

## **TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

### **Monday, March 3, 2025**

**I. TOWN COUNCIL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: The Jamestown Town Council (President Beye, Councilor Meagher, and Councilor Glackin) met to conduct interviews of applicants for the committee vacancies as follows:**

TIME	NAME	COMMITTEE
5:20	Kenneth Newman	Board of Canvassers (Full/Alternate)
5:30	Mary Brimer	Board of Canvassers (Full)
5:40	George Newman	Board of Canvassers (Full)
<del>5:50</del>	<del>John Murphy</del>	<del>Board of Canvassers (Full)</del>
5:55	Laura Goldstein	Board of Canvassers (Full/Alternate)
6:00	Jane Gilgun	Board of Canvassers (Full/Alternate)
6:10	Jennifer Thran	Board of Canvassers (Full)
6:20	Daphne Meredith	Board of Canvassers (Full)

**II. ROLL CALL**

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

Also, in attendance: Town Administrator Edward A. Mello, Solicitor Peter Ruggiero, Finance Director Christina Collins, and Town Clerk Roberta Fagan.

**III. CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

A regular meeting of the Jamestown Town Council was held on March 3, 2025. Town Council President Beye called the meeting of the Jamestown Town Council to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IV. OPEN FORUM**

- A) Scheduled request to address: None at this time.
- B) Non-scheduled request to address.

Ramona Bessinger, 437 Davit Avenue, stated I am here to express my opposition to lifting the tax cap. I do not recall receiving any information from the town council, which is supposed to represent us, the residents. She questioned whether any public forums have discussed the implications of lifting the tax cap with the townspeople. Ms. Bessinger hoped the Town Council was not making any decisions or sweeping statements tonight that would change the current tax structure; the matter has not been adequately discussed with the residents.

Helen O'Grady, in February 2018, the Town Council passed the Jamestown Resolution, which is a statement of intention to protect both documented and undocumented immigrants. This resolution was developed in response to proposed state legislation that aimed to ensure humane and constitutional interactions between local and federal enforcement agencies. Additionally, it would prevent local law enforcement agencies, such as the Jamestown Police department, from being

commandeered for immigration enforcement, avoiding any undue financial burdens on the community. The resolution states, "Jamestown, Rhode Island, has a tradition of promoting tolerance, hospitality, and fellowship within its secular, religious, and governmental institutions, welcoming people of all religions, races, and ethnicities to live here, work here, or simply visit and enjoy our parks, beaches, and the resources that Narragansett Bay provides." The resolution also affirms that every person deserves equal respect because of their inherent humanity, regardless of their appearance, gender, race, creed, or any other characteristic. The Jamestown Resolution was created to support and protect immigrants. Ms. O'Grady stated this is a clear declaration of our commitment to ensure humane and constitutional protection for all immigrants. She asked the Town Council to consider passing an immigrant protection ordinance, which would solidify Jamestown's commitment.

Mary Lou Sanborn, Bay View Drive, read the following statement on behalf of the Taxpayers Association of Jamestown Executive Committee, Ann Gagnon, Linda Jamison, and Mary Lou Sanborn: *"Dear Town Council Members: Escalating property assessments and subsequent property taxes are creating a difficult financial situation for many Jamestown taxpayers. Household incomes are not increasing at the same rate as taxes, utilities, and other living expenses. Cost-cutting measures are needed in the town and school budgets including the issuance of bonds. School Budget:*

- *Year-round residents in Jamestown are now less than 50% of the total households therefore not increasing the student population.*
- *Close Lawn Ave School in the next several years. It is a financial albatross. This would eliminate \$201,000 bond debt costs plus interest from the proposed recreation bond requested by the town council. Closing Lawn Ave school would reduce the school's operating budget by 33 percent (\$5 million+)*
- *Offer school choice vouchers. Off-island schooling for grades 6,7, and 8 would offer students more life-long experiences and opportunities than found in Jamestown.*

#### *Town Budget*

- *Continue to maintain a 4% tax levy cap. A tax cap restricts the town and school from over spending.*
- *Based on continuing declining school enrollment in Jamestown schools, students who wish to participate in sports are now having to go off island and join other town teams. This would eliminate the modernization of Eldred Ave field at a cost of \$910,000 in bond debt costs plus interest.*
- *Defer Senior Center upgrades until a decision is made on the future of Lawn Ave School. This building can be repurposed for use of a Senior Center and a Recreation/Community Center. It would save \$885,000 in bond debt costs plus interest.*
- *Maintain Fort Getty RV park. It is the second largest revenue source for Jamestown. Eliminating the RV park will also impact revenue for our local businesses. On the current proposed budget, no revenue is broken out for the Fort Getty pavilion and second floor of the golf course clubhouse. What is the revenue for both of these town owned properties?*
- *Bike paths: based on the TC proposed recreation bonds of \$1.5 million, grants could be applied for rather than use tax-payer dollars.*
- *Affordable Housing Bond: defer \$3 million taxable housing bond; no details have been presented to the public. The current balance in the Affordable Housing Trust is \$900,000 plus \$100,000 in the proposed 2025-2026 capital budget.*

- *In addition to the current and proposed 2025-2026 bonds, future Town Administrator capital expenditures require the issuance of bonds for sewer facility upgrades (6 million+) and purchase of a new ladder truck (2.5 million)*

*Eliminating the above suggested items would reduce the proposed budget and debit bonds cost by \$6.5 million (plus interest).*

*In closing, both town and school planning needs require a wider and extended review before approval.”*

Marian Falla, 75 Green Lane, addressed the Town Council about the article she shared earlier. She asked for the status of the ten-year plan discussed by the Town Council and School Committee earlier this year and whether it will be included in future agendas. Ms. Falla hopes that once the plans are finalized, they can be presented to the community to clarify the direction of the school and the town. She emphasized the need for bonds and capital expenditures to align with long-term plans, allowing a better understanding of priorities. She also questioned whether there would be a bond for Mackerel Cove projects. Regarding short-term rentals (STRs), Ms. Falla highlighted the previous lack of revenue for reinspection fees and suggested including these fees in the STR ordinance to cover costs. A recent What’sUP Newport article noted that STR fees should be cost-neutral, considering aspects like labor and parking. Finally, she pointed out that there is a lack of awareness about STR commercial activities and proposed that fee structures should vary based on whether rentals are for a room or an entire property, similar to Newport’s model. She urged the Town Council to consider these points in their budget discussions.

## **V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, PRESENTATIONS, RESOLUTIONS, AND PROCLAMATIONS**

### **A) Presentations**

- 1) Keith Roberts, President, Jamestown Shores Association.

Keith Roberts, 93 Umiak Avenue, and President of the Jamestown Shores Association, made a presentation to the Town Council. (See attached).

### **B) Resolutions and Proclamations**

- 1) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: regarding Resolution 2025-08, Resolution in Support of Amending the Rhode Island General Laws to Allow Financial Town Meetings to Approve An Annual Budget Exceeding the 4 Percent Levy Cap.

Vice President Brine provided a brief explanation of why the Town Council seeks to pass a resolution requesting our state representatives to present the proposed amendment to the Rhode General legislature. Councilor Meagher noted that other towns have taken this step and requested a waiver, which allows communities to empower themselves in developing annual budgets.

Vice President Brine read regarding Resolution 2025-08, a Resolution in Support of Amending the Rhode Island General Laws to Allow Financial Town Meetings to Approve An Annual Budget Exceeding the 4 Percent Levy Cap.

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Vice President Brine, to approve Resolution 2025-08, Resolution in Support of Amending the Rhode Island General Laws to Allow Financial Town Meetings to Approve An Annual Budget Exceeding the 4 Percent Levy Cap. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; Councilor Ross, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

- 2) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: regarding Proclamation 2025-09 declaring April 25, 2025, as Arbor Day in the Town of Jamestown.

Vice President Brine read Proclamation 2025-09 declaring April 25, 2025, as Arbor Day in the Town of Jamestown.

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Vice President Brine, to approve Proclamation 2025-09 declaring April 25, 2025, as Arbor Day in the Town of Jamestown. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; Councilor Ross, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

## **VI. PUBLIC HEARINGS, LICENSES, AND PERMITS**

- A) Public Hearing: No items

## **VII. COUNCIL, ADMINISTRATOR, SOLICITOR, COMMISSION/COMMITTEE COMMENTS & REPORTS**

- A) Town Administrator's Report: Edward A. Mello
  - 1) Mental Health Awareness Month

The Town Council is being asked to declare May as Mental Health Awareness Month. If the Council agrees, a resolution can be prepared for the meeting on March 17. The Town staff will work on promoting awareness during this month.

- 2) Right-of-Way (ROW) Revised Policy

The Town Council had suspended the Right-of-Way adoption policy and had referred the program back to the Conservation Commission. The Conservation Commission has revised the policy and added clarifying language regarding the roles and limitations of individuals or groups adopting a Town right-of-way. The Council is now being asked to consider the adoption of this revised policy.

- 3) Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT)/Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

RIDOT has requested that each community submit up to five projects for consideration under the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

- 4) RIDOT Grant

As previously reported, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has awarded the Town a \$100,000 grant to further develop the plan for bike lanes on East Shore Road, connecting Eldered Avenue to Conanicus Avenue. The Town has received a request for proposal (RFP) from an engineering firm to undertake the design work, which will include a multi-phase approach to the project.

## VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: At the request of Councilor Meagher discussion and consideration to increase funding to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund:

- 1) Memorandum from the Affordable Housing Committee requesting increased investment into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund at a minimum of \$225,000 annually.

Councilor Meagher expressed gratitude to the residents that attended the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. There was an informative dialogue. Financing affordable housing exceeds what is currently in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The proposals are being presented for discussion, and the vote should wait until Councilor Ross is present at a future meeting.

The first proposal proposes to increase the annual allotment for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund from \$100,000 to \$225,000. This increase is necessary due to the skyrocketing property costs in Jamestown, making it difficult for nonprofits to secure funding. It was also proposed to allocate a portion of the real estate conveyance tax to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, specifically for properties sold for over a million dollars. This could potentially increase the current tax rate by about 4 cents, costing the median taxpayer approximately \$30, based on a median house value of \$718,600 from last August.

No action was taken.

- B) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: At the request of Councilor Meagher discussion and consideration to submit a request to Senator Dawn Euer and Representative Alex Finkelman to introduce legislation authorizing the creation of linkage/impact fees to support Affordable Housing.

- 1) Memorandum from the Affordable Housing Committee regarding the request to adopt linkage/impact fees for Affordable Housing.

The Affordable Housing Committee is requesting that the Town Council consider implementing a new impact fee called a linkage fee. This fee would be applied to the construction costs of new developments and renovations. The funds generated from this fee would be directed to support the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Currently, state law allows towns to implement impact fees for necessary infrastructure related to new developments. A suggested 1% fee on any residential project where total building costs exceed a million dollars.

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Vice President Brine, to authorize Town staff to write a Resolution requesting Senator Dawn Euer and Representative Alex Finkelman to introduce legislation authorizing the creation of linkage/impact fees to support Affordable Housing. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

- C) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: At the request of Councilor Meagher, discussion and consideration of a \$3,000,000 Bond for affordable housing for FY 2025/2026:

- 1) Request to meet with Bond Counsel to discuss potential affordable housing bonds.

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Vice President Brine, to request to meet with Bond Counsel to discuss potential affordable housing bonds. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

- 2) Memorandum from the Affordable Housing Committee requesting Town Council support of a \$3,000,000 Bond for potential affordable housing initiatives:
  - a) Affordable and workforce housing at 11 Knowles Court (former ambulance barn). See attached floor plans.
  - b) An additional affordable housing building at 171 Conanicus Avenue.
  - c) Single-family houses on town-owned lots (similar to those on Swinburne Street).
  - d) Incentive for affordable accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- 3) Request for Proposals (RFP) for an affordable housing developer to develop proposed affordable housing/workforce housing at 11 Knowles Court and 169 Conanicus Avenue

Councilor Meagher proposed that the Town Council discuss a \$3,000,000 bond for affordable housing to be voted on at the financial town meeting. Last year, the Affordable Housing Committee made a similar request, which the Council supported, but Bond Counsel raised concerns about not having a specific project. To address this, Councilor Meagher provided exploratory drawings for a potential multi-unit building on the vacant ambulance barn site on Knowles Court. The plans illustrate nine units: six two-bedroom apartments and three one-bedroom units, with 15 parking spaces. These units could potentially be used as rentals priced below market rates, such as a two-bedroom apartment at around \$1,500. While this may still be challenging for families earning \$60,000 to \$70,000, it would support households earning less than 80% of the HUD-defined median income, making them affordable for a two-person household earning up to \$108,000.

Councilor Meagher and Town Administrator Mello recently had a conversation about the income limits for families, particularly those whose combined income exceeds \$121,000. Affordable housing could still benefit individuals like town staff—police officers, teachers, and restaurant workers—who currently may live with parents or other family members.

The goal is to prioritize housing for Jamestown residents and seek additional funding to exceed the \$3 million target. There are foundations available that offer support without federal limitations, especially under the current administration. Uncertain government funding necessitates local action. A tax rate that costs the median taxpayer approximately \$60 annually could be feasible, particularly with potential rental income to offset costs.

Jamestown has a history of investing in its future, such as the 1987 purchase of the golf course for \$2 million, which equates to about \$5.5 million today. Similar investments have preserved the Jamestown landscape.

The Affordable Housing Committee advocates for efforts to create affordable housing for those living and working in Jamestown, particularly families struggling to remain in the community. Councilor Meagher emphasized that it is essential for those nearing retirement to have nearby housing options for their families. This is an investment Jamestown needs, can afford, and deserves.

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Vice President Brine, to authorize Town staff to draft a resolution that would seek impact linkage fees for affordable housing. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Vice President Brine, to authorize the Town staff to seek request for proposals (RFP) for the proposed affordable housing projects. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

- A) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: Town Administrator Mello Proposed FY2025/2026 to the Town Council, (Code of Ordinances Town of Jamestown, Part 1 Charter and Related Laws, Article XI. Financial Provisions, Sec. 1101. – Proposed budget).

Town Administrator Mello explained the budget process and the Charter requirements.

- B) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: Approval of the revised Adopt-A-ROW (Right-of-Way) policy:

- 1) Town of Jamestown, 550.10 Adoption Program

Conservation Commission Chairperson Bob Laman gave a brief summary of the proposed revisions to the Adopt-A-ROW (Right-of-Way) policy.

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Vice President Brine, to approve the revised Adopt-A-ROW (Right-of-Way) policy. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

## **X. ORDINANCES, APPOINTMENTS, VACANCIES, AND EXPIRING TERMS**

- A) Appointments, Vacancies, and Expiring Terms
  - 1) Board of Canvassers- One (1) unexpired six-year term **Full Member** Vacancy (March 2022-March 2028) and One (1) expiring six-year term **Full Member** Vacancy (March 2025-March 2031); interviews to be scheduled on March 3, 2025:
    - a) Jamestown Republican Town Committee
      - i) Jennifer Thran
    - b) Jamestown Democratic Town Committee
      - i) Kenneth Newman (seeking reappointment)
      - ii) Daphne Meredith
      - iii) George Newman
      - iv) John Murphy
      - v) Laura Goldstein
      - vi) Jane Gilgun
    - c) Letter of interest for appointment (not endorsed by the Republican or Democratic Town Committees)
      - i) Mary K. Brimer

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Councilor Glackin, to appoint Daphne Meredith to the Board of Canvassers- One (1) unexpired six-year term **Full Member** Vacancy (March 2022-March 2028) and to reappoint Kenneth Newman for the One (1) expiring six-year term **Full Member** Vacancy (March 2025-March 2031) . Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

- 2) Board of Canvassers – One expiring six-year term Democratic **Alternate Member** vacancy (March 2025- March 2031)
  - d) Jamestown Democratic Committee
    - i) Kenneth Newman
    - ii) Laura Goldstein
    - iii) Jane Gilgun

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher, with a second by Vice President Brine, to appoint Laura Goldstein to the Board of Canvassers – One expiring six-year term Democratic **Alternate Member** vacancy (March 2025- March 2031). Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

A motion was made by Vice President Brine, with a second by Councilor Meagher, to accept the Consent Agenda. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

## **XI. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A) Minutes of Boards/Commissions/Committees
  - 1) Affordable Housing, December 18, 2024.
  - 2) Affordable Housing, January 15, 2025.
  - 3) Board of Canvassers, January 15, 2025.
  - 4) Zoning Board of Review, January 28, 2025
- B) All One-Day Event/ Entertainment license application approvals are subject to any COVID-19 protocols in effect at the time of the event:
  - 1) Applicant: Save the Bay
  - Event: Save the Bay Swim (ENT-25-9)
  - Date: July 19, 2025
  - Location: Potter Cove, RITBA lawn, Jamestown

Communications were acknowledged.

## **XII. COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS, AND PROCLAMATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS FROM OTHER RHODE ISLAND CITIES AND TOWNS**

*The Council may acknowledge any of the listed Communications and Proclamations and Resolutions. Should any member wish to have a conversation on any of the matters, the item will be placed on a future agenda for review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote.*

- A) Communications Received:
  - 1) Copy of letter to: Town Council
  - From: Abby Jenkins and Jeff Boal
  - Dated: February 11, 2025
  - Re: Ft Getty Park- Park & Rec Utility Garage/Shed



- 2) Copy of letter to: Town Council  
From: Peter Gadoury  
Dated: February 24, 2025  
Re: Mental Health Awareness Month
- 3) Copy of report to: Town Council  
From: American Civil Liberties Union Foundation(ACLU)  
Dated: February 2025  
Re: Remote Access to Public Meetings Post-Covid: A Review of Rhode Island City and Town Councils and School Committees.

### **XIII. OPEN FORUM**

#### **A) Continued (If necessary)**

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher to move into Executive Session with a second by Vice President Brine. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

### **XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

#### **A) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote in Executive Session and/or open session pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a) Subsection (5) the acquisition and/or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to the interest of the public. (Potential lease of publicly held property, AP 9-152).**

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher to seal the minutes and adjourn from Executive Session, with a second by Vice President Brine. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

It was announced that no votes were taken.

The Town Council reconvenes the regular meeting.

### **XV. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Councilor Meagher with a second by Vice President Brine to adjourn at 8:09 p.m. Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

Attest:

*/s/ Roberta J. Fagan*

Roberta J. Fagan, CMC, Town Clerk