

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
January 14, 2014**

I. ROLL CALL

Town Council Members present:

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

Town Council Members absent:

Eugene B. Mihaly

Also present:

Kevin E. Paicos, Town Administrator
Peter D. Ruggiero, Town Solicitor
David R. Petrarca, Jr., Assistant Town Solicitor
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director
Lisa Bryer, Town Planner
Michael Gray, Public Works Director
William Piva, Parks and Recreation Director
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

II. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Town Council Vice President Meagher called the special meeting of the Jamestown Town Council to order at 4:02 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. TRANSFER OF PROPERTY AND ASSIGNMENT OF WEST FERRY
LEASE: Discussion and possible action to approve**

Solicitor Ruggiero gave an overview of the request before the Council to grant the assignment of the lease for the property at West Ferry operated by Dutch Harbor Boat Yard. There is currently one year left on the lease and the assignment would relieve the current lessee from any obligations and transfer them to the new purchaser. Finance Director Collins finds all documents to be in order and she has no hesitations on the transaction. Transfer would be subject to approval of all legal documents by the Solicitor. There are personal assurances as well. Approval of the lease assignment allows the property transfer to take place on Friday, January 17th.

Attorney Greg Fater introduced client Joe McCready, one of the principals in attendance, and thanked the Council, Solicitor, and Finance Director for a seamless transaction.

Renovations proposed by the purchaser and his intentions to move his family to Jamestown were noted. Council members welcomed Mr. McCready to Jamestown.

A motion was made by Mary Meagher with second by Blake Dickinson to approve the transfer of lease, subject to Solicitor review of the documents. President Trocki, Aye; Vice President Meagher, Aye; Councilor Tighe, Aye; Councilor Mihaly, Absent; Councilor Dickinson, Aye.

IV. RECREATION STUDY IMPLEMENTATION WORK SESSION

A) Discussion/Questions/Answers. President Trocki announced the discussion is a continuation from the January 6th meeting. Additional comments were made by Vice President Meagher regarding the Executive Summary outline prepared by the Collins Center, which is considered the preliminary review and beginning step for reorganization of the Recreation Department. The Town Administrator's review and memorandum, Recreation Director's memo, and Public Works Director's report and memo were referenced. The purpose for the Collins Center study and findings were discussed at length. Town Administrator Paicos commented the reports submitted contain the information requested. Vice President Meagher commented there may be other options and she would like to see them presented. President Trocki noted the purpose of the study was to give an overview of the Recreation Department, its operations, and programs. The information needed to determine whether the Recreation Department should be reorganized is not there yet. The recommendation for separating Parks from Recreation is major; there should be a variety of options to deal with maintenance that should be reviewed thoroughly; this is one option available.

Councilor Tighe noted there should be other options to review, including consolidating services with the schools, and a thorough examination of recreation programs. Councilor Dickinson noted tactical strategies laid out at the last meeting that should be reviewed. Change is difficult; the recommendations are taken seriously; the analysis of consequences to Public Works should be reviewed; this is not the final decision, it is an option. Discussion ensued of a lack of resources and budget development. Council members comment a well thought out plan is required, the Town is not yet ready for implementation of the Collins plan, not yet ready for reorganization of the Recreation Department, and more conversation can determine the big issues and how to resolve them. Discussion ensued of the Town's recreational facilities, operating them as a business, and the campground operation. Discussion facilitates the process to make a decision on what works for the Jamestown community. Councilors would like to see other options.

Town Administrator Paicos explained his process, spending over 100 hours on the report, and the perceived the mission was:

- Collins Center engaged to review Recreation Department.

- Review of recommendations by Town staff with commentary on agree/disagree and how to implement the recommendations, including time and resources.
- Met with departments affected and reviewed each recommendation, using summary chart.
- Redeveloped summary chart with comments for resources and time.

Many of the items are administrative, are not policy, and do not require Council attention. The reorganization recommendation, taking maintenance out of Recreation and putting it under DPW, was proposed by the Collins Center. The two maintenance workers are under the Recreation Director, who is not a trained manager. The DPW Director is a trained manager, who was consulted, and gave a thorough analysis. Other areas, such as consolidation with the schools, outsourcing, independent structure, or contracting were not indicated in the report, but an extension of what was originally requested. The Council agreed and stated this is what they would like to see, and is important information.

Town Administrator Paicos outlined four policy-level, substantive areas:

- What is the proper home for fields and grounds maintenance capabilities
- What is the vision for the Recreation Department
- What are we doing for performing arts and housing the activities
- What about taking social services and putting it under a single management - senior services and recreation

Reviewing the areas, the options are:

- Leave the maintenance under the Recreation Department where it is; it provides a service and is not perfect; it could be done with additional manpower.
- Have it as a stand-alone department. The school maintenance department was referenced and its success in maintaining their assets
- Put maintenance under the Public Works Department- two subsets – staffing patterns.
- Consolidate with the school department – not able to dialogue with school superintendent as yet; work in progress.

The current status is less important than cooperation, competent management, and staffing. Towns and cities do not traditionally maintain their buildings properly, due to improper funding, resulting in deterioration of buildings. The Jamestown School Department is an exception, and they have excellent results. The school department has capable management and is doing a great job - when well funded, we have good results. This is a possibility, with the assurance we are serious. During the discussion, other areas will be reviewed. Mr. Paicos noted the budget is the ultimate expression of policy. The chart reflecting organizations and organizational structure prepared by Town Administrator Paicos was distributed to Council members. It reflects current staffing with costs, positions subject to reorganization, and analysis of duties and shifting of wages will be addressed in an updated version of the chart. Discussion continued.

The Collins Center recommended taking management of Fort Getty from Recreation and moving it elsewhere, Mr. Paicos noted he does not agree with putting it under DPW, and he prefers a stand-alone department with proper management. After review of the municipal salary survey (prepared by the Office of Municipal Finance), a \$75,000 commensurate salary is needed for a qualified, trained person. Expenses were estimated at \$10,000, plus \$15,000 for fringe benefits. This would create a new department head and move the two maintenance workers to that department. It is achievable, but expensive.

The Deputy DPW Director option (the previous deputy position was eliminated) was reviewed. A talented, trained manager is in place, and the Deputy would have management and GIS capabilities. The estimated salary is \$65,000, the deputy would be a jack of all trades, and Mr. Paicos recommends this redundancy. This scenario assumes elimination of the Environmental Engineer position, with the assumption we want GIS capabilities and need some new capabilities, and still maintaining our status as the 3rd lowest tax rate in RI. Mr. Paicos stated he made a value decision based on what one position provides and what another new position could provide, and the new position could provide more than the position that is being sacrificed. Taxpayers demand efficiency, and it is his job to do more with less. What results is a better staff structure for that delivers more critical services than those eliminated. The DPW option is the compromise scenario. The final column, if the schools agree, would not require a top manager, as they have one, but would have some type of middle management. This would have to be worked out over the next month.

The last option of contracting out this service to a private party requires detailed information on town staff operations. Contracting out does not save money, as it cannot replicate what a government entity is performing unless the government entity is performing duties at an inflated cost, which he does not see. The Friends of the Jamestown seniors group was referenced. Most towns have a department rather than an organization run by volunteers that provides an outstanding product for the cost. Collins Center recommends putting recreation and seniors under one department. If the Seniors are not in favor of consolidating their department, it will be respected. A future meeting with the Seniors and the Council is in order.

Strategic Plan for the Recreation Department. All non-government programs and organizations that have a relationship with the Town need to be documented, which should be ready in 2 to 3 weeks. When this is available the questions to ask are:

- Where will we house all the programs (not room for all of them)
- Do we assume this represents Jamestown's desires for recreational and cultural programming
- Median age for Jamestown is 50; has impact on recreation; requires formation of a committee after completion of the study

- Need to know from the architect what should be housed at the golf course building.

This is a work in progress. Councilor Dickinson noted employees know their feelings and what their functions are; it is important to articulate the missions, documenting their current status and where they should go from there. Vice President Meagher noted the Collins Center brought out the big issues, there are other things that need to be addressed, and we shouldn't rush this.

Town Administrator Paicos noted this is very complex. He found Vice President Meagher's spreadsheet very helpful. There are big decisions that need to be made, but it does not have to be done in the next six weeks. The big questions are: What do we do with maintenance? What do we do with Fort Getty?

Councilor Dickinson noted it is imperative we provide access to government, which will be accomplished via information technology. Per Finance Director Collins this will take place with website upgrades. Evaluation is underway and may be reflected in capital budget requests. Discussion continued.

B) Set Date for next Work Session. Upcoming meetings and dates were referenced. The date set for the next work session is Tuesday, February 18th, beginning at 7:30 p.m., followed by the regular meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mary Meagher with second by Blake Dickinson to adjourn. President Trocki, Aye; Vice President Meagher, Aye; Councilor Tighe, Aye; Councilor Mihaly, Absent; Councilor Dickinson, Aye.

The special meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Attest:

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council (5)
Town Administrator
Finance Director
Town Solicitor