

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

March 10, 2014

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 5:01 p.m. by Council President Kristine Trocki. The following members were present:

Kristine Trocki, President
Mary Meagher, Vice-President
Eugene Mihaly
Thomas Tighe
Blake Dickinson

Also present:

Christina Collins, Acting Town Administrator/Finance Director
Heather R. Lopes, Assistant Town Clerk
David Petrarca, Town Solicitor
Cheryl Fernstrom, Town Clerk
Michael Gray, Public Works Director
Kenneth Gray, Tax Assessor
William Piva, Parks & Recreation Director
James Bryer, Fire Chief
Edward Mello, Police Chief
Lisa Bryer, Town Planner
Donna Fogarty, Librarian

Tina Collins began with an overview of the Operating Budget line by line noting how very conscientious Department Heads are in their budget requests. Ms. Collins states much of the salary amounts are due to contract obligations. We have three (3) contracts; NAGE 68 & 69 and IBPO. IBPO is currently in negotiation. Department Heads and nonunion personnel were given a 2.5% increase in pay and determined longevity in line with the employees covered under the NAGE union contracts. There will be some slight adjustments when the IBPO contract is ratified. Tina Collins stated the increase is factored into the budget under salary adjustments and will be placed under specific line items when figures are finalized. If the budget is accepted with no changes as it stands currently, there will be a \$0.15 increase in the tax rate. Other across the board increases will be seen in maintenance, supplies and repairs as the general cost of these items is increasing.

In addition to the above mentioned, adjustments in amounts were explained as follows:

- **Elections:** This year will hold two elections & by State mandate there is going to be an increase in the number of poll workers.
- **Legal:** Has been level funded. Councilor Mihaly inquired if this amount should be increased. Tina stated if that is the Council's desire and that these numbers can be adjusted any time prior to the Council's vote on acceptance of the budget. She also noted this applies for any line item.

- **Personnel:** Blue Cross & Delta Dental actual rates will be out in mid-March. This can be a significant change. Retirement figure does not include the Police Department employees.
- **Finance:** It consultant increase is due to an increase in the number of hours due to our high demand on his services. Councilor Dickinson asked if this time covers work on the new website and other projects. Tina stated no, this is day to day maintenance. Professional Services covers payroll as it is outsourced to ADP.
- **Tax Assessor:** He has taken over most of the clerical work at this time so the figure is reduced. Increase in field inspections for Vision Appraisal to assess new houses as they are completed for consistency.
- **Audit:** Contract will have to go out to bid this year. Costs have gone up in general so this is expected to increase.

- **Public Safety:**

Police: This contract is in negotiation as earlier stated so figures are expected to change. A new vehicle is not being requested this year so maintenance fees are expected to increase. Councilor Meagher pointed out the decrease in the overtime cost over the previous few years. Tina stated this is due to being fully staffed and the need to fill open shifts is less.

Fire Protection: Councilor Meagher inquired on the number of hours the Fire Chief is scheduled, she is told it is 35 hours per week. Fire Inspector salary increase will be received. This position is hourly not salary. It was able to be absorbed from monies not spent so is not shown in the budget. Telephone increase is due to combining the EMS systems with the fire departments.

EMS: There is a decrease in the stipends as they are no longer being requested by the Medical Director at Newport Hospital and the QA/QI is removed because the merger with the fire department is complete. Councilor Tighe inquired if the ambulance medical supply cost will go up if the level of service is moved from BLS to ALS. He is informed yes, this would increase and ALS is discussion on the Capital budget at this time as it has not been implemented as of yet. Councilor Dickinson asked if we bill patients for these supplies and is told yes, the figure is included on the revenue side of the budget.

- **Public Works:** The salary of the Director is spread from 50% general fund, 25% water fund and 25 % from the sewer fund. Councilor Dickinson asked if longevity figure is affected by this and is told the longevity schedule is the same but the longevity is applied against the general fund.

Environmental Scientist: This salary is also funded out of various budgets. Funding this position in this manner is due to the scope of his work covering all these areas.

Snow Removal: Councilor Dickinson inquires why the snow removal overtime is separate from the regular overtime line item. Ms. Collins states it is to keep track specifically for snow removal versus a road paving project per say. This number has frequent inquiries from the media and is also needed if there is a FEMA issue and figures are required. Councilor Dickinson asked when this figure is depleted does the money come from. Ms. Collins stated all figures are then looked at to see if spending can be reduced in another area to absorb the cost. Councilor Mihaly would like to know when the \$50,000 contingency fund is drawn on. Tina stated this is only done when the Town Council approves expenditure to use the funds on. Discussion ensued.

- **Street Lighting:** Increase is due to National Grid costs. Councilor Mihaly inquired on where we stand on a buy-out of the street lighting. Mike Gray states Washington County Planners is handling that for the communities they represent. It is unsure what direction that is heading. For a community to take that over you need to have the employees, equipment available and knowledge of maintaining the street lights. National Grid is currently providing this. Electricity is included in the cost as well as the maintenance. Washington County Planners are currently working with the General Assembly on this issue. Discussion ensued.
- **Buildings:** Tina stated the cleaning services include the Town Hall, Police Station, Recreation Center, Library as well as the bathrooms at Dutch Harbor and outside the Rec Center. These services are contractual.
- **Public Health:** Senior Center Operations is increased due to the Center receiving less money from grants and State. The \$15,000 increase is towards the salary of a new Director due to the retirement of the current as well as additional funding for programs. The Town is a major source of their funding. It is stated this is not related to the food service. Discussion ensued regarding current concerns and issues with food services and the costs. Councilor Dickinson would like to see sub-accounts. Tina will provide line items to separate out expenses.
- **Parks & Recreation:** Salaries (line 102) has been reduced due to a review of the positions and number of hours worked in the past and what is anticipated. The reduction in the Teen Center salaries is due to the pay increase being absorbed in remaining monies. Councilor Meagher would like to see these salaries separated as the figure includes casual labor and the Teen Center Coordinator.
- **Debt Service:** Payment of Principal increase is due to the first year paying the principal on monies for the landfill closure bond in addition to the corresponding interest payments. The leased equipment amount is proposed and not finalized. If leased this would include six pieces of equipment and would be interest only for the first year. This will be addressed further in the Capital Budget discussions.

Councilor Mihaly inquired if these are stand-alone items or would be rolled into the debt of the landfill. Tina stated these are stand-alone items. Purchase of the equipment is a capital expense although the funding is an operational expense. Discussion continued on priority of equipment and the possible financing options.

Tina Collins stated the proposed budget shows an increase of approximately \$107,000 in the General Fund budget. These increases are mostly due to the increased cost of electricity, contractual obligations and the cost of health care.

The work session adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Attest:

Heather R. Lopes, CMC
Assistant Town Clerk