

FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING
June 4, 2018

Call to Order

Moderator John Murphy calls the Annual Financial Town Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Lawn Avenue School Gymnasium, 55 Lawn Avenue, Jamestown, and led the Pledge of Allegiance. A moment of silence was observed for Jamestown residents who passed away since our last Financial Town Meeting.

Town Council members present:

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

Also in attendance:

John A. Murphy, Town Moderator
Andrew E. Nota, Town Administrator
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director
Howard Tighe, Deputy Fire Chief
Donna J. Fogarty, Library Director
Edward A. Mello, Police Chief
Angela Deneault, Police Lieutenant
Fred F. Pease, Town Sergeant
Steven J. Tiexiera, Deputy Fire Chief
Andrew J. Wade, Parks and Recreation Director
Wyatt A. Brochu, Town Solicitor
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

School Committee members present:

Bruce J. Whitehouse, Chair
Sarah Baines, Vice Chair
Sally Schott
Agnes Filkins

Also in attendance:

Kenneth Duva, Superintendent
Jane Littlefield, Director of Finance
Peter Anderson, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Carole Peterson, Melrose School Principal
Nate Edmunds, Lawn School Principal
Erika Dickson, Director of Student Services

Budget Process, Meeting Procedures and Voting Overview

Town Moderator Murphy thanked the staff of the Lawn Avenue School and members of the Jamestown Fire Department for setting up a comfortable and safe place for so many voters in attendance. Moderator Murphy alerted those in attendance to the location of all the exits and which exit to use in case of an emergency. Our objective is to have a fair and open meeting, and the rules we follow are designed to achieve that. This FTM operates under State law and Town Charter.

Moderator Murphy stated the Town Council President and School Committee Chair will describe their budgets and what you will be asked to vote on. Voters seated in the main body of this room should have a green wristband, which they may be asked to show when they vote. Voters who wish to speak should use the microphone in the center of the room. People seated behind the yellow chain in the bleachers are non-voters and have purple wristbands.

Voting on Motions

Moderator Murphy commented on efficiency at the FTM. Moderator Murphy explained voting on motions as follows: the first method is to have a voice vote; if that is not decisive, I will ask you to vote by standing; it is possible we may have a paper ballot on an issue if 20% of those eligible to vote are in favor of that, which takes some time to accomplish. The Board of Canvassers assists with counting votes. You are not permitted to make a motion to add \$10,000 or more to the budget unless a warrant has been filed in writing to the Town Clerk. We have no such filings, so there will be no such motions of that type. When a motion is made, it must be seconded, and then we will proceed with discussion on that motion.

Town Council President Kristine Trocki

Moderator Murphy introduced President Trocki, who thanked Moderator Murphy and addressed the assembled voters. President Trocki noted she will be leaving after her address as her husband has a medical emergency.

Good evening everyone. I'm Kristine Trocki, your President of the Jamestown Town Council for the past 6 years. This is very likely my last time before you at an FTM. It has been my honor to serve you and this amazing community for all of these years. On behalf of the Town Council and B. J. Whitehouse, Chair of the School Committee, I would like to thank you all for joining us this evening.

Simply put, tonight's Financial Town Meeting is a process that gives us an opportunity to present to you an outline of our community priorities and costs. An outline that the Town Council, School Committee, and more importantly, we the community, believe will support our many quality of services and infrastructure in order to make improvements throughout the Island for all of our residents.

Hopefully, by the end of our presentations, and after an opportunity for your questions

and comments, together we as a community will vote Yes and Yes, thereby approving both our Town and School budgets. I do want to make it abundantly clear that despite the circulation of misinformation, both budgets have already been unanimously approved by all 5 of your elected Town Councilors. Both the Town and School Budgets have been exhaustively vetted line item by line item by us, by your Town Administrator, by the School Committee, as well as by all Town and School Departments during more than a dozen meetings throughout the course of this past winter and spring. Now it is your turn.

By way of background, although the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Budget is a year-round process, the formal structure began back in November. It is at this time that our Town Administrator, Andy Nota, lays out the process and timeline. In addition, individual Town Departments and Staff develop recommendations, and these recommendations are used in the development of the Administrator's Proposed Budget. This budget offers insight, scale, scope and costs to local priorities, while balancing the Town's most immediate needs and noting the financial impact to Town residents.

In order to provide as much community input as possible, the Town Council itself held a total of ten (10) budget related public discussions to allow for sufficient time to discuss and review the Town Administrator's and School Department's budget recommendations. As the weeks progressed, and more information was provided by the Town Departments and the public, the budget was continuously updated and refined by the Town Council, School Committee and the Town Administrator.

A challenge this year, more so than in the past, was an ongoing need to continue to engage the public not only to elicit your input but to also address the misinformation out there in various forms - whether it be print, social media, or local conversations. Town and School officials spent a great deal of time, as they should, to educate, and sometimes re-educate folks, as to how all of this information was impacting the budget and local projects. Thus, it is our hope that you can now feel comfortable relying on the Town's professional staff, consultants and guidance for this year's budget and for future Town Councils to move these initiatives forward.

The great news is that Jamestown continues to offer its residents one of the lowest residential, commercial and motor vehicle tax rates in Rhode Island, while maintaining high quality municipal services and an amazing community-based quality of life. In FY 2018, Jamestown was able to again offer the third lowest residential tax rate, third lowest commercial rate and fourth lowest motor vehicle rate in Rhode Island.

In spite of what you may have heard around town in comparing us with our neighboring communities regarding overall financial health and fiscal management practices, we are different in many respects from our neighbors. I'm very glad we are and I hope you are too. In a brief comparison with Newport, Middletown, East Greenwich, North Kingstown and Narragansett, we maintain considerably lower residential, commercial and motor vehicle tax rates. The only two communities in Rhode Island able to achieve a lower

residential tax rate than Jamestown are Little Compton and Block Island. In 2017, thirty (30) other Rhode Island communities had a tax rate above \$15.00 with most in the \$20-\$25 range per thousand. This statistic does not outline the other pension and OPEB liability, debt capacity limits and community challenges these cities/towns are also facing. Many of these concerns can influence a communities' bond rating, population trends, employment recruitment practices and whether or not they can maintain professional continuity and service levels in their local community. Jamestown does not have these problems.

The facts are that: since FY 2013, the Town has realized a tax rate reduction totaling \$.50 over the prior six-year period from \$9.35 in FY2013 to the proposed rate of \$8.85 for FY2019. The budget proposal is for a \$.19 rate increase for next year, while a \$.20 tax rate reduction occurred in FY2017 - with no increase over the prior two years. This, also following a \$.60 rate reduction in FY2014. This year's proposed 2.98% increase in the net levy keeps us in a stable financial situation and allows important priorities to be addressed in the community and the School Department, while still allowing us to maintain one of the lowest overall tax rates in Rhode Island.

The Capital Program over the past five years has been targeted at improving the community's infrastructure through one-time investments in the Town's roads, sidewalks, drainage systems, buildings, schools, parks and various shoreline improvements. We are continuing to address a portion of this work through the efforts of in-house personnel, thus greatly reducing project cost and expanding the scope of work for many of our town projects. A few of these projects include the Mackerel Cove restroom/storage facility, various park improvement projects including the Playground and Lawn Avenue Playfields, Taylor Point, improvements at Fort Getty, and the North Road improvements. These are all important projects for our community and when combined with the quality and scope of municipal services that we also enjoy, these are all achievements that our community can take great pride in.

The Town's recognized financial stability, leadership in the areas of preservation and environmental stewardship, sustainability, elementary and secondary education, agricultural pursuits, the arts, marine services, and preserving what is unique about our community are all accomplishments that we have grown accustomed to as part of our local culture. The Town's Aa1 Bond rating remains a significant achievement, in that we continue to be one of only five communities in Rhode Island with a rating this high and by far the smallest community (with a heavily seasonal commercial) district to do so. With various infrastructure improvements, and the 3 bonds of the School, Golf Course and Library scheduled to come before the community for consideration on the November ballot, this rating and fiscal strength is poised to save the Town hundreds of thousands of dollars during the payback term of any long-term borrowing that is required.

On a side note, with respect to the three (3) Bonds that will be on your November Ballot (the School, Golf Course and Library), you can look forward to upcoming educational

sessions and information this Fall about all three of these important projects that are not only necessary, but vital to maintaining our infrastructure and community standards. I, and at least three of my fellow Councilors, fully support each project independently and together and strongly encourage you to learn more about them so that you too can vote yes to all three in November. However, these decisions are not budgetary matters before us this evening and will be addressed in the next fiscal year or years.

In addition, the Town and School Department successfully launched a joint initiative to enter into an Irrevocable Trust program to manage the existing and future Other Post Employment Benefit Liability or better known as (OPEB). As of the end of 2017, the Town and School has already invested with earnings, a total of \$1.28 million dollars to address retiree benefit costs, a program managed by the Rhode Interlocal Risk Management Trust, the Town's insurer. This investment has provided an affordable and comprehensive way for the Town to manage this liability and its Trust investments in the years to come.

Priorities in the Operating Program for this year worthy of special comment include overall service stability in recommending a 1.18% increase of \$97,060.00 in municipal operations. In this proposal, you will see minimal cost increases in Public Safety services, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Public Health services, Library services and Debt Service - yet you will continue to experience the existing service levels that we all expect. The increase in the School Budget Program is \$476,140.00 or a 4.32% increase, which B. J. will address shortly. I, too, want to mention and applaud the recent accomplishments of our school system. Some major highlights include:

1. Both Melrose and Lawn Schools have received Top Ranking Commended Status by the Rhode Island Department of Education;
2. The recent Teacher of the Year award for all of Rhode Island was given to our 6th grade science teacher at Lawn, Charlene Tuttle;
3. The Susan B. Wilson Civic Education Merit Award was given to our 5th grade teacher, Christine Bernardo; and
4. Melrose School has been nominated as a United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon School.

These amazing accomplishments really say it all and are frankly in my opinion, priceless. In spite of these awards and the many other successes, when you look at the school department over time, they have managed themselves using a very frugal and efficient approach in delivering one of our most important services. I will let B. J. further address the figures and accomplishments with respect to the schools.

Just so you are aware, the Town's contribution to the Schools fluctuates based on many factors, including volatility in revenues and expenditures, the issuance of debt, capital investments, as well as program and contractual requirements. We stand with our School

Officials in acknowledging the great work being conducted in our schools and in addressing the needs of a consistent enrollment and their collaborative approach in working hand in hand with Town Officials on joint initiatives. It is with great confidence that I can state that our community's educational system is sound, well managed, and provides leadership both inside and outside of Jamestown. Jamestown is a prime example of what a successful public education program should be.

With respect to personnel within the General Fund, we are anticipating very little change in the full-time and part-time categories. There are no full-time positions recommended to be added or deleted from the Town's workforce in FY2019. We are very excited to have included investment in two important areas – the Town's Senior Program and an investment in rooftop solar panels on several Town buildings to help curb our electricity costs in the future. The Senior Program investment includes an expansion of the Senior Coordinator position in providing necessary program and social service support, along with additional program, transportation and facility improvement funding.

The Town and School Combined Capital Program in FY2019 recommends a decrease of \$93,650.00 following a decrease of \$101,070.00 from last year. In spite of this reduction, this year's Capital Program again targets numerous areas of need within the community, including:

1. A continued commitment to the Pavement Management Program to improve our road network and sidewalks; including the fourth and final phase of North Road improvements, beginning with an improved drainage system, paving of Phase II and the installation of a Shared Pedestrian/Bicycle Path from West Passage to the North Reservoir;
2. Continuation of Fort Getty improvements that is self-funded by park operations to complete much of the ongoing work, with the replacement of the Gatehouse structure and the rehabilitation of the lower restroom building, along with other needed improvements;
3. Continued support for Affordable Funding initiatives;
4. The final phase of funding for the installation of Vault Shelving in the Town Clerks Office;
5. Information Technology projects including Fiber Network Expansion and further work on the viability of a North End Cell Tower Installation;
6. Communication Replacements and Radio Call Box Equipment System and Equipment Upgrades for Fire and EMS Services; and
7. Parks and Recreation projects including, needed interior work at the Senior Center, enhancements to our Public ROW's and the replacement of aging Parks Equipment.

These community priorities as proposed, as well as others listed within the Town and School Operating and Capital Programs, address our community's needs in a fair, thoughtful and fiscally responsible fashion and deserve your support.

With these efforts, the recommended Annual Town budget for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 \$10,735,066.00.

The recommended Jamestown School Department budget is \$13,567,492.00.

The total recommended Town and School Department budget for fiscal year 2018-2019 totals, \$24,302,558.00.

On behalf of the Town Council, I respectfully request your support for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Budget as it is presented.

Thank you. (Applause)

Moderator Murphy thanked President Trocki for sharing that information.

School Committee Chair Bruce J. Whitehouse

Moderator Murphy introduced Chairman Whitehouse, who thanked Moderator Murphy and addressed the assembled voters:

Thank you for your ongoing support.

The proposed school budget is \$12,678,360 which represents an increase of 4.43% over last year's budget. The town contribution is \$11,665,624 or an increase of 4.14%

The School Committee keeps a sharp eye on the bottom line. But, we also recognize that excellence comes with a cost.

Tax rate changes over the years – average of 1.24% school budget from FY08 to FY19– this year we are asking for a 4.43% increase or 4.19% town appropriation.

- Budget drivers:
 - net increase of high school students
 - SPED costs
 - Contracts with all personnel
 - Unknowns – student needs, staffing needs, energy costs, tuitions
 - Transportation cost

A few factoids:

- Student population has been steady for the past five years
- We have very good relationships with the high schools in NK and Narragansett
- We service 673 students, grades pre-K through 12

So, what do you get in return for your tax dollars?

In the past few years Jamestown Schools have achieved:

- Commended Status (the Highest Ranking) from the Rhode Island Department of Education for the last three years (Melrose) and the last two years (Lawn)
- Melrose School Nominated for a United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon School
- Recognized by Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo and Commissioner Ken Wagner as a leader in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Education
- Award-winning robotics teams coached by community members and parent volunteers
- Top standardized test scores in Rhode Island
- Creative and innovative Makerspace labs in each school are visited by teachers from around New England
- Vibrant music and athletic programs
- Exciting community support through Island Treasures
- Extraordinary support through parent/community groups such the PTO, Jamestown Educational Foundation, SELAC and the School Improvement Teams
- Christine Bernardo
- And if that isn't enough, Charlene Tuttle, Sixth Grade Science teacher is the RHODE ISLAND TEACHER OF THE YEAR FOR 2019!! CONGRATULATIONS, CHARLENE!! WE ARE SO PROUD!!!!

And if you are interested in participating in upcoming events please subscribe to the school's electronic newsletter, The Howl. Here are a few of the latest entries:

- The eighth grade has just returned from their Washington DC trip
- The 5th grade recess committee will present to the SC on Thursday.
- National Junior honor Society induction is Wednesday at 5PM
- NKHS graduation is Monday, June 11
- 5/6 grade chorus and band concert is 6/12
- 7/8 grade band/chorus concert is 6/13
- June 14 in Narragansett High School graduation
- Friday, 6/22 is the 8th grade graduation
- Check out the Midnight Moon, a GPS sailboat created by the students that was launched off of George's Banks and is, presently, 462 miles off of the Azores
- And, lastly, the Green Thumb Club is holding a plant sale in the Melrose greenhouse, June 7 and 8 from 2:30-4PM.

I'll never try to tell you what a buck is worth, but this is the cost of excellence.

On behalf of the School Committee and the Children, thank you. (Applause)

Voting on the Budget

Moderator Murphy stated we will continue with this exercise in civics and get to the business of the meeting, which is to act upon the request made by the Town Council and School Committee to adopt the budget. Moderator Murphy entertained a motion to adopt the town general budget.

A motion was made by Town Council Member Mary Meagher with second by Town Council Member Eugene Mihaly to approve the general Town Budget for the fiscal year 2018-2019 in the amount of \$10,735,066.

Moderator Murphy asked for any discussion, directing voters to treat others as you would like to be treated, and to use the microphone, stating your name and street address.

Valerie Southern of Clinton Avenue stated she is here on behalf of herself and her family and has discussed the budget with her family. This is a good budget but there are concerns she would like to raise tonight. What she finds disturbing due to its impact on all our budgets are the increases in salaries for public service employees; please do not take it personally. The Town Administrator salary includes a \$3,000 increase and an additional \$3,000 for longevity. Legal Professional Services in the Legal category increased by \$30,000. The salary for the Town Planner increases in one year by \$4,000. The Salary Study Adjustment increased from \$0 to \$12,900. The Other Post-Employment Benefits increased by \$25,000. The salary for the Finance Director increased by \$3,000. The salary for the Assessor increased \$5,000 for one year. Professional Services for the Audit of Accounts increased by \$5,000. The salary for the Police Chief increased by \$8,000 in one year. The Longevity for Police Officers increased by \$51,000 for one year. The Salaries for Dispatch and Others increased by \$220,000 in one year. Police Retirement increased by \$30,000. Uniforms for Police increased by \$6,000 in one year. Police Incentive increased by \$3,000. Fire Protection increased by \$12,000. Cleaning contract for fire protection increased by \$7,000. Fees, Supplies and Dues increased by \$5,000.

Moderator Murphy notified Ms. Southern the time limit per citizen is three minutes.

Ms. Southern noted she will speak faster. The salary for the Building Inspector increased \$3,000. The Engineering Salary for Environmental Services increased by \$6,000. The Salaries for Highway increased \$40,000 plus. The Salary for the Operator Waste Removal increased \$11,000. The Salary for Public Buildings increased \$13,000. The part-time Salaries for the Senior Center increased \$26,000, but I think I can understand that. The Miscellaneous, Incidentals and Emergencies looks like \$27,000, but I won't go on as that was three minutes. I see the Town Council as a steward. Who among us has \$2,000, \$4,000, \$5,000 salary increases in one year? Why can't you incrementally increase them; I understand the need for increases for inflation, etc. I see the Town Council as a steward in this and if we pass the budget we are setting a precedent, which means we don't go back and change the increase in these numbers over time. Unless I hear an explanation of why all these increases are included, I have to vote no on this budget.

Town Council Member Meagher responded, noting some of the amounts quoted were incorrect, and I will ask the Town Administrator to respond as well. Legal Services went up by \$20,000, and this is the first increase in 11 years. Salary adjustments are made when we are negotiating salaries and the salaries studies line item is put in for this purpose. Our staff is terrific and in times of trouble (2007, 2008, 2010) they didn't take raises. Pay raises right now are about 2.5%. In some cases longevity is included in the salaries where it did not appear in last year's budget, so some of the numbers quoted are not correct. Department heads and staff brought in over the last two years \$2 million in grant funding - the Recreation Department alone brought in \$590,000. In terms of salary pay raises, they deserve the 2.5% now, in light of the fact they did not take raises when times were bad.

Moderator Murphy asked if there is anyone else who would like to speak to the general town budget.

A motion was made by Linda Jamison of Ocean Avenue with a second by a voter in attendance to vote on the Town general budget by paper ballot.

Moderator Murphy explained to have a paper ballot we must have 20% of eligible voters present vote in favor of a paper ballot. He asked for a standing count of those in favor of a paper ballot, raising their hand with the green wristband, and asked the Canvassers to count people standing.

Count of Voters Present

The Board of Canvassers inform the Moderator there are 285 voters in attendance at 8:11 p.m.

The Canvassers count the voters standing (wearing green wristbands). The count of voters in favor of a paper ballot is given to the Moderator at 8:15 p.m.

Moderator Murphy announced the motion for a paper ballot fails. **Motion fails by a majority vote in the negative.** (Applause)

Linda Jamison of Ocean Avenue asked what the fail number was. Moderator Murphy stated 44 votes in favor of it (285 voters present).

Valerie Southern of Clinton Avenue stated (to Councilor Meagher) that what she quoted was based on the numbers provided in the flyer we received (in the *Jamestown Press*). It would probably be best to discuss this after the meeting. She doesn't like what she said being characterized as inaccurate. She noted there is a little sensitivity here by people who work in public service. The statement we have great staff she is sure is true, and she doesn't dispute that. Her issue is we have to continue to be judicious and look at our budget, whether we are the lowest or the highest in the state every year, and one of the reasons for

this meeting is to discuss and make sure our budget is as appropriate as possible for the taxpayers who have to pay for that budget every year. Thank you. (Applause)

Moderator Murphy stated unless there is more discussion, we will now vote by a voice vote. All those in favor of the budget vote yes in a clear voice, don't yell. **"Yes"**. All those opposed will say no. **"No"**. Moderator Murphy stated the **"Yesses"** have it. **Motion passes by a majority vote in the affirmative.** (Applause)

Moderator Murphy stated at this time he entertains a motion to support the school department budget.

A motion was made by Town Council Member Mary Meagher with second by Town Council Vice President Michael White to support the recommended school department budget in the amount of \$13,567,492.00.

Moderator Murphy asks if there is any discussion.

Valerie Southern of Clinton Avenue stated her only question on the budget is why we don't have a line item or some other indication that we are protecting our children and our schools against the latest trend of violence, people walking into public schools and just causing so much pain. Is there something in the budget I am missing, as I don't see an indication in 2018. (Applause)

School Committee Chair B. J. Whitehouse stated following the tragedy at Sandy Hook the School Committee took this job very seriously. When you enter one of our schools, you must be buzzed in by somebody in the office, and there is a holding section before you can go any further. Then you must have a pass that has been entered into the computer with a photo ID sticker before you can come into the building. Some of the upgrades made at that time, which we subsequently continue to improve, include new doors, and bullet resistant, not bullet proof, glass. If you are buzzed into the Melrose School, you go into the vestibule and if there is suspicious behavior, you can be locked into the vestibule as you walk in. If you are an intruder you can also be locked into the elevator in that area. There are certain security designs that we are not at liberty to discuss. We are in constant contact with the Police Department, they have held active shooter drills in our schools, and there is nobody who takes it more seriously than I do, making sure your children are safe, making sure your grandchildren are safe. We do everything we can to protect children, and it started well before that and even now. We hope our schools are inviting, we hope you want to visit our schools, but there are procedures and you have to walk through it, just as I had to do today, to ensure that our most precious commodity on the planet, our children, are safe. Thank you. (Applause)

Moderator Murphy asked if there is further discussion on the motion to support the school department budget.

Linda Jamison of Ocean Avenue commented on the school department budget and the accolades she has heard regarding our schools and how great our town is. She realized she had no idea what was involved in the budget process. She thanked Town Administrator Nota, Finance Director Collins, and Superintendent Duva for the information they graciously gave her in answer to her questions. She appreciates all the hard work that goes into the budget. She asks if the school budget does not pass tonight, what happens.

Moderator Murphy stated if a person wanted to present an alternate budget they could have submitted to the Town Clerk prior to this meeting a warrant with the budget they would like to suggest. That did not happen. People can also participate in the budget hearings. If this budget fails tonight, the town government, including the Town Council and the School Committee, would have to go back and consider their positions, as they would be operating under the old budget.

Ms. Jamison stated so they would be operating under last year's budget, and if there was a shortfall the town has the ultimate responsibility for the school, and the town would have to make up the difference in the budget. She was under the impression it reverts back to last year, but she learned at a Council meeting the town has the ultimate responsibility for the school department and would have to cover it. She brings this up as in emails and newsletters sent to the parents in support of the budget, to ensure the children get a quality education, what she heard is it would have to be made up and we can never take it away and the children will continue to receive a high quality education. If we vote down this budget, who is responsible for the difference between last year's budget?

Moderator Murphy stated if the money is not allocated in the budget it cannot be spent.

Ms. Jamison stated so the town is not responsible for the school?

Moderator Murphy stated they are responsible but they are governed by the former budget.

School Committee Chair Whitehouse stated if the school budget fails, at our last meeting 11 teachers were laid off. We hope to call them back. We would not do our job if we didn't have a budget that could pass. If this budget did not pass this evening, up to 11 teachers would be laid off.

Ms. Jamison stated so the \$476,000 additional that is requested is to ensure the 11 teachers are called back?

Mr. Whitehouse stated yes.

Ms. Jamison asked if we approve the budget for \$12.6 million, it was circulated that is the budget we start with next year, so that even though this is a big increase we can never go back?

Moderator Murphy stated that is not correct, each year is treated on its individual merits.

Mr. Whitehouse explained in FY2008 there was a 5.48% increase, the largest he can remember, the next year it was a .5% increase, the next year a 1.37% decrease, in FY2012 it was 1.86% increase, in FY2013 a .85% increase, in FY2014 a 2.39% decrease, in FY2015 a .47% increase, in FY2016 a .59% increase, in FY2017 a 1.7% increase, and last year a 2.37% increase. If we don't need the money we don't spend it. If we can cut in some place we do. If this budget doesn't pass, we have to take that option, and that which he has been through before as a teacher, and we would not be doing our job if we came to you expecting you to pass this budget, we can expect that we would have last year's budget, and that is the 11 positions we are talking about. Mr. Whitehouse explained that the school department engages zero base budgeting, and every year each line item starts at zero. We do not just add a percentage increase. We look at what we need. This starts every year in this manner and it is the best way to do it as we have an accurate number he feels comfortable with putting before the voters that he is confident about.

Ms. Jamison thanked him for the information.

Moderator Murphy stated discussion has ended and we will now vote.

All those in favor please say yes. **“Yes”**. All those opposed please say no. **“No”**. The yesses have it. **Motion passes by a majority vote in the affirmative.** (Applause)

Voting on the Resolutions

Moderator Murphy stated the first three Resolutions are housekeeping Resolutions and we will take them together. He entertains a motion to approve them as described in the brochure.

Resolution Number 1 – Sewer Line Frontage Tax Rate

Resolution Number 2 – Borrowing in Anticipation of Taxes

Resolution Number 3 – Disposition of Collected Back Taxes

A motion was made by Town Council Member Mary Meagher with second Town Council Vice President White to approve the Resolutions. There was no discussion.

Moderator Murphy called for all those in favor to say yes. **“Yes.”** All those opposed say no. **(no response). The motion passes unanimously.**

Resolution Number 4 – Setting the Tax Rate

Moderator Murphy announced we will now set the tax rate.

A motion was made by Town Council Member Mary Meagher with second by Town Council Vice President Michael White to set the Tax Rate at not more than \$8.85 per \$1,000.00.

Moderator Murphy called for all those in favor to say yes. **“Yes”**. All those opposed please say no. **“No”**. **Motion passes by a majority vote in the affirmative.**

Adjournment

Moderator Murphy entertains a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Town Council Member Blake Dickinson with second by Vice President Michael White to adjourn.

Moderator Murphy called for all those in favor to say yes. **“Yes”**. All those opposed say no. **“No”**. **(no response)**. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Moderator Murphy thanks all those in attendance.

The Financial Town Meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Attest:

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council
 Town Administrator
 Finance Director
 Town Solicitors
 Town Moderator