

FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING

JUNE 4, 2007

The annual Financial Town Meeting was opened by Town Council President David J. Long, at 7:05 PM at the Jamestown School, 55 Lawn Avenue. The following Town Council members were present:

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

as well as School Committee members:

Catherine L. Kaiser, Chair
David Dolce

also present were:

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator
Arlene D. Petit, Town Clerk
James Donnelly, Town Moderator
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director
Peter D. Ruggiero, Esq., Town Solicitor
Fred Pease, Town Sergeant
Robert Power, School Superintendent

JAMES A. DONNELLY, TOWN MODERATOR

The Town Moderator addressed the 66 registered voters (eventual number) in attendance and reviewed the general rules for the Town Meeting. In addition, Mr. Donnelly reminded the assembly that no motion which increases or reduces an appropriation recommended by the Town Council by \$10,000 or more shall be in order unless notice of intention has been presented to the Town Clerk at least twenty (20) days prior to this meeting.

READING OF THE WARRANT

The Town Moderator called for a motion to waive the reading of the warrants. It was moved by Council President Long, seconded by Councilor Schnack to waive the reading of the warrants. There being no discussion, the motion was put to a voice vote, which clearly carried.

Mr. Donnelly introduced the Town Administrator for presentation of the Town Government budget.

BRUCE R. KEISER, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Bruce R. Keiser, Town Administrator, reviewed the process followed to develop the budget as presented and thanked the Council and the Jamestown Town staff for their efforts. Mr. Keiser stated that the overall proposed budget of \$19,846,185.00 is a 4.5 percent increase or \$859,158.00 in new spending. The municipal operating budget is \$8,147,569.00, a 4.9 percent increase or new spending in the amount of \$382,400.00. Mr. Keiser stated that Catherine Kaiser, School Committee Chair, will be presenting a budget that, overall, is increased by 4.2 percent.

Mr. Keiser informed the audience that the property tax levy to support the proposed budget is \$16,042,518.00 which represents property tax dollars of 735,486.00, a 4.8 percent increase in the levy. The 4.8 percent is below the levy tax allowed by the State. Mr. Keiser explained that this is the first year of the new formula set by the State. The change effects the amount of tax levy allowed to be imposed by any city or town. This year would not allow for an increase in excess of 5.25 percent; following years will be reduced by .25 percent to a cap of 4 percent.

The property revaluation has expanded the tax roll to \$2,100, 000,000, resulting in a proposed tax rate of \$7.85 per \$1,000.00 of valuation.

CATHERINE KAISER, SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR

Ms. Kaiser stated that the challenge of maintaining high-performing schools has intensified with the descending tax cap passed by the legislature and the continuing lack of state funding for mandates and departmental regulations. Aided by the efforts of Senator Paiva-Weed, Jamestown has been involved in the crafting of the education funding formula currently under consideration. This formula assumes critical changes in state/local funding strategies such as the out-of-district transportation expenses and high needs special education costs being shifted to the state.

Ms. Kaiser stated that the School Committee continues to focus on increasing academic rigor at our Schools. This year's budget provides for the addition of two strategic half-time positions; a literacy coach and a math coach. The School committee has eliminated the full-time position of dean of students and continues to reduce the teaching staff in response to lower enrollment. In addition, a classroom will close in the fall as the school moves to a "looping" model in grades 7 and 8.

Ms. Kaiser noted that an agreement has been finalized to lease space at the Lawn Avenue School to Pathways, a teaching center that will open a satellite classroom for up to six autistic students. This agreement will generate income, provide staff development opportunities and may allow us to keep in Jamestown a student currently paced out-of-district.

The Administrative team will continue to evaluate the new administrative structure of a part-time superintendent and site-based management. Ms. Kaiser informed the audience that the school budget was passed by a unanimous vote of the School Committee.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution Number 1, Sewer Line Frontage Tax Rate:

It was moved by Councilor Schnack, seconded by Councilor Kelly to approve Resolution Number 1, setting the sewer line frontage tax rate. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and the motion clearly carried.

Resolution Number 2, Borrowing in Anticipation of Taxes:

It was moved by Councilor Szepatowski, seconded by Council President Long to approve Resolution Number 2, borrowing in anticipation of taxes. There being no discussion the voice vote was taken and the motion clearly carried.

Resolution Number 3, Disposition of Collected Back Taxes:

It was moved by Councilor Schnack, seconded by Council President Long to approve Resolution Number 3, disposition of collected back taxes. There being no discussion the voice vote was taken and the motion clearly carried.

Motion to Approve Budget:

It was moved by Councilor DiGiando, seconded by Councilor Kelly to adopt the General Government budget in the amount of \$8,147,569.00.

It was moved by Sav Rebecchi, Sail Street, and seconded by Rosemary Woodside to amend the main motion by reducing the Capital Improvement Fund Budget under the Finance Department Technology for annual computer improvements by \$9,999.99.

Mr. Rebecchi stated that he did not believe that a small town like Jamestown needed such a large capital budget for computers.

Christina Collins, Finance Director, stated that the budgeted amount also includes license agreements, support and supplies.

Bruce Keiser, Town Administrator, stated that this is not a routine year because of the move to the new town hall and the need to install new cabling networks. Mr. Keiser noted that he would expect the budget to return to the annual allotment of \$20,000.00.

Mr. Rebecchi stated that the \$30,000.00 extra should have been part of the bond to construct the new town hall. Mr. Rebecchi also stated that the \$70,000.00 being set aside for furniture should also have been part of the bond.

There being no further discussion, the voice vote was taken and the amended motion clearly failed.

There being no further discussion the voice vote for the main motion to approve the General Government budget in the amount of \$8,147,569.00 clearly carried.

It was moved by Councilor DiGiando, seconded by Councilor Kelly to approve the School Department budget in the amount of \$11,698,616.00. There being no discussion, the voice vote clearly carried.

It was moved by Councilor DiGiando, seconded by Council President Long to approve the total Town and School budget in the amount of \$19,846,185.00. There being no discussion, the voice vote unanimously carried.

Resolution Number 4, Setting the Tax Rate:

It was moved by Councilor Schnack, seconded by Councilor Szepatowski that it be resolved that the electors of the Town of Jamestown, qualified to vote on any proposition to impose a tax, in the Town Meeting legally assembled on this 4th day of June 2007 hereby order the assessment and collection of a tax on the ratable real estate and tangible personal property in the sum not less than \$16,042,518 or not less than \$7.85, nor more than \$7.90 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. There being no discussion the voice vote was taken and the motion unanimously carried.

There being no further business before the Council, it was moved by Councilor DiGiando, seconded by Council President Long to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 PM. The voice vote clearly carried.

Attest:

Arlene D. Petit
Town Clerk

C: Town Council Members (5)
Town Administrator
Town Solicitor
Finance Director
Board of Canvassers
School Committee
Tax Assessor
Administrative Circulation