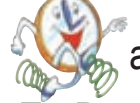


SPRING Has Sprung!



and it's time...

To Prep Gardens!

Compost • Peat Moss • Top Soil

To Start Seeds!

Seeds • Potting Mix • Starter Trays

For Blooming Bulbs!

Tulips • Daffodils • Hyacinth



Florist & Garden Center

Open Everyday • 10 am - 6 pm

401-423-0050

12 Southwest Avenue

Advertise in the Jamestown Press and your display ad automatically appears online at JamestownPress.com

Include your Web site address in your ad and a link will be provided!

\$11.7 million school budget presented to council

By Sam Bari and Michaela Kennedy

Jamestown educators proposed an \$11.7 million budget for fiscal year 2009 to the Town Council at a March 20 budget meeting at Town Hall.

After listening to Superintendent Marcia Lukon, Director of Student Services Robert Fricklas, and Maintenance Director Lewis Kitts present their various areas of the budget, Town Council members suggested how the 5.6-percent increase over the current spending plan can be cut.

When asked why there was a 5.6-percent increase when a 5-percent ceiling was mandated by the state, Lukon said the .6-percent overage was absorbed by outside revenues, and the town contribution was only 5 percent, which meets the state law governing allowable property tax increases.

Salary increases of \$118,192, benefits to employees and retirees of \$208,141, all tuitions amounting to \$349,270, and maintenance expenses, including utilities of \$63,663, brought the total increases to \$675,603. By eliminating teacher aids, Lukon said the committee reduced the budget by \$54,000 to come in under the 5-percent cap.

According to the school panel, the 2009 operating budget by category is as follows: instructional fees of \$2.7 million; North Kingstown and charter school fees totaling \$2.2 million; professional development costs of \$6,525; library and audio visual costs totaling \$102,661; technology fees of \$96,076; English language learning costs of \$49,516; special education fees of \$2.1 million; health services totaling \$80,270; maintenance fees of \$558,238; athletic costs adding up to \$18,200; student activities budgeted at \$13,000; transportation costs of \$586,934; safety costs of \$14,542; system-wide costs totaling \$559,390; the school committee costs of \$57,550 and the benefits of 2.5 million for a grand total of \$11.7 million.

The summary of tuitions, which accounted for 26.33 percent of the budget, broke down to North Kingstown High School \$2.14 million; out-of-district special needs, both public and non-public \$908,541; and charter school tuitions were \$49,556; for a grand total of \$3.1 million for all tuitions.

After the meeting, Councilman William "Bill" Kelly summarized his concerns saying, "Reduce the

number of classes in grades one, five, six and seven from three to two. No class would have more than 23 children each." He continued, "Look at the feasibility of closing Lawn Avenue School. It is costing us almost \$17,000 a year to educate children in Jamestown. North Kingstown is charging us less than \$12,000 a year per child." Kelly concluded, "Sending middle school children to North Kingstown would save over a million dollars a year. In addition, North Kingstown offers a more varied school curriculum, a larger number of after school organizations for students to participate in and a more varied and competitive sports program, and in addition, a more integrated school community."

Councilwoman Barbara Szepatowski said, "I'm not concerned about what the school department was currently spending, but I urge school officials to look at how costs could be reduced in the future." She also said that she would like to know what the national average is for educating each student, the average class size, and the costs of administration, "so we can see how we compare to the national average and surrounding school districts."

Councilman Robert Sutton

agreed with Kelly about the class size, but was more concerned with the costs of two administrations for two small schools. "I think we should explore the idea of one administration for both schools," Sutton said. "It appears to me that thinking in that direction would be more efficient. I'm no authority on how many students should be in each class. I trust the educators to tell us those things. I do, however, recognize the need for a central administration to run both schools as if they were one. Two administrations just seems to be excessive," Sutton said.

Council President Julio DiGiando said that it was remarkable how the cost of administration within the school system had increased 62 percent in six years. He also said he was concerned that the cost of educating each child was more than \$17,000. "How does that compare to surrounding communities?" he asked.

At a continuation of the meeting on Tuesday night, the School Committee fielded questions about pupil education costs and salaries.

Lukon supported hiring an additional principal for Melrose Avenue School by stressing additional responsibilities of administrators mandated by state policies. "She (the principal) evaluates 62 direct reports. In industry, 12 to 15 is maximum for any managerial position." Lukon noted that increased accountability was the biggest change in education over the last 25 years.

Sutton again asked why leadership of the school system needed administrative structures in both buildings. "Somehow they are going to compete for resources. It's inevitable that if you treat these schools as two separate entities, it can't help but get more expensive over time," he said.

School Committee Chairwoman Cathy Kaiser stood up to address data showing that all school buildings across the state housed a principal.

Terri Tamase, of Stern Street, stood up in support of two principals. "I don't know where you went to school, Mr. Sutton, but where I went there was a principal."

DiGiando pointed out that people wrestled with the question of why some of the principal's duties couldn't be absorbed by present administrators. He hinted that the council would support a proposed administrator at Melrose. "Everyone has made a strong case as to why there should be a principal in each school," he said.

School committee member William "Bucky" Brennan drew focus to two major line items, special education and benefits that support retirees no longer in the system. "You spend an hour and half discussing what amounts to a \$1,500 difference in salary, when there are much bigger things to look at," he said.

The council gave no argument about class size. Tracy Shea from Coronado Street said she was glad to hear favorable comments about class size. "There's unbelievable data on the effects of small classes, even quality of life and income. It's the higher achieving kids that benefit particularly," Shea said.

Tick Season Is Here!

The risk of exposure to Lyme Disease carrying ticks can be reduced.

Protect yourself with Sawyer® Permethrin Clothing Treatment



Stop ticks at their Source with Damminix® Tick Tubes



True Value. START RIGHT. START HERE.™ 5 Narragansett Avenue 423-2722

CHOPMIST CHARLIE'S

Prime Rib
Friday & Saturday Nights

'Seaworthy Fare'

Dinner for Two \$19.95
with a Bottle of Wine

5 - 9 p.m. Sunday thru Thursday

This Week's Features:

ORANGE GLAZED GRILLED CHICKEN
EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA • TILAPIA PROVENCEALE
PORK OSSOBUCO • CORNMEAL CRUSTED CATFISH
MAPLE MUSTARD GRILLED HAM STEAK • POT ROAST
SAUSAGE & BROCCOLINI RAVIOLI IN PINK VODKA SAUCE

Not Available for Take-out

40 Narragansett Avenue • 423-1020
Open For Lunch & Dinner

jamestown fitness

Finally Fit Again

My athletic passion was playing soccer. But after finishing college, completing medical school, entering private practice and giving birth to two sons, finding my fitness niche seemed impossible. I craved fitness, flexibility, and strength. I found all of that and more with the Kettlebell. Will Fish introduced me to the Kettlebell 2 1/2 years ago. I am so grateful to Will for pushing me to excel at every level. His impeccable attention to technique has kept my body healthy and allowed me to progressively improve. Will trained me through my third pregnancy and now 10 months postpartum, I am 10 pounds lighter than my pre pregnancy weight. I will grow old with Kettlebells and thanks to Will, it will be graceful and with strong bones and a healthy heart.

—Wendy Regan, MD - Jamestown, RI USA

Mon-Thurs: 5:30 am-8 pm • Friday: 5:30 am-7 pm • Sat-Sun: 7 am-3 pm
T: (401) 560-0300 • 36 Southwest Avenue • F: (401) 560-0301

YANKEE

✦

HOUSEWRIGHTS

Exterior Remodel by

CHRYSLIS AWARD WINNER
Best Porch/Deck

Robert Van Cleef, Master Builder—RI Registration #10
(401) 423-3800
yankeehousewrights.com