

**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING  
BUDGET WORK SESSION MINUTES  
Tuesday, March 25, 2025  
5:00 P.M.**

**I. ROLL CALL**

A special meeting of the Jamestown Town Council was held on March 25, 2025. Town Council Members present were as follows: Nancy A. Beye, Mary Meagher, E. Edward Ross, Mary G. Glackin, and Erik Brine (via Zoom per RIGL 42-46-5(b)(2)).

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

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

Town Council President Beye called the meeting of the Jamestown Town Council to order at 5:02 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Beye noted that although no open forum was scheduled on the agenda, public comments would be permitted during the discussion. She emphasized a strict 7:00 PM adjournment due to the zoning board meeting.

**III. TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION for FY 2025/ 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026)**

A) Review and Discussion: Discussion and consideration of staff-proposed projects requiring potential bond initiatives of \$3,883,000:

1) Memorandum from Town Administrator Mello to the Town Council regarding Bond Options:

a)	Project 1: Senior Repair Project	\$ 885,000
b)	Project 2: Fort Getty Improvements	\$ 430,000
c)	Project 3: Town Buildings/Facilities Maintenance	\$1,618,000
d)	Project 4: Department of Public Works Equipment	\$ 950,000

Town Administrator Mello walked through the bond request, originally totaling \$3,883,000, explaining that the budget included debt service only for this bond. He proposed dividing the funds across several key capital projects:

**1. Senior Center (6 West Street)**

- Total estimated cost: \$995,000
- Existing capital funds: \$110,000
- Bond requirement: \$885,000

**2. Town Hall Repairs**

- Scope: Roof replacement, HVAC, structural upgrades
- Bond request: \$535,000

### **3. Recreation Center Upgrades**

- Scope: Windows, siding, painting, HVAC improvements, storage upgrades, and parking lot repairs
- Existing capital: \$100,000
- Bond request: \$650,000

### **4. Transfer Station Building Replacement**

- Scope: Demolition and new structure
- Bond request: \$150,000

### **5. Fire Department Equipment & Repairs**

- SCBA replacement (20 units), station, and dispatch repairs
- Available funds: \$110,000 (capital) + \$82,000 (leftover bond)
- Bond request: \$283,000

### **6. Department of Public Works (DPW) Equipment**

- Replacement of aging vehicles/equipment
- Bond request: \$953,000

### **7. Fort Getty Projects (Proposed for Exclusion)**

- Originally included bathroom upgrades, maintenance building, water main replacement, and electrical repairs
- Approx. \$320,000 has already been allocated across several years, but the design and engineering work is incomplete
- Town Administrator Mello recommended deferring all except water main replacement, which can be funded with existing capital

**Revised Bond Total (Excluding Fort Getty): \$3,453,000**

Councilor Meagher asked for clarification on capital reserves for Fort Getty. Town Administrator Mello explained that the \$320,000 includes incremental earmarks over time for the lower bathroom, septic system, and a partially funded maintenance building.

Councilor Glackin noted the balance seemed generally well distributed. Councilor Beye raised concerns about the cost efficiency of bonding smaller items, such as the transfer station.

Vice President Brine inquired about the rationale for assigning different bond terms. Finance Director Christina Collins explained that the DPW equipment was set to a 7-year bond due to life expectancy. Other infrastructure had 10- or 15-year terms, based on durability and value of debt servicing.

Councilor Meagher revisited the idea of grouping projects into one bond versus separate bond questions. She and President Beye suggested allowing the public to vote on individual bond items, referencing past precedent (library, golf course, and school bonds were separated after a petition).

Councilor Ross and Vice President Brine preferred a unified "maintenance bond" approach, especially with Fort Getty removed.

Town Administrator Mello urged the Town Council to provide clear direction soon due to resolution/warrant preparation needs. He emphasized that all included items pertain to existing infrastructure and maintenance only.

No formal decision made; to be addressed at next meeting.

Linda Jamison, 7 Ocean Ave, praised town officials for staying within the 4% cap and urged avoidance of debt beyond necessity.

Mike Swistak, 143 Narragansett Ave, criticized bundling bonds without prioritization and opposed raising the cap. He strongly advocated for ballot voting instead of voice or hand votes.

John Potter, 191 Narragansett Ave, recommended leveraging Fort Getty revenue for other recreational needs. He asked for data transparency regarding Fort Getty's profits and operational efficiency.

Richard Smith, 1258 North Main Road, echoed Mike Swistak's concerns about financial clarity and town meeting voting procedures. He and his wife have experienced intimidation at the Financial Town Meeting with the voice and/or hand voting.

Town Planner Lisa Bryer emphasized that affordable housing is legally mandated (10% target); Jamestown is currently only at 4.29%. Affordable housing is not aspirational and is critical. The town needs to start taking this seriously.

Alma Davenport, 99 Clinton Ave, urged funding only the essential bond ("Bond A") for infrastructure. She warned against economic overreach during national instability and supported affordable housing.

- B) Review and Discussion: At the request of Vice President Brine discussion and consideration of a proposed Jamestown Recreation Bond of \$1,700,000 or \$2,600,000:
  - 1) Memorandum from Vice President Brine regarding potential bond(s) for investment into Eldred Field, Lawn Avenue School gymnasium, and bike/pedestrian paths.

Administrator Mello described the Council-approved to date \$1.7M of the proposed \$2.6M. \$910,000 for Eldred Ave improvements still pending.

Gymnasium Upgrades (Lawn Ave School). Town Administrator Mello reported that the Jamestown School Superintendent and staff offered to use \$100,000 in school capital funds to improve the bleachers, locker room, and bathroom upgrades in response to Council feedback. The backboards and flooring deferred to future assessment. These changes resulted in a \$200,000 reduction in the line item from the proposed recreation bond \$1.5 itemized list.

The Town Council emphasized determining true safety needs and the process through the school facility staff, and not making assumptions.

Town Administrator Mello reiterated the Town Council's request to the Superintendent and the School Committee: replacement of the bleachers, locker rooms/bathrooms improvements, and to prioritize the basketball backboards.

Councilor Ross noted the school's reliance on full town appropriation despite \$1.1M in fund balance. He suggested using \$268K from the school's reserves.

Councilor Meagher supported partial drawdown (as historically practiced) from the school fund balance. She suggested pursuing matching grants through RIDE for school improvements.

Town Administrator Mello reported that the School Committee requested formal Council feedback before their March 27th meeting.

The Town Council consensus was to request the school to fund their \$268K operational shortfall from the fund balance.

Vice President Brine advocated for including Eldred Field grass improvements and protective netting (retractable).

Councilor Meagher proposed allocating \$450,000 for these specific enhancements, adding to \$1.5M bond to reach \$ 1.95 M.

Councilor Ross supported improvements to the field for grass-based activities.

Councilor Glackin suggested that Jamestown Soccer Association (JSA) should be financially responsible for the protective netting.

President Beye and Councilor Glackin advised delaying until the Eldred Field Committee completes the assessment. Councilor Glackin is supportive of allocating funds for a planning study only, but not for project execution yet.

Justin Sirotin, 34 Green Lane, the 2016 Eldred Field (Jay Sisson) study determined what can be done with the current deed restrictions. JSA already pays and takes care of the Eldred field and is comfortable with fundraising to improve the field. Grading and drainage are the main issues.

Marian Falla, 75 Green Lane, has the town aligned timing of the bike path improvements with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation? Also, the North End fire station line item is the \$40,000 for planning or building something? Town Administrator Mello clarified that the \$40,000 in the capital budget is earmarked for planning only. Ms. Falla, \$1m items were taken out of the budget. Will those items be in a future bond too? Town Administrator Mello referenced the 6-year Capital Program, which details anticipated projects that may require bonding.

No vote taken. Discussion deferred to the next Town Council meeting.

- C) Review and Discussion: At the request of Councilor Meagher discussion and consideration of a \$3,000,000 Bond for affordable housing for FY 2025/2026:
- 1) Memorandum from the Affordable Housing Committee requesting Town Council support of a \$3,000,000 Bond for potential affordable housing initiatives.

Councilor Meagher stated she has spoken to Jamestown Bond Counsel David Ferrara. The best way to bond affordable housing is to have a specific project. The Affordable Housing Committee has looked to use existing funds to seek an RFP for specific properties in Jamestown. Councilor Meagher stated she is not asking for the Town Council to vote tonight, but to consider the proposed Affordable Housing bond at the next meeting.

- D) Town Council Budget Work Session: review and discussion: FY2025-2026: Town Administrator's Proposed Budget; recommend proposed FY2025-2026 Town Budget of \$30,841,871 for consideration at the Annual Financial Town Meeting on June 2, 2025:
- 1) Town Administrator's Proposed Town General Fund Budget of \$14,006,265 and the Town Administrator's Proposed School Budget of \$16,835,606.

No action taken.

#### **IV. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Councilor Ross with a second by Councilor Glackin to adjourn at 6:45 p.m.  
Vote: President Beye, Aye; Vice President Brine, Aye; Councilor Meagher, Aye; Councilor E. Ross, Aye; and Councilor M. Glackin, Aye.

Attest:

*/s/ Roberta J. Fagan*

Roberta J. Fagan, CMC, Town Clerk