coverage for sick leave, vacations, and injuries. The Town Administrator further explained that minimum staffing levels calls for two officers on duty twenty-four hours each day, seven days a week.

Norma Willis, North Main Road, expressed her disappointment that residents could not speak at the budget work sessions. Ms. Willis asked if it was true that Jamestown has the highest paid Animal Control Officer in the state.

Rosemary Woodside, inquired as to why, with several state roads and state parks located in Jamestown, there is not more State Police situated in Jamestown.

The Town Administrator stated that with the state fiscal climate he would expect that additional manpower would be restricted.

Timothy Yentsch, Gondola Avenue, questioned the costs associated with waste removal. Mr. Yentsch asked for a breakdown of those expenses.

The Town Administrator noted that in order to encourage recycling in Jamestown, we have contracted with a private vendor to pick up recycling curbside. The costs associated with this service are \$180,000. This service significantly reduces the amount of trash hauled to the landfill each year. Jamestown pays \$32.00 per ton for the first 22,000 tons and thereafter must pay \$60.00 per ton. The more recyclables picked up, the lower the tonnage of waste hauled to the landfill, reducing the cost to the town.

Councilor Kelly took this time to announce that there will be a hazardous waste collection site at the Melrose Avenue School parking lot on Saturday, June 6, 2009, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. In addition, there will be a paper shredding facility at this site.

Richard Kingsley, Clinton Avenue, stated that he is a state employee and appreciates the time and effort put into keeping taxes down in Jamestown.

There being no further discussion on the motion, the voice vote was taken and the motion clearly carried.

MOTION TO APPROVE the total School budget:

It was moved by Council President DiGiando, seconded by Councilor Szepatowski to approve the School budget in the amount of \$12,531,883.00.

The Town Moderator called for discussion.

Rosemary Woodside asked how many children are in school.

Dr. Lukon answered that there are 476 students in Pre-K through 8th Grade and 225 students in high school.

Robert Salk, Seaview Avenue, asked for a count of students for the last three years. Mr. Salk stated that with dropping enrollment, costs per student should be more stable. In addition, he stated that Jamestown has sub-par results for the amount of money being spent on education.

Dr. Lukon gave a breakdown of student enrollment indicating a declining number of students; however, it was noted that with the fluctuating number of military family students must be considered, making it difficult to predict the exact number of enrollment.

Catherine Kaiser, School Committee Chair, noted that with the enrollment declining in thirty-three of thirty-six school districts, no budgets have been reduced. Ms. Kaiser

reviewed some of the actions taken to reduce the school budget, as well as some of the mandates that the school cannot change.

Jessica Burrows, Shady Lane, asked how many students are receiving special services.

Catherine Kaiser answered that although she did not have the exact numbers presently receiving special services; she assured us that Jamestown is not any higher than the surrounding communities.

Guy Archambault, Whale Rock Road, inquired into the number of military students presently enrolled in school.

Dr. Lukon answered that there are 53 military students. Dr. Lukon noted that the town receives \$11,000 in federal impact fees for those 53 students.

Councilor Kelly, in reviewing the budget, noted that the town side of the budget accounts for 35.6 percent of the budget, while the school side accounts for 64.4 percent. Councilor Kelly pointed out that the \$150,000 reduction in school spending was the result of a reduction in health care costs. Council Kelly suggested that there be more transparency in the school budget presentation by providing more detail.

Paul Srague, Mast Street, asked how much of the school funds go towards the maintenance of the fields at the school. Mr. Sprague suggested that the Fire Department hold their practices there and water the fields.

Catherine Kaiser stated that the Parks and Recreation Department maintains the fields.

Mr. Sprague commented on the terrible condition of the fields, roads, and town-owned vehicles.

The Town Administrator answered that a plan is being developed for maintenance of the fields; however, the turf is affected by the lack of water because of the irrigation restrictions in Jamestown. Consideration is being given to artificial turf or possibly underground irrigation. Again, though, there are restrictions on digging at the site because of Native American archaeological findings. The Town Administrator addressed the condition of the roads, adding that to bring them into good condition would cost approximately \$4 million dollars.

Raymond Iannetta, North Main Road, asked how much money the town receives from the state and federal government to cover the costs of mandates. Mr. Iannetta suggested that we look at the mandates and decide which ones that the town can do without.

Rosemary Woodside asked how often we look at other schools to control out of district tuition.

Catherine Kaiser stated that there was a full review five years ago. Presently the School Committee is completing a mini-review and is looking again at Narragansett High School and North Kingstown High School. Ms. Kaiser noted that the town is due to renegotiate with North Kingstown in October.

Maureen Ryall, Columbia Lane, stated that she supports the school budget process whereby residents were allowed to speak at the work shops. She stated that it was frustrating to attend the Council work shops because individuals were not allowed to speak.

There being no further discussion on the motion, the voice vote was taken and the motion clearly carried.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 1, Sewer Line Frontage Tax Rate:

Resolution No. 2, Borrowing in Anticipation of Taxes:

Resolution No. 3, Disposition of Collected Back Taxes:

It was moved by Council President DiGiando, seconded by Councilor Szepatowski to waive the reading of Resolutions No. 1 through No. 3 and to approve Resolutions No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3.

There being no discussion, the voice vote unanimously carried.

Resolution No. 4, Additional Appropriation for Improvements and Expansion of the Police Station:

Resolution No. 4 was read by the Town Moderator and followed by the call for a motion.

It was moved by Councilor Szepatowski seconded by Council President DiGiando to approve Resolution No. 4.

Phil Willis, North Main Road, inquired into the size of the addition.

The Town Administrator answered that the addition is 600 sq. ft. Also, included in the expansion of the police station is the overhaul of the twenty-year old HVAC system, as well as repairs to leaks in the flat roof.

There being no further discussion on the motion, the voice vote was taken and the motion clearly carried.

Resolution No. 5, Appropriation for Payment of Certain Bonds and Leases:

Resolution No. 5 was read by the Town Moderator and followed with the call for a motion.

It was moved by Councilor White seconded by Councilor Szepatowski to approve Resolution No. 5.

Sav Rebecchi, Sail Street, asked what the balance is in the undesignated fund balance. Mr. Rebecchi pointed out that the extra money in the undesignated fund balance is from taxes already paid.

The Town Administrator stated that with the passage of Resolution No. 4, the balance is \$3,134,572. If Resolution No. 5 passes, the balance of the undesignated fund would be \$2,934,572.

The Town Administrator answered yes to Mr. Rebecchi's questioning regarding whether or not 14% is a suitable reserve fund. In addition, The Town Administrator noted that the town is insured for natural disasters.

Timothy Yentsch asked if there were provisions for replacement vehicles.

The Town Administrator answered that there is a planned replacement schedule.

Susan Little asked for the breakdown of any prepayment penalties.

The Town Administrator answered that there are no prepayment penalties.

There being no further discussion on the motion, the voice vote unanimously carried.

Resolution No. 6, Setting the Tax Rate:

It was moved by Council President DiGiando, seconded by Councilor White to waive the reading of Resolution No. 6.

There being no discussion, the voice vote unanimously carried.

It was moved by Councilor White, seconded by Councilor Szepatowski to approve the tax rate of not less than \$8.11, nor more than \$8.15 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation.

There being no discussion, the motion was put to a voice vote, which clearly carried.

It was moved by Council President DiGiando, seconded by Councilor White to approve the Town of Jamestown Budget in total.

There being no discussion, the motion was put to a voice vote, which clearly carried.

There being no further business before the Council, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM. The voice vote clearly carried.

Attest:

Arlene D. Petit
Town Clerk

C: Town Council Members (5)
Town Administrator
Town Solicitor
Finance Director
Board of Canvassers
School Committee
Tax Assessor
Administrative Circulation