

We've Got Balls!



Glass Floats, That Is

Nautical Impressions

⚓ GIFTS FOR SAILORS AND LANDLUBBERS ALIKE ⚓

16 West Main Street, Wickford, RI (401) 295-5303

Budget hearing

Continued from page one

haps final session, is set for Thursday, March 23, to review capital spending needs.

Councilors Barbara Szepatowski, Michael Schnack, and William Kelly spoke on items individually, and sometimes jointly, that they thought needed attention. Concerns of the three arose after a tour of town facilities last spring. At that time, the three expressed horror, and this week, Szepatowski and Kelly repeated their surprise and shock over the extent of disrepair of so many town facilities.

In his first budget rounds since his January hiring, Town Administrator Bruce Keiser proposed funds for several building repairs in both operating and capital accounts, but one or more of the trio of councilors asked about items not funded for as much as they seemed to expect. Keiser

based his budgeting after discussing needs with his staff.

Szepatowski referred to building conditions that represent demoralization for workers. She said conditions "are scary. The (line items) are not enough."

Schnack focused on conditions of town boats, as interwoven with reports of police plans and needs for Homeland Security related patrols. Council Vice President Julio DiGiando suggested that the police and harbormaster boat needs should be shared. Schnack said at least one boat cited in the discussion "was never seaworthy. It should be off the table" and not considered an option.

Keiser was directed to gather more data about town boats and about grants used for various town programs.

Szepatowski and Kelly led other forays, including one for a review of the plan to decrease funds for grant writing; and for adding money, up to \$3,750, to immediately replace police "bullet proof" vests because of possibilities that the 2002 supply of vests being used may be ineffective.

The police proposed that they would wait for the usual five-year life of the vests to expire, pending a lawsuit settlement about the vest quality, but some councilors were concerned that their safety was not worth the risk even though local police activities have not involved shootings.

Szepatowski asked about funds for expanding the teen co-ordinator to full-time status. Keiser promised a review, saying that he may need to recommend a reduction elsewhere. He had explained his plans to re-organize some staff assignments, to remove clerical tasks from the town planner, to hire a town worker able to help both the engineering and building departments, and to better staff and pay recreation workers.

The administration included the council-initiated goal of starting a municipal court with an estimated \$17,000 that may or may not be self-supporting through fines. Council President David Long said he had met earlier Tuesday with Keiser to discuss various budget items, including the wisdom of the court plan if enough revenue could not be assured.

Another major topic was the plan to replace long outdated public works equipment through a lease purchase plan that would cost \$13,000 a year for five years in interest payments alone, plus annual installments for the \$550,000 equipment costs.

Szepatowski said she was definitely for that spending, but only if town officials promised to get rid of the old equipment.

Sticky or silly

An unexpected exchange developed over a matter in the budget only indirectly. DiGiando asked about the possibility of a return to the town admission stickers — once good for the transfer station, town beach, and Fort Getty — and now for the past two budget years at an increased price, only for the station. People who want to park at the beach or travel within Ft. Getty need separate stickers. DiGiando said some residents want a return to one-sticker-good-for-all. A full scale discussion started.

"We could reverse it. It's not that big a problem. But we won't tonight. Anyone who wants can ask for an agenda item" for a future meeting.

Keiser asked if councilors wanted him to do a sticker study. There were a few snickers. Schnack said he was worried about safety for those with windshields filled with stickers.

Long asked if anyone wanted to prolong the discussion. DiGiando feigned deep thought, then responded, "Naahh."

Keiser said, "I was enjoying this." Long said, "I'd be enjoying it if it were 7 o'clock." The councilors adjourned about 20 minutes later, at 9:15 p.m. The session had started a few minutes after 6 p.m.

MARCH SALE
20%-50% OFF CLOTHING

Midnight Sun
 83-85 Brown St. Wickford 295-1601 Open 7 Days

THRIFTY OIL
 24 Hour Burner Service
 Call for appointment
CALL FOR OUR LOWEST PRICE 
 We Now Accept Visa and MasterCard 
CALL 1-800-276-3835
 RI Petroleum Dealer License #83

MEET THE ARTIST/SILVERSMITH, SCOOP!
SATURDAY, MARCH 18TH
 AT
A BIT OF THE WEST
 WICKFORD VILLAGE
 83 BROWN STREET, ON THE WHARF
 294-1089

True Value
 Help Is Just Around The Corner.
SUPER HARDWARE STORE

- Paint & Supplies
- Cabot Stains
- Electrical
- Plumbing & Heating
- Glass & Screen Repair
- Lumber

 Hours:
 M-F 7am - 6pm
 Sat 7am - 5pm
 Sun 9am - 3pm

847-8460
 236 Connell Highway, Newport
 Quality & Friendly service is our specialty

Jamestown is the Jewel of the Bay!

"Lobsters Cooked To Order"
 A COMPLETE LINE OF FRESH FISH, LOBSTER & SHELLFISH
 Our Fish is Cut Fresh Daily
 Shrimp, Swordfish & Crabs • Whole Fresh Fish
 Foods & Salads • Home of Jumbo Shrimp
2 GREAT LOCATIONS!
 Come visit our New Location at:
 641 Warwick Ave., Warwick, RI • 781-2526 (CLAM)
170 Main Street • Wickford • 295-4600
 Open 7 Days • (Next to town dock)


\$19 million

Continued from page one

per \$1,000 of property assessment, or 1 cent less than 5.5 percent maximum rate increase allowed under state law. The current rate is \$9.09 per \$1,000 of assessment.

As an example, an owner of property assessed at \$400,000 would pay \$3,636 in taxes this year. For the new budget as proposed, the owner of the same property would pay \$3,832 in taxes next year, which is \$196 more than is currently paid.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser proposed that the town's portion of the annual budget be \$7,764,340. That amount is \$751,538 or 9.33 percent more than this year. The councilors heard Keiser's proposals for the town this week, and will hear the school spending plan Tuesday, March 21, at 6 p.m. The final budget plan will be presented to voters at the annual financial meeting on June 5.

Keiser's spending plan includes continuation of all existing town services, with increases involving:

- 3.75 percent salary adjustments for police.

- 3.5 percent increases for all other union workers and for department heads.

• Phasing in the second part of the new emergency services incentives at an added cost of \$83,174 offset by more than that amount in revenue.

• \$15,000 for the new municipal court, offset by a similar amount of revenue from fines.

• Phasing in \$519,573 in recommended improvements to the police, library, and Community Center buildings.

• Capital spending of \$892,110 for most items and \$550,000 under debt service for heavy equipment — two dump trucks, a street sweeper and a backhoe — to be leased for five years at a gross cost of \$616,875 for ownership.

• Staff re-organization for additions for planning, recreation, and engineering departments.

• \$10,800 stipend for the ambulance commander that was erroneously left out of the current budget, with no provision to compensate the post for the amount intended this year.

• Adding annual debt service of \$68,750 to cover the new town hall if approved for \$2.75 million at the June 5 financial meeting.

SCOTT A. LUTES
 ATTORNEY AT LAW
"Achieving outstanding results for clients for 19+ years"
 Criminal Defense, Domestic Assault,
 Driving While Intoxicated, Juvenile Offenses
www.scottluteslaw.com
 127 Dorrance Street Providence, RI 02903 (401) 861-1142 Office
 (401) 741-7525 Cellular

What are you doing this winter?

Your world doesn't have to get smaller and more isolated when bad weather hits or darkness comes. At the Seasons, the good life goes on. Each day, and into the evenings, residents share their lives — enjoying activities and meals together, taking trips, exercising, or just chatting by the fire. And thanks to the staff's genuine caring and support, residents are healthier, happier and safer than they were living alone.

We can broaden your world and add sunshine to your life. There's a place waiting for you at The Seasons.

For information or to arrange a tour, call 884-9099 or e-mail: info@theseasons.org

Not convinced?
 Then let us introduce you to life at The Seasons through our Caregiver Respite or Trial Residency Program.*
 *Stay in a furnished studio apartment.


 The Seasons
 ASSISTED LIVING
www.theseasons.org

A CareLink Partner
 Five Saint Elizabeth Way
 East Greenwich, RI



- Studio, one and two bedroom apartments, including three meals daily.
- Separate Alzheimer's/dementia care residence

CARPET
 VINYL
 CERAMIC TILE
 WINDOW TREATMENTS
 LAMINATE
 AREA RUGS
 PRE-FINISHED WOOD

Fashionable Floors at Tough to Beat prices!
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!

BART'S INC.
 CARPET SALES
 a complete flooring center

491 Davisville Road, Route 403, North Kingstown, RI
884.8300 295.0164
bartscarpet.com
 We challenge you to find us!

TRY BART'S X-TRA CLEAN CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING