

JOINT TOWN COUNCIL and SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES
Tuesday, March 15, 2022
6:00 P.M.

I. ROLL CALL TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

A Town Council/School Committer Budget Work Session was held on March 15, 2022. Town Council Members present were as follows: Nancy A. Beye, Mary Meagher, Erik G. Brine (virtually via Zoom), Michael G. White, and Randy White. Also, in attendance were Town Administrator Jamie Hainsworth, Finance Director Christina Collins, Solicitor Peter Ruggiero, and Town Clerk Roberta J. Fagan.

II. ROLL CALL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

School Department Members present were as follows: Keith Roberts, Kristine Lapierre, Sally Schott, Andrew Allsopp, and Agnes Filkins. Also, in attendance were Superintendent Dr. Kenneth A. Duva and Director of Finance Jane Littlefield.

III. CALL TO ORDER

Council President Beye called the Joint Budget Work Session of the Jamestown Town Council and School Committee to order at 6:00 p.m.

Councilor R. White made comments regarding the budget challenges that both the Town and School are faced with. The Town Administrator's proposed combined budget does not accommodate the proposed School Budget, equating to approximately a \$250,000 reduction for the School Budget. Councilor R. White stated that he will have an open mind about seeking a tax levy waiver, but many questions need to be answered beforehand. Specifically, what can or cannot happen if the \$250,000 is not allocated to the School Budget. The objective of the work sessions needs to be collaborative for the success of all. Increasing the tax levy impacts all taxpayers.

IV. Joint Town Council and School Department Budget Work Session and Hearing for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2023 (July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023).

- A) School Operating Budget
- B) Capital Improvement Program
- C) Review and Discussion

Dr. Duva made a presentation on the FY 2022/2023 School Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program. The full PowerPoint presentation and proposed budget can be found on the Jamestown School Department website: <https://www.jamestownschoools.org/apps/news/>

Councilor R. White questioned the Strategic Plan \$25,000-line item. What were prior years' expenses of \$6000 and \$12,000; and what was the explanation for the \$25,000 increase? Dr. Duva explained that the expense was for a facilitator to run the strategic plan process. The pre-COVID facilitator expense looked at and analyzed previous performance years; the proposed post-COVID facilitator expense will look at the continuation and development of the Strategic Plan.

Councilor R. White also had a question about the Professional Services \$96,099 increase line item. Dr. Duva explained that the Professional Services budget line item (Legal/support contracts, PD,

etc.) would include contractual services for two students requiring behavior needs staffing support, staffing contracted out of the district, and cyber security staffing.

Councilor Brine questioned if there were additions to the original budget to include a full-time art teacher for the Melrose School and for STEAM programs as discussed. Dr. Duva explained that the updated budget did not adjust the budget to include these. Councilor Brine expressed concern that the 7.5% budget increase only addresses the bare minimum and does not include the necessary funding to be at the Blue-Ribbon school level.

Vice President Meagher questioned whether any grants or resources were available to supplement the school and address the budget shortfalls. Dr. Duva explained that no additional grants or resources have been identified to supplement the budget.

V. OPEN FORUM

A) Scheduled request to address

B) Non-scheduled request to address

Linda Jamison, 9 Ocean Avenue, had a question pertaining to ESSR funds, specifically, are the funds restricted to students K-8? Dr. Duva explained that the ESSR funds are for students K-12.

Councilor M. White requested guidance as to what the next steps would be. The Town Council and the School Committee are at a crossroads. He has always been supportive and an advocate of the School Committee. Children with special needs are entitled to educational services until they reach their 22nd year. These budget discussions are about what the school requires to educate the children, and what the Town requires to operate successfully.

School Board Chair Roberts gave perspective on what in the budget would be negotiable and/or non-negotiable. Reducing the proposed 2022/2023 budget would compound budget issues in the future years. Growth comes from investment. Mr. Roberts encouraged the Town Council to move forward with applying for the waiver. This budget is about closing the education gaps to prepare Jamestown students for the future. The elected officials need to be able to answer the following question: Is the goal of the education system to offer the least cost programs?

Councilor R. White stated that the laws mandating no more than a 4% budget increase, were designed to provide equity for all. The Town Council has to balance the needs of all residents, to be fiscally responsible to the Town.

Lengthy discussion continued.

Dr. Duva offered that budget reduction would most likely include staff layoffs and facility improvements, which could negatively impact the needs of the students.

President Beye explained that applying for and receiving a waiver would have very complex implications.

Vice President Meagher commented that taxes are an individual's contribution to a community. The Town Council has to analyze and examine all the data that has been provided.

Board Member Sally Schott shared her concerns if the Town Council were to reduce the proposed

School Budget.

Christina Smith, 16 Courageous Court, expressed concerns regarding the current School budget shortfall and the proposed 2022/2023 budget as a parent and taxpayer.

Town Administrator Hainsworth provided clarifying statements about the waiver process and the next steps for the Town Council.

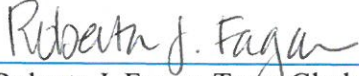
VI. ADJOURNMENT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

A motion was made by Chair Roberts with a second by Sally Schott to adjourn at 8:46 p.m.

VII. ADJOURNMENT TOWN COUNCIL

A motion was made by Vice President Meagher with second by Councilor M. White to adjourn at 8:47 p.m. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Meagher, Aye; Councilor Brine, Aye; Councilor M. White, aye; Councilor R. White, Aye.

Attest:



Roberta J. Fagan, Town Clerk