

Council

Continued from page 1

ters of a million dollars was outrageous for closing the site and asked if the town could do the work ourselves. Keiser said that town workers could certainly do most of it. Councilman Bill Kelly suggested that with the new equipment the town purchased last year, the town should be able to do everything.

Keiser suggested that the town could handle all the labor costs, but noted they might need to rent a bulldozer. Kelly said, "even that might not be necessary." Keiser agreed, and said that he would discuss the matter with Gray and GZA. He also said they would look around the island for the two-feet of clean soil required to cover areas where waste had been buried, but he thought they might be required to purchase some.

Sutton asked Keiser if it would be possible to get an extension from the DEM. "With a little more time, we could use the landfill for a composting site for leaves and yard waste," Sutton said.

Keiser agreed that using the site for composting was a good idea and said he would draft a letter to DEM to ask for an extension and to tell them about Jamestown's intentions.

After the meeting, Gray said that he would look into exactly how much fill would be needed and said that he and Keiser would be meeting with GZA next week to discuss a revised estimate using town employees to do the work. He said they would have the necessary information for the first Town Council meeting in April. He also said he would come to the meeting and discuss the matter with the council so a detailed response to OWM could be drafted.

In other business, the council voted unanimously to buy all of its electricity from renewable sources. Based on last year's consumption, by joining other municipalities with the League of Cities and Towns, the town could satisfy all of its electricity needs for an additional \$11,000 in the next fiscal year.

The council also voted to approve an amended fire prevention and protection ordinance that was advertised for hearing in the Press Feb. 28. The ordinance would call for three final floor plans and a site plan, as requested by the fire department, in order for them to decide on the location and number of smoke and fire detection devices needed for any house in question.

One plan would go to the fire department, another to the building officer, and the third to the installer. One plan would be locked away for safe keeping by the fire department and the other two would be returned to the homeowner after the installation work was completed.

In an unrelated matter, the council voted unanimously to support Bill H-7776 of the Labor Relations Act. If the bill passes, the town would not be obligated to name an exclusive health care provider for its teachers and employees in future labor contracts.

The councilors also voted unanimously to approve the permanent appointments of Tiffany B. Kopacz, Rui J. Silva, and Theodore Hebert to the Jamestown Police Department. The three were sworn in as probationary officers on July 9 of last year.

The council voted to move forward to the next phase of the proposed purchase and sales agreement with Church Community Housing for the former town offices at 44 Southwest Ave. Town Solicitor Peter Ruggiero said that Church agreed to pay for any needed archeological surveys and recommended that the council make a motion for approval to move ahead with the three-unit affordable housing project.

Councilwoman Szepatowski suggested that Church look into possibly converting the garage into a fourth unit that would be small, easily accessible, and a convenient unit for a handicapped person. Church agreed to look into the possibility.

Sutton and Kelly suggested using the garage to house recreation equipment that was being exposed to the elements because of lack of storage space.

Councilor Sutton, who was absent when the council voted to

support the town as a sole source aquifer was given an opportunity to voice his views on the matter, because he was opposed to the designation.

Sutton read a letter he had written to his fellow council members stating his reasons. Some of the highlights of the letter said, "The island was not eligible to be designated as a sole source aquifer because underground water studies have indicated that there are probably several aquifers on the island if the word aquifer even applies." He went on to say that "the town's public water system is supplied by two surface water reservoirs and the definition of single source aquifer supplied by the Environmental Protection Agency is therefore not consistent with the reality of the Jamestown public and private water supply system."

He also said, "A second part of the definition requires that 50 percent of the drinking water supply must originate from the aquifer. According to Rhode Island Health Department statistics, the Jamestown surface water reservoir system currently supplies a little over 55 percent of the island population." He said that the application submitted to the EPA by the North End Concerned Citizens reports undocumented population statistics that indicate 57 percent of the island population relies on the sole source aquifer. Therefore, the definition of the sole source aquifer is not consistent with the reality of the Jamestown public and private water systems.

Sutton had additional reasons for the town not being eligible for the designation. He also emphasized that he "absolutely opposed any process within the Town of Jamestown that unilaterally and without Town Council authority and without input and consideration of the elected and appointed officials, petitions another government agency to provide oversight of the town."



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Budget

Continued from page 1

those positions. We're talking about paying people a competitive salary, a reasonable salary." He mentioned three or four department heads by name and talked about their "outstanding" work. "And Tina, you are a pain in the butt to get money out of," he joked in praise of the frugal practices of the town's finance director Tina Collins. "If this budget is approved as is, we are not looking at anything that is not the ordinary inflation adjustment."

Kelly went on to ask about the benefits package, totaling over \$1.3 million, with more than \$700,000 in healthcare coverage alone. He suggested a review of workers' compensation, and asked if possible fraud in ongoing claims might surface that would impact the high price tag. Keiser agreed to look into any possible abuses.


Kelly also asked if any improvement could be made in the quarter of a million dollars

of proposed retirement funds. Keiser explained the increase in retirement pay was a requirement by state law, but added that he continued to research other possibilities that would lower the burden.

The town administrator commented that spending in Jamestown is manageable under the new tax levy, adopted through the Paiva-Weed bill. The new law caps at 5.25 percent, the amount a town can increase its budget. In previous years, increases in the town's budget reached over six percent at times, Keiser said.

Before the workshop switched gears to address the school department budget, Town Council chairman Julio DiGiando commented that Jamestown has become the wealthiest town in the state, "yet we have the lowest property tax in the state."

As the evening wore on, seats in the council chambers filled to near capacity. Time ran out for general town budget questions from the public. The council will continue the workshop on Monday, March 31.



BOOT CAMP

Starts Tuesday, April 15, 6:00AM

Boot Camp will be run as a series of 2 sessions/week
Tuesday and Friday at 6:00AM
The series will continue for 12 weeks (last day will be June 27).

Jason and Pat Vieira will conduct the series.
The series will progressively get more difficult.
No drop-ins will be allowed.
Class size will be limited and members will be given preference over non-members. Sign-up early to reserve a spot.

Cost:
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