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Town Council begins review of new budget

By Dotti Farrington

The three Town Council newcomers Tuesday spent more time suggesting items not included in the proposed town budget for next year than looking for ways to cut the administrative recommendations. Finding places to cut has been the usual approach to budgets in the past.

The session included an overview of all financial matters and a focus on town spending. The second budget session, slated for Tuesday, March 21, at 6 p.m. at the town library will focus on school spending. A third, and per-

See "Budget hearing" on page 12

Combined budgets total \$19 million

By Dotti Farrington

The proposed town government and school budgets, aired Tuesday, total \$19,019,138 which is \$1,370,970 or 7.76 percent more than the current budget. The town's portion is 40.8 percent of the total, and the school budget is 59.2 percent of the total.

If approved by voters as is, the new tax rate would be \$9.58

See "\$19 million" on page 12

Disputed landfill closure to set standards for others in state

By Dotti Farrington

Dr. W. Michael Sullivan, director of the state Department of Environmental Management, last week said closure of the Jamestown landfill will break new ground.

"We are setting the standards with this one so it is immensely important to do it right," he said.

He made this statement during a March 10 telephone interview. The Jamestown landfill is the first of up to 200 Rhode Island landfills and contaminated sites iden-

tified for cleanup under supervision of the DEM.

Sullivan had attended the forum hosted March 5 by the North End Concerned Citizens when it was announced that pollution was found in four private water wells on properties abutting the old Jamestown landfill. The DEM chief said he attended the meeting "because there were umpteen e-mails to me imploring me to come to hear the other side

See "Landfill" on page 13



Marsh perch

Chris Powell, co-chairman of the Conanicut Island Raptor Project, has a bird's-eye view from atop the new osprey nest platform Saturday at Marsh Meadows. Powell was adjusting the angle of the Internet video camera in preparation for the ospreys' return. Photo by Bar Wharton

Statehouse bills would have island impact

Municipal court among those pending

By Donna K. Drago

Two months into the 2006 General Assembly, Jamestown's lawmakers are backing bills that will enable the town to have a municipal court, change the way state Department of Environmental Management looks at lots to determine if they are suitable for septic system permits and to help alleviate new burdens the state wants to place on the harbormaster.

Rep. Bruce Long (R-Jamestown, Middletown) is working to eliminate burdensome language in the state's no-discharge law, which seeks to keep harbors and shorelines clean of boating waste.

Passed in 2004, the law with an implementation date of June 1 is causing concerns among towns that have shorelines and marinas. The sticking point, Long said, is that, under the new law, mooring permits are tied to boat owners getting their vessels' plumbing systems inspected. Because town harbormasters typically issue mooring permits, it has become a tremendous burden for them, Long said, noting that in Jamestown the harbormaster would have to inspect more than 1,000 boats in a short amount of time to comply with the law.

Some modern boats have "very sophisticated systems" that could take great periods of time to inspect, Long pointed out.

"We want to remove the inspection requirement

from the mooring permit," he said of his goal.

Long said the bigger issue is that "we don't want the state sending us unfunded mandates." The DEM should be responsible, Long said.

Sen. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Jamestown, Newport) is a sponsor of a similar bill in the senate, Long noted, and shares his desire to "start the discussion" about unfunded mandates.

Bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate to allow the town to create a municipal court to handle enforcement of local ordinances.

The bill has already passed the House, Long said, and Paiva Weed said she expected it to pass the Senate "shortly." If established, a municipal court would handle issues like traffic citations, noise and pet complaints, and money collected from fines would be the property of the town and not have to be shared with the county.

A bill that could impact future development in Jamestown is one that would require the DEM to look at the cumulative impact on an entire area when issuing individual sewage disposal systems. Currently, laws allow the DEM, the only agency that can permit septic systems, to look only at the lot for which an ISDS application is pending. "We want to develop a formula for how one lot impacts the entire area," Long said.

A similar bill, introduced by Paiva Weed, is working its way through the Senate.

DEM hears from town on no-discharge plans

By Sam Bari

Town Council liaison Julio DiGiando told the Harbor Management Commission last week that the council signed commission's letter opposing the state mandate requiring pump-out stickers on any vessel with sleeping accommodations. The letter was then sent to the state Department of Environmental Management.

At its regular March 8 meeting, Harbor Commission Chairman Michael deAngeli said the Harbor Masters Association of Rhode Island does not support the new law, which will become effective on June 1 of this year. However, except for North Kingstown, the other harbormasters attending the harbormasters' meeting said they would try to comply if the effective date is not postponed or if the law is not repealed.

David Greenberg, North Kingstown's harbormaster, said that North Kingstown will not

participate in this program.

Harbor Commission Executive Director and Police Chief Thomas Tighe reported that \$4,100 was received from the town's insurance carrier for the vandalized inflatable used by the harbormaster. The boat was deemed irreparable by the insurance company. Tighe said that bids are out with specs for a new inflatable with an enclosed wheelhouse and a hard-chine bottom. He also said they were exploring slightly larger boats to better serve the needs of the harbormaster.

Commissioner Rick Anderson asked if the bids included a new engine. Tighe said that the bid did not because the old engine was not damaged. Anderson suggested that a bigger boat could require a larger engine because the old engine would be inadequate. De Angeli pointed out that now was the time to make an adequate pur-

See "Harbor" on page 13