

TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 2, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A special meeting of the Jamestown Town Council was held on January 2, 2025. Town Council President Beye called the meeting of the Jamestown Town Council to order at 5:36 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Town Council Members present were as follows: Nancy A. Beye, Mary Meagher, E. Edward Ross, Mary G. Glackin, and Erik Brine.

Also, in attendance: Town Administrator Edward A. Mello, Assistant Solicitor David Petrarca, and Town Clerk Roberta Fagan.

President Beye gave a brief overview of the work session; no votes will be taken.

III. TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

- A) Review and Discussion:
 - 1) Town Council Rules and Procedures
 - 2) Town Council Agenda Preamble
 - 3) Town Council Goals and Objectives

Town Council Agenda Preamble (2) and Rules and Procedures (1) were discussed at length.

Councilor Meagher led the discussion and read a revised draft agenda preamble.

The Town Council discussed time limits during the Open Forum. Clear expectations of time limits may help both the Town Council and citizens speaking during the Open Forum. For clarification during Open Forum, a 10-minute limit already exists in the Rules and Procedures if a citizen has requested to address the Town Council. Further discussion about Non-scheduled speakers and/or during the meeting, at the discretion of the Town Council, about a certain agenda item.

Councilor Meagher suggested placing a time limit for the Open Forum.

Assistant Solicitor Petrarca stated as long as it is properly noticed. Time limits on Open Forum may have unintended consequences; be sure that the Town Council can extend the time or review at another time during the meeting.

Councilor Meagher stated that allowing people to speak during discussions is appropriate, as long as all Town Council members have had an opportunity to deliberate beforehand. Public participation is important, but excessive debate may detract from the main topic.

Including an Open Forum at the end of the meeting would enhance public participation.

Paul Sprague, Mast Street, 10 minutes is more than sufficient time for individual participation. President Beye has conducted the meetings fairly and appreciates her discretion.

Councilor Glackin proposed sign-up sheets for Open Forum.

Assistant Solicitor Petrarca noted that while sign-up sheets are used in other communities, they should not be mandatory. The clerk will collect the list just before the Open Forum, and then the Clerk will read the names in order.

Councilor Meagher will amend and present a draft agenda preamble for a future meeting.

Christina Paolino, East Shore Road, stated that is too late to request to address the Town Council once the agenda has been posted. The public needs to have the opportunity to speak during the meeting regarding an agenda item.

Assistant Solicitor Petrarca stated Open Forum/Public Comment is for bringing up issues that haven't been brought up on an agenda for discussion and may be brought back for further discussion if needed on a future agenda that has been properly noticed. If a speaker wants to address an item on the agenda, the Town Council has the discretion to ask a member of the public to wait until that portion of the agenda.

Town Administrator Mello discussed the orderly and timely process of the State House public hearings.

The Town Council discussed Rule 3.2 and 3.3. and potentially removing the following:

3.2 "The Council may also use the third Monday to conduct either a meeting or workshop reviewing particular, specific issues or the work or concerns of a specific town commission.

3.3 "Such emergencies would be those affecting public peace, health, safety, comfort and welfare of the inhabitants of the Town and for protections of persons and property."

Rule 5 Order of Business for Regular Meetings was discussed and reordering Open Forum before Public Hearings.

A detailed discussion about developing the agenda and prioritizing the agenda items was discussed.

Rule Public Hearings, 6.2, any proposed Zoning Ordinance needs to go to Planning first for an advisory opinion and RIGL dictates local Planning and Zoning rules.

Rule 14, Motions, is a rule that had previously been imposed by a sitting Town Council but is not legally required in the State of Rhode Island. 14.2 removing "No motion shall be debated until it is seconded" was discussed.

Assistant Solicitor Petrarca stated the Rules & Procedures document is used to govern yourselves (the Town Council), and can be changed if it isn't working.

Town Council Goals and Objectives (3) were discussed at length.

Councilor Meagher referenced previously approved Goals and Objectives approved in March 2015.

President Beye goals/priorities

- Addressing water sustainability- prioritize initiatives to safeguard critical water resources, staffing the water treatment plant, and mitigating coastal erosion.
- Housing solutions: balance the needs of the growing population with thoughtful policies on STRs, ADUs, and workforce housing.
- Community engagement: strengthen communications between council and residents ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and trust in the Town Council decision-making process

- Senior Resident needs: advocating for enhanced services resources and support systems for our senior population recognizing their vital contributions and unique challenges. Over half of the Jamestown population is considered a senior citizen.

Vice President Brine goals/priorities

- Infrastructure investment – awesome assets such as Mackerel Cove and Fort Getty that the Town should prioritize.
- Find a path to generational investment in Jamestown. How can Jamestown make the appropriate investments and maintain assets such as Bike path, Eldred Field, Parks & Recreation Center, Fort Getty, Jamestown Schools and Mackerel Cove.
- Organization infrastructure: Right sizing Town staff departments
- Communications: utilizing social media, a better website and better ways to respond to residents needs.
- Opportunities for financial resources outside of taxes such as parking revenue.

Councilor Glackin goals/priorities

- Harbor/Boating: Completing the Harbor Management Plan, boat ramp(s) improvements, consider a public dinghy dock, dinghy entrance at Mackerel Cove.
- Water issues: alternate water source strategies such as a rain barrel program; better communication on island-wide water ban and enforcement.
- Green Plan: windmill on the water tower, high efficiency in Town buildings, compost service, wildflower/pollinator project along the bike path and/or in open spaces
- Tax issues: Homestead exemption definition and understanding of a tax exemption.
- Heads Beach improvements: More shade options such , improved boat ramp, swim platform
- Bike Path completed: ensure improvements at Great Creek and Mackerel Cove (state roadways) include a safe route included in the plans.
- East Ferry Landing improvements such as a gazebo/bandstand, and/or covered seating at the ferry landing.
- Town Council community engagement events such as a civics project with the School.
- Golf Course: feedback has been received on the management of the golf course.

A discussion ensued regarding the Jamestown Golf Course. The history, existing lease, and options for both the tenant and the Town were discussed.

Councilor Meagher goals/priorities:

- Water Resources feasibility study, sustainable solutions
- Generational investment: COVID inflation impacts and State 4% levy cap
- Town Staffing
- Facilities/Infrastructure
- Senior Services, Senior Center, Senior Housing/Assisted Living Facility
- Affordable Housing
- School Facilities
- Reorganizing tax structure
- Fort Getty improvements
- Zoning legislation- potential effects on the Town of Jamestown
- Short-Term Rental Ordinance- the need for amendments
- Coastal resiliency/Emergency preparedness

Councilor Ross

- Water resource issues and solutions for sustainability
- Investment: Town staff and resources relate how we interact with the State.
- Normalize the dialogue with the Narragansetts and the American Indians, and figure out a pathway forward
- Suicide prevention/support services
- Fort Getty improvements: great asset with deferred maintenance that needs to be addressed.

Councilor Meagher commented Community Outreach and Support Team (COAST) will be offering a program on January 14th .

Town Administrator Mello briefly gave an update on ongoing Town projects, approximately \$22 million in process, what are ongoing over the next 12 months:

- Bike Path
- Fort Getty
- Solar Array
- Senior Center
- Safe Route to Schools (path between the two Jamestown Schools)
- Energy efficiency improvements to all Town building
- South Pond dam
- Hull Cove Trail Project
- Old Ferry Landing/East Ferry
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Water line improvements on North Road/Narragansett Avenue
- Water meter replacement project
- Comprehensive Plan
- Emergency Operations Plan
- Employee Handbook
- West Ferry bulkhead repair project
- Drinking Water Grant study
- Waste Water Resource Plan project
- Road Paving
- Harbor Management Plan
- Drainage issues on Town roads


Discussion ensued.

The Town Council continue the Goals and Priorities workshop to the January 21st Town Council meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher with a second by Vice President Brine to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; Councilor E. Ross, Aye; Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

Attest:


Roberta J. Fagan, CMC, Town Clerk