

JAMESTOWN BOARD OF CANVASSERS MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2025

2:30 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL

A meeting of the Jamestown Board of Canvassers was held on March 3, 2025 and was called to order by Chairman Kenneth Newman at 2:37 P.M., at 93 Narragansett Ave in the Rosamond A. Tefft Council Chambers. Board of Canvassers Members present were as follows: Mr. Kenneth Newman, Mr. Hugh Murphy, Ms. Daphne Meredith, Ms. Jennifer Thran, and Ms. Laura Goldstein.

Also in attendance: Town Administrator Edward Mello, Finance Director Christina Collins, Town Clerk Roberta Fagan and Deputy Town Clerk/Clerk to the Board of Canvassers Keith Ford.

II. MINUTES

A) Approval of Minutes; Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote:

1) Board of Canvassers meeting of April 16, 2025.

Mr. Newman opened the agenda item for the above minutes. Ms. Meredith made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as amended with a second by Mr. Murphy. Vote: Mr. Newman, Aye; Mr. Murphy, Aye; Ms. Meredith, Aye. Vote Passed unanimously.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A) Review, Discussion, and/or Action and/or Vote: Financial Town Meeting (FTM) to be held on Monday, June 2, 2025.

Mr. Newman opened the agenda item of the FTM. Town Administrator (TA) Mello remarked that the FTM is run by the Town Moderator (TM) Dennis Webster and he is responsible for the overall management of the meeting. Town staff and Board of Canvassers have a significant amount of involvement in the FTM and planning talks have already begun with the TM. The last day to register to vote has been advertised and is May 3rd, with Town Hall being open from 1:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. TA Mello outlined the procedures of the FTM as well as some of the planning that the town staff has begun. As of right now we have nine questions that voters will be voting on; questions one through four will be the Town Budget and related questions for the yearly operation of the town. Questions five through nine will be the bond questions. Mr. Ford is in the process of drafting up a single ballot that will cover all questions so that voters will only have to vote once. TA Mello commented that the Town will be providing a FTM booklet that will be published and delivered with the Jamestown Press. In this booklet there will be a description of the town operating budget and bond questions to help inform voters. One week before the FTM, a dedicated informational advertisement will be published detailing the bond questions and their intended uses, ensuring voters are as informed as possible.

Mr. Newman commented that this will take on the appearance of an election but will not be a Title 17 election. This is the Financial Town Meeting which is run by the Town Moderator and is governed by town ordinance. The Board of Canvassers will be serving at the pleasure of the Town, and has been invited to help with the vote.

Mr. Newman inquired as to how many sessions has the town had to discuss the budget and bonds. TA Mello commented there has been five public discussions on the operating budget, capital budget, and bond questions which have just been finalized by the Town Council. TA Mello reiterated the process that the town will take for advertisements and education of voters. *A Discussion Ensued.* Ms. Meredith commented that the Board's mission here should be voter education and to create a efficient process for voters. All nine questions on the ballot may make for confusion if not all the questions go to a paper ballot, but this is the correct way to proceed for cost savings and efficiency. TA Mello noted that we will be publishing a sample ballot as well for voters, and will have materials available and posted for voters to educate themselves. Ms. Thran inquired about if a voter was to make a motion to increase or reduce the budget during the meeting. TA Mello commented that a notice of intention amendment is required for any increase or reduction of more than \$10,000 which is due by May 13th. This should allow us time to make adjustments to the ballot. Any motion to

increase or reduce the budget by \$9,999 or less can be made at the meeting and the town will be prepared for this by having additional voting equipment and yes/no ballots available on site to use. *A Discussion Ensued.*

TM Webster commented that if a motion on the floor was made for a paper ballot, he would not entertain a voice vote and will be calling for a hand or standing vote for the count to have an accurate count. In the past the Board and town staff would count the vote and report the numbers to him and the Town Clerk. *A Lengthy Discussion Ensued.*

Mr. Newman asked for an agenda item be added for the May 8th meeting regarding the Board recommending to TM Webster that the electorate vote on a combined budget, town and school department, in on vote not separately. Mr. Ford will add that to the next agenda.

Jamestown Press Editor Tim Reil commented that this Board meeting will be in next weeks papers, the following week will be the budget book, and then he will be having a feature article before the FTM. All letters to the editor are forwarded to the publisher, Robert Berczuk who decides which to publish.

Ms. Thran inquired as to if the Board receives communications from voters what steps should they take. Town Clerk Fagan commented that letters addressed to the Board should be forwarded to Mr. Ford. He can place them on an agenda, under communications item so that these communications can be distributed to the Board. If a Board member would like to then take up the issue it can be placed on a future agenda.

IV. OPEN FORUM

Mr. Newman inquired about future agenda items. Mr. Ford commented that he has been asked by individual Board members to add, the Board of Elections request for support letters for budgeting approval for the replacement of poll pads, for a poll worker appreciation event, and the recommendation of passing the operating budget with only one vote and unfinished business of political signage in Jamestown. Which will be placed on the May 8th meeting agenda.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Meredith made a motion to adjourn with a second by Mr. Murphy. Vote: Mr. Newman, Aye; Mr. Murphy, Aye; Ms. Meredith, Aye. Vote Passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 3:41 P.M.

Attest:



Keith Ford
Deputy Town Clerk/Clerk to the Board of Canvassers

CC: Town Council Members (5)
Board of Canvassers (5)
Roberta Fagan, Town Clerk