

FINANCIAL TOWN MEETING
JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
MARCH 1, 2004

The annual Financial Town Meeting was called to order by James A. Donnelly, Town Moderator, at 7:11 PM at the Jamestown School, 55 Lawn Avenue. The following Town Council members were present:

Kenneth G. Littman, President
David J. Long, Vice President
Julio J. DiGiando
Claire M. Ferguson
Guy J. Settipane

As well as School Committee members:

Catherine L. Kaiser, Chair
William C. Brennan
Julie A. Kalfelz
Elizabeth H. Gooding
James R. Filkins

Also present were:

Maryanne Crawford, CPA, Town Administrator
Arlene D. Petit, Town Clerk
Christina D. Collins, Deputy Finance Director
J. William W. Harsch, Esq., Town Solicitor
Fred Pease, Town Sergeant
Katherine E. Sipala, School Superintendent

The Town Moderator set out the order of the meeting.

KENNETH J. LITTMAN, TOWN COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Council President Littman addressed the 224 registered voters (eventual number) in attendance, stating that the change in the fiscal year has required an expanded sixteen-month budget in order to bring Jamestown in line with the State budget cycle which runs from July 1 to June 30. The budget as presented is for a one-time fiscal year from March 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. Council President Littman stated that combining this longer budget cycle year with the substantial increase in our tax base from the recently completed revaluation has presented a novel problem for both the Town Administration and the School Administration. President Littman stated that the budget as presented is a fair and responsible budget while establishing a tax rate that is not overly burdensome for our residents.

Council President Littman recognized the Town Administrator, Finance Director and the School Superintendent for their hard work and dedication during this unusual budget

process. President Littman thanked the School Committee for allowing the transfer of \$145,000.00 from their unreserved fund, thereby reducing the general fund contribution.

Council President Littman presented the annual Town and School budget in the amount of \$22,230,419.00. The Town government portion is \$8,144,216.00, which reflects an increase of 3.14% in spending calculated over an annual basis. Highlighting a few of the budget items, Council President Littman noted the following:

- Anticipated hiring of an engineer/deputy public works director
- Hiring of an additional police officer
- Set aside money to be included in an Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Purchase of a new police vehicle
- Set aside money for a rescue/fire boat
- Funding to repair the tennis courts on Melrose Avenue
- Set aside \$100,000.00 to provide sprinklers at the Community Center
- Set aside \$150,000.00 for the preservation of open space

Additionally, President Littman noted that Resolution #5 requests that the voters set aside \$350,000.00 from the unreserved fund balance for the purchase of vacant land located on Cedar Lane (three lots to be purchased for the protection of the watershed) and a 3 ½ acre lot which abuts the Eldred Avenue soccer fields (to be used for passive recreation).

Council President Littman concluded stating that the ultimate decision on expenditures for the next sixteen months rests with the voters of Jamestown.

CATHERINE KAISER, SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR

School Committee Chair Catherine Kaiser informed the audience that the Strategic Plan for the School was based on a partnership with students, teachers, family, Town leaders, legislators and the community of Jamestown. Chair Kaiser noted that the committee successfully negotiated a lower tuition rate at North Kingstown High School.

Additionally, the teacher's union contract has established a co-payment for health insurance and replaces the lifetime family plan for senior teachers with individual medigap coverage. Chair Kaiser stated that Town and School officials joined forces in September to address issues dealing with funding education and consolidating school services as well as attending the State Municipal Summit in November.

Chair Kaiser recognized that the School Committee remains resolved to give back to the community whenever possible and as such, has committed the additional \$145,000.00 from the School's unreserved funds as revenue in this budget.

In closing, School Committee Chair Kaiser invited the community to attend the second annual Jamestown Education Awareness Day on March 27, 2004.

READING OF THE WARRANT

There was a motion made and seconded to waive the reading of the warrant and resolutions. There being no discussion, the motion was put to a voice vote, which clearly carried.

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Councilor Long to approve the Town budget proposed in the amount of \$8,144,216.00.

Richard Wing, North Road, moved to amend the budget by adding \$39,269.00 to the Fire Department's budget for the sixteen-month cycle. The motion was seconded from the floor.

Richard Allphin, Clarke Street, spoke in support of the motion to increase the Fire Department's budget by \$39,269.00. However, Mr. Allphin encouraged residents to attend the budget hearings so that it would not be necessary to amend the budget in this manner.

There being no further discussion, the voice vote was taken and the motion to amend the Town budget by adding \$39,269.00 clearly carried.

There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the Town budget as amended in the amount of \$8,183,484.00 clearly carried.

School Committee Chair Kaiser moved to approve the total school funding capital reserve budget in the amount of \$13,605,727.00. The motion was seconded from the floor.

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Council President Littman to amend the School budget for the corrected amount of \$14,086,203.00. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and the motion clearly carried.

School Committee Chair Kaiser explained that the amount as stated by Councilor Settupane includes debt service, which was not included in the previous motion.

There being no further discussion, the voice vote was taken and the amendment clearly carried.

There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the School budget as amended in the amount of \$14,086,203.00 clearly carried.

It was moved by Council President Littman, seconded by Councilor Settupane to approve the Total Budget in the amount of \$22,269,688.00. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and the motion clearly carried.

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Councilor Long to approve Resolution Numbers 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Eric Parker, Greene Lane, stated that he was against Resolution #5 and suggested that a separate vote be taken.

Councilor Long withdrew his second to Councilor Settupane's motion.

Resolution Number 5
Acquisition of Real Estate

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Councilor DiGiando to adopt Resolution number 5 for the acquisition of real estate for the amount of \$350,000.00.

The moderator called for discussion.

Dennis Webster, Mt. Hope Avenue, stated that he was generally in favor in acquiring land along the Route 138 corridor in order to protect the watershed and the largely undeveloped roadway corridor and to provide some passive recreational land along East Shore Road. Mr. Webster questioned if the Town has any particular use in mind for the three lots between Route 138 and Cedar Lane and asked what type of passive recreation use was being considered for the property on East Shore Road. Additionally, Mr. Webster asked what effect the \$350,000.00 cost will have on this year's tax rate and if there are any matching funds or grants involved.

Councilor Settupane noted that the Department of Transportation currently owns the land and has given the Town the first right in order to acquire that property. Councilor Settupane stated that the Department of Transportation needs to raise revenue to meet many State projects and therefore, if the Town does not acquire that property, it will be sold and there is a very strong possibility that it will be developed.

The Town Administrator stated that the passive recreation considered for the property on East Shore Road would be jogging and walking trails. The Town Administrator noted that there would be no effect on the tax rate for the purchase of these four parcels. Also, the Town Administrator informed the audience that the Town currently has an application through RIDEM for a grant that would pay for 50% of the property located on East Shore Road. The \$350,000.00 is part of the matching funds for that property. The Town Administrator stated that all four lots are not intended for any kind of development. If we do not acquire this property, it will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder with the possibility that they would be developed.

Mary Webster, Mt. Hope Avenue, inquired how much acreage is involved the Resolution #5 purchase.

The Town Administrator stated that there are 7.5 acres.

Jean Britton, Reservoir Circle, asked if the Town could put affordable housing on any of the property being purchased through Resolution #5.

The Town Administrator stated that the property on Cedar Lane is located in the Town's watershed and is being purchased for the protection of that watershed. Additionally, the Town Administrator noted that the property on East Shore Road could possibly be used for affordable housing; however, it would depend on the zoning and, if grant funding is used, any restrictions that would be incorporated with that funding.

There being no further discussion, the voice vote was taken and Resolution #5 clearly carried.

Resolution Number 6

Tax Relief for the Elderly

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Councilor Long to pass Resolution # 6, Tax Relief for the Elderly. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and clearly carried.

Resolution Number 7

Tax Relief for Gold Star Parents

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Councilor Long to pass Resolution #7, Tax Relief for Gold Star Parents. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and clearly carried.

Resolution Number 8

Tax Relief for Veterans

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Councilor Long to pass Resolution #8. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and clearly carried.

Resolution Number 9

Tax Relief for Members of the Jamestown Volunteer Ambulance Corps and Volunteer Fire Department

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Councilor Long to pass Resolution #9. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and clearly carried.

Town Administrator's Proposal

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by School Committee member William Brennan to approve the Town Administrator's proposed adjustment to increase the transfer from the unreserved fund balance by \$145,000.00 for a total of \$320,000.00 and to reduce the general fund contribution to said budget by \$145,000.00. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and clearly carried.

It was moved by Councilor Settupane, seconded by Councilor Long to pass the following resolutions:

Resolution Number 1
Sewer Line Frontage Tax Rate

Resolution Number 2
Borrowing in Anticipation of Taxes

Resolution Number 3
Disposition of Collected Back Taxes

Resolution Number 4
Borrowing Through Issuance of Refunding Bonds

The Town Moderator called for discussion on Resolution #1, Resolution #2, Resolution #3 and Resolution #4.

There being no discussion on Resolution #1, Resolution #2, Resolution #3 or Resolution #4, the voice vote was taken and clearly carried.

Resolution Number 10
Setting the Tax Rate

It was moved by Council President Littman, seconded by Councilor DiGiando to pass Resolution #10 to set the tax rate at not less than \$11.58 nor more than \$11.83 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. There being no discussion, the voice vote was taken and clearly carried.

There being no further business, it was moved by Councilor Settipane, seconded by John Murphy to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 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