

## **TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

**December 1, 2014**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The Joint Jamestown Town Council and School Committee Pre-Budget Work Session was called to order at 5:40 p.m. in the Jamestown Town Hall Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers at 93 Narragansett Avenue by President Trocki.

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Town Council members present:

Kristine A. Trocki, President  
Mary E. Meagher, Vice President  
Blake A. Dickinson  
Michael G. White  
Thomas P. Tighe

School Committee members present:

Cathy Kaiser, Chair  
B. J. Whitehouse  
Melissa Mastrostefano

School Committee members absent:

Julia Held  
Sarah Baines

Also present:

Andrew E. Nota, Town Administrator  
Wyatt A. Brochu, Town Solicitor  
Christina D. Collins, Finance Director  
Carol Blanchette, School Superintendent  
Jane Littlefield, School Director of Finance  
Cheryl A. Fernstrom, Town Clerk

### **III. BUDGET ISSUES FOR FY 2014 (JULY 1, 2014 TO JUNE 30, 2015) and BUDGET ISSUES FOR FY 2015 (JULY 1, 2015 TO JUNE 30, 2016)**

The Jamestown School Committee distributed a description of their budget. Superintendent Carol Blanchette noted the budget mirrors the goals of the school department, which uses zero-based budgeting in conjunction with the Unified Chart of Accounts mandated by the RI Department of Education. The current budgeting practice allows the school to create the budget that provides with the district and its students need to succeed, and will vary from year to year based on population and needs. The department has worked on the “Race to the Top” initiative for the last four years.

A basic overview of the how the budget is developed included discussion of:

- Contractual requirements
- Unknowns
  - Population, particularly military families, by grade level
  - Federal and State funding
  - Health insurance costs
  - Transportation
  - Tuitions
  - Out of District Placements for Special Needs

An overview of past operating budget history was given by Superintendent Blanchette.

Other areas referenced that could have an overall impact:

- Option to attend Narragansett High School in fall 2015
  - Some students need a smaller environment, provided by Narragansett High or a Charter School
  - Students notified of option; little feedback to date

Town Administrator Nota distributed a FY 2015-2016 Initial Budget Hearing document including:

- Budget development goals to be accomplished
- Budget calendar, discussed in detail.
- Discussion of budget process.
- Senate Bill 3050 adopted in 2006, requires a 4% maximum increase over prior year levy
- No major changes expected
- RI Economic landscape
- Municipal landscape
- Property Tax roll projection
- Property Tax roll classification
- Preliminary Budget development guidance
  - Preliminary expenditure considerations
  - Preliminary revenue considerations
- Pro forma budget template

Discussion ensued of State Aid received by Jamestown, educational formula follows the student and declining enrollment and how it affects the tax rate. The Town's bonding capacity is excellent at just under .5%

Budget review included:

- Motor vehicle exemption
- In FY 2015 93.74% of the budget is residential property tax dependent

- Not anticipating expansion of Town services, except in areas already specified, including Advanced Life Support (ALS), Lyme Disease Prevention, Meeting Video Systems, and potential facility acquisition
- Salary increases at 2.5%, with health insurance co-shares consistent
- Next year contract negotiations for NAGE 68 and 69, IBPO is ongoing
- PAC and JFD improvements referenced

Questions/Answers

School Committee member B. J. Whitehouse asked if there is chance the FTM date could be changed. He was informed no, as it is set by Town Charter.

President Trocki stated she is looking forward to the budget process and commended School District Director of Finance Jane Littlefield for doing a fine job and thanked the School Committee and Administration for coming this evening. The School Budget work session is usually held in March.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the pre-budget work session was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Attest:

---

Cheryl A. Fernstrom, CMC, Town Clerk

Copies to:     Town Council (5)  
                  Town Administrator  
                  Finance Director  
                  Town Solicitor