**TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

**December 17, 2018**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Joint Jamestown Town Council and School Committee Pre-Budget Work Session was called to order at 6:02 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue by Council Vice President Meagher.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Town Council Members present:

Mary E. Meagher, Vice President

Nancy A. Beye

Randall White

William J. Piva, Jr.

Town Council Members absent:

Michael G. White, President

School Committee members present:

Keith J. Roberts, Chair

Sally Schott

Agnes C. Filkins

Sheila M. Reilly

Kristine A. Lapierre

Also present:

Andrew E. Nota, Town Administrator

Christina D. Collins, Finance Director

Kenneth A. Duva, School Superintendent

Jane Littlefield, Director of Finance

Erica B. Dickson, Director of Student Services

Nate Edmunds, Lawn School Principal

Carol Peterson, Melrose School Principal

Peter Anderson, Director of Facilities Maintenance

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

**III. JOINT TOWN COUNCIL AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORK SESSION**

**Review and Discussion of budget issues for the remainder of the current fiscal year (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) and pre-budget review and discussion of issues for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020) pursuant to RIGL §16-2-21**

Town Council and School Committee members and Administrative staffs were introduced. School Committee Chair Roberts noted this is his first joint session. Superintendent Duva

Gave an overview of the budget process and Jamestown’s recognition of Melrose School as a Blue Ribbon School of excellence and the School Department’s goal to continue the high level of education. Review of the RI Comprehensive Assessment System proceeded. Jamestown is rated 3rd in RI for English Language arts.

The School District uses the zero-based budgeting process based on need and is in compliance with the mandated Chart of Accounts. Discussion ensued of the process based on fluctuating populations, needs, out-of-district costs, required programs, salaries and benefits, and the goals of the strategic plan. Lengthy discussion ensued of the zero-based budgeting process.

Discussion involved the unknowns that occur, and this year a part-time nurse was hired due to an increased need. High School tuitions and the impact of the fluctuating population, including military families, were noted. Discussion involved the military families that come to Jamestown, their children who attend our schools, and that they are an asset to the community. Lengthy discussion ensued of budget development, unknown costs, and impacts.

The School Construction Program and budgeting process were reviewed. The $5.9 million Bond Issue was approved by the voters at the November election, the budget must meet what is mandated, and they are transitioning to reflect those impending costs that will reflect an increase in the capital budget. Discussion ensued of retiring debt that will offset the increased debt for the mandated school construction project.

Town Administrator Nota commented on the open communication between Town Administration and School Department. Budget factors include revaluation which is underway, and property sales to date exceed property values, by 15% to 20%. Healthcare is usually an increase of 5%. Budget submittal is 90 days prior to the FTM, which is June 3, 2019, with departmental budget submittals by the end of December, meetings with Town Departments in January, Town Administrator’s budget submission to Council in March, budget hearings in March and April, followed by budget adoption by the Council 30 days prior to the FTM.

Budget factors include debt service, healthcare and contractual obligations. Jamestown’s fund balance is 20.38%, higher than most communities. Pension funding and Bond Indebtedness were reviewed. The Town’s high bond rating results a lower interest rate for borrowing. The budget increase is expected at 1%. Discussion ensued of the motor vehicle tax reimbursement, at $6,000 for Jamestown ($500 State and $5,500 Town).

Discussion ensued of the capital improvement budget, with reductions in recent years, and debt, which is down. The draft audit expected soon will provide more information on the general fund, reserve fund, and unreserved fund. Discussion ensued of long-term liability, including OPEB and pensions, contractual obligations and contract negotiations.

Review of Bonding ensued, including the $5.9 million for school construction, $2.9 million for the golf course, and $1 million for the Library, and potential solar projects for Town and School facilities. Discussion ensued of upcoming needs for vehicle replacements and debt.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the work session was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Attest:

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to: Town Council

Town Administrator

Finance Director

Town Solicitor