

**TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION
April 10, 2018**

I. ROLL CALL

Town Council Members present:

Kristine S. Trocki, President
Mary E. Meagher, Vice President
Blake A. Dickinson
Michael G. White
Eugene Mihaly

Also in attendance:

Andrew E. Nota, Town Administrator
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director
Edward E. Mello, Police Chief
Andrew Wade, Recreation Director
James Bryer, Fire Chief
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

School Committee Members present:

Bruce J. Whitehouse, Chair
Sarah R. Baines, Vice Chair
Agnes C. Filkins
Sally F. Schott
Dorothy S. Strang

Also in attendance:

Kenneth A. Duva, Superintendent
Erica B. Dickson, Director of Student Services
Jane Littlefield, Director of Finance
Peter Anderson, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Carole Petersen, Melrose School Principal

II. CALL TO ORDER

Town Council President Trocki and School Committee Chair B. J. Whitehouse called the Joint Town Council and School Department Budget Work Session to order at 7:03 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10, 2018, 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 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019); continued

- 1) Operating Budget, continued
- 2) Capital Improvement Program, continued
- 3) School Infrastructure Project, continued
- 4) Review and Discussion

Dr. Duva gave a synopsis of events that transpired since the last budget work session with the Town Council. General review of potential changes that impact the School Department budget proceeded. The Transportation Contract bid process for the next three years concluded. A recommendation is on the next School Committee Meeting agenda to award the bid to First Student, the current contractor. The proposed contract would result in a \$10,106 savings. There is a \$91,100 reduction in the Special Education budget due to a population shift. The resulting total budget reduction is \$101,206. The original adopted school budget represented a 5.10% appropriation increase. With the two reductions, it reflects a 4.19% budget appropriation increase. This will be addressed at Thursday's School Committee Meeting.

Dr. Duva referenced the five-year Capital Improvement Plan and noted the Capital Budget bottom line amount is maintained at \$150,000. The Phase 2 application process with RIDE is ongoing with some revision.

Lawn School. Lengthy discussion ensued of the Lawn School programming expansion and realignment of the 5th Grade classrooms, based on directives from RIDE. Lengthy review of the revised schematic design continued, involving realigned areas to create more usable collaborative space for the benefit of all grades and students. This will affect the 2022-2023 Capital Budget, and in turn will allow for increased reimbursement from the State.

Lengthy discussion ensued of the planned use of solar panels to reduce electricity costs. The feasibility study for solar panels previously provided to Council members was noted. Over 20-25 years, with the grant funding, school construction reimbursements, and net metering, the solar energy investment is feasible and will provide a payback ahead of other projects (estimated at 18 years).

Chair Whitehouse commented there as a 1% budget decrease with the new transportation contract, with all new buses within two years. The two paramount issues for the School Committee are:

- Education of the children to preserve the republic
- The bottom line

Council members are pleased with the budget and commend the School Committee and Administration. Jamestown has two of the top performing schools in the State. Discussion ensued of using additional surplus funds to reduce the budget impact and school populations. The School budget adjustment reduced the 29 cent tax increase by 4%. Discussion ensued of OPEB and unreserved funds currently at 5%, as recommended by the auditors.

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

Jerome Scott of Walcott Avenue asked for the per-student cost for education and the reimbursement for military children. Chair Whitehouse stated Federal impact aid is \$90,000 for children of military families. The cost per student is \$17,000 for elementary students and \$14,000 for high school students. School Committee Member Strang explained the Federal reimbursement program and the great asset provided by military families to the community and schools by their presence. Discussion continued.

Linda Jamison of Ocean Avenue inquired about the out-of-district costs for special education students. Dr. Duva explained the process followed to determine what programs can be provided in-house and what must be provided out-of-district, based on needs, educational requirements, and costs to provide services. Chair Whitehouse noted students are kept in Jamestown as much as possible and the fantastic job done by School Department staff to keep costs down, as shown by the \$91,000 special education cost reduction discussed earlier.

Councilor Meagher noted the benefit to the year-round population provided by military families bringing their experiences and skills to the community and schools.

Dante Tita of Columbia Lane, Member of the Taxpayers' Association, commented the proposed tax increase is too costly for senior citizens living on a fixed income and requests a review of the process to lower the overall tax increase.

Discussion ensued of the need for the budget work session scheduled for Thursday, August 12, 2018, if needed. The structure of the agenda for this meeting allows for discussion of the Town budget as well. If Thursday's meeting is not needed it can be cancelled; budget adoption is scheduled for Monday, April 16th, on the regular meeting agenda.

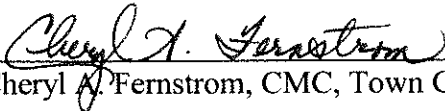
Discussion ensued of the percentage of budget increase, estimated between 3.29% and 3.33%. Councilor Meagher suggested raising the rates for campers at Fort Getty by \$400 for FY 2019, for an additional \$32,000 income. Discussion ensued of using reserve funds for the Fort Getty Gatehouse and Restrooms project, and reducing the Fort Getty Capital Improvement Fund appropriation from \$75,000 to \$50,000, for an additional 2 cents savings on the tax rate, a total reduction of 10 cents less than the original proposed tax rate of 29 cents. Discussion ensued of the daily camper (transient) sites and tent sites.

Discussion ensued of requests for additional funding for public service agencies. President Trocki announced that an additional budget work session is not needed, and Chair Whitehouse noted the School Budget revision is on the agenda for Thursday's School Committee Meeting. The April 12th work session is cancelled as it is not needed, and the FY 2019 Budget will be voted on at Monday's Council meeting (April 16th at 6:30 p.m.).

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the Town Council and School Department Budget Review Work Session was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Attest:


Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council
 Town Administrator
 Town Solicitor
 Finance Director