

JAMESTOWN TOWN COUNCIL
Budget Work Session
March 15, 2007

Following interviews scheduled for 6:00 p.m. for the Wind Energy Committee, a budget work session of the Jamestown Town Council was called to order at the Jamestown Philomenian Library, 26 North Road at 7:00 p.m. by Council President David J. Long. The following members were present:

Julio DiGiando, Vice President
William A. Kelly
Michael Schnack
Barbara A. Szepatowski

Also present were:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator
Christina Collins, Finance Director
Arlene D. Petit, Town Clerk

Councilor Szepatowski requested that the Council review the budget for the Teen Center at this time.

Present for the discussion on the Teen Center were:

Melissa Minto
Laura Hosley

Teen Center

Ms. Hosley stated that there is a need for a Student Assistance Counselor to participate at the Teen Center and to provide continuity between the schools and the community center. This would enable a counselor to have a non-school focus and would provide access to high school students. Ms. Hosley presented the Council with a list of student assistance statistics for January 2006 through June 2006 and September 2006 through February 2007.

The Student Assistance Counselor position would be paid for as a consultant for 396 hours at \$21.47 per hour. The funding for this position would be separate from the present Teen Center funding. The Town Administrator noted that the Parks and Recreation Department has a fund balance in the amount of \$13,225, from which the \$8,500 expense could be paid.

Ms. Hosley noted that Stephanie Nocon, present Student Assistance Counselor at the school would fill this position. In answer to Council questions, Ms. Holsley stated that the RI Foundation has two more years of funding for the Teen Center. It is hoped that there will be continued State funding for the program after the two years.

Debt Service

The Town Administrator presented the Council with a summary debt schedule illustrating both current and proposed debt service. The summary shows that by 2012/2013 a substantial portion of the debt service will be retired; thereby, reducing the general obligation principal and interest to under \$1,000,000. The Town Administrator stated

that, as a rule, debt service should not exceed 10 percent of the budget. The Town Administrator anticipated, even with the bonding for the highway facility and landfill closure, the Town would remain well within an acceptable debt level.

The Finance Director informed the Council that the sale of bonds for the \$3,300,000 debt for the new town hall took place today. The bonds sold for 3.99%, an amount much less than anticipated and a savings to the Town of more than \$200,000 over the life of the bond.

The Council discussed the importance of the preservation of open space and the benefits to the community. Prior to making a decision on funding for open space, it was the consensus of the Council to instruct the Finance Director to provide information relating to the properties acquired and the expenditures from 1998 to present.

Police Budget

Council members addressed the police overtime budget being affected by the overtime hours for police officers filling in for the dispatcher position.

The Town Administrator informed the Council that the union contract requires that police officers have first choice for filling in.

There was ensuing discussion regarding the possibility of hiring a part time / floater dispatcher to fill in for vacations, sick time, etc.; the position would be more than funded by the decrease in police overtime. It was the consensus of the Council that the position of police dispatcher be put on the March 26, 2007 for further discussion.

Litter Corp

Councilor Szepatowski suggested using the remaining fund balance for the Parks and Recreation Department for an extended litter corp.

Juvenile Court

Councilor Szepatowski asked that the Council consider funding a juvenile court with the funds dropped from the municipal court budget.

Fire Department

Councilor DiGiando asked for a long range plan for purchases by the Fire Department. The town Administrator noted that with the proposed replacement for the two tanker trucks, it is expected that this would be near the end of vehicle purchases.

Blue Cross

The Town Administrator announced that due to the school anticipating a 10% increase in Blue Cross rather than the actual 6.9% increase, he expects a decrease in the school budget.

There being no further discussion on the budget, Council President allowed comment from the audience.

The following individual commented on the budget:

Sav Rebecchi, Sail Street

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Attest:

Arlene D. Petit
Town Clerk

c: Town Council Members (5)
Town Administrator
Town Solicitor
Administrative Circulation