

WORK SESSION

JANUARY 7, 2025

At a JOINT WORK SESSION of the Town Council and School Committee of the Town of South Kingstown, County of Washington, in the State of Rhode Island, held at the Town Hall, in and for said Town on the 7th day of January 2025 at 7:03 PM.

PRESENT: Town Council
Rory H. McEntee, President
Michael K. Marran, Vice President
Patricia A. Alley
Deborah D. Bergner
Jay G. Wegimont

School Committee
Carol Vetter, Chairperson
James Restivo, Vice Chairperson
Michelle Brousseau
Stewart Lander
Katherine M. Macinanti
Bradley M. Shear
Paula Whitford

Also present: James M. Manni, Town Manager; Brian Silvia, Finance Director; Michael Podraza, School Superintendent; Daniel Seger, Assistant School Superintendent; Ryan Kilpatrick, School Chief Financial Officer; Douglas Snow, School Director of Technology; and Brian Mahoney, Director of School Facilities.

1. **A.** The Pledge of Allegiance is given.
- B.** The Land Acknowledgement Statement is read.

The Town Council wishes happy birthday to Council Vice President Marran.

Council Member Bergner requests to include public comment on the Agenda.

Discussion ensues relative to public comment, the length of the presentation, and the ability to allow public comment.

2. **A.** School Committee Chairperson Vetter notes that the proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Plan is in draft form and has not been voted on by the School Committee yet. No changes are anticipated outside of tonight's presentation.

Michael Podraza, School Superintendent gives an overview of the presentation and introduces the members of the School administration team in attendance.

Ryan Kilpatrick, School Department Chief Financial Officer gives a brief presentation on the Facilities Master Plan (FMP) based on 2022 Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA), the FCA conducted on October 2024 with results pending, and projects subject to change based on priorities and funding availability. It is noted that the School Department is not requesting additional funds from the Town Council for the CIP.

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Mr. Kilpatrick reviews the primary funding sources for their CIP, reappropriated fund balance in the amount of \$1,163,133, federal grants in the amount of \$46,992, and an insurance reimbursement for replacing a generator at Peace Dale Elementary School.

B. & C. Douglas Snow, School Director of Technology presents the School Technology's portion of the CIP totaling to \$486,208 for capital equipment and computer software. Proposed equipment includes student laptops for 2nd and 9th grades, Cisco main core switch, Cisco phone servers, Middle School computer devices, network hardware, server room UPS, storage array, support staff laptops, wireless access points, wireless controllers, elementary computer devices PK-1, and telecommunication program.

Discussion ensues relative to the possibility of future coordination of software usage between the school district, Town, and public libraries, the recent wireless breach in the State and what has been done in the district to harden up our security, the plan for the migration of hardware to the new high school, collaboration between the Town, school district, and the police department in regard to safety technology, the retirement of iPads that were purchased during the pandemic and the plan for them, the possibility of purchasing a badge system for the district and its benefits, and the success of the Yondr bag program.

Brian Mahoney, Director of School Facilities presents the School Facilities/Maintenance portion of the CIP totaling to \$656,007 for a mass notification system, replacement/repair chain link fencing, installation of exit signage at Matunuck Elementary School and West Kingstown Elementary School, installation of fire alarm initiating devices at Peace Dale Elementary School, installation of GFCI receptacles at Broad Rock Middle School, handrail refinishing at Peace Dale Elementary School, replacement of carpeting at Broad Rock Middle School and Peace Dale Elementary School, replacement of lavatory fixtures at Matunuck Elementary School and West Kingstown Elementary School, upgrade/repair/replacement of soffit Peace Dale Elementary School, replacement of fire alarm initiating devices at Peace Dale Elementary School, purchase of a custodial machine, purchase of a district defibrillator, replacement of a box truck, and repair bituminous parking lot at Broad Rock Middle School.

Discussion ensues relative to the roof leak issue at Matunuck Elementary School and West Kingstown Elementary School, the vendor for the mass notification system and geofencing tags/system, the level of cleanliness in the buildings, the district's tracking for the same, projects a part of the RI Department of Education applications whereby expenditure would allow the town to receive reimbursements, and the plan for affording the projects that have been proposed through 2031.

Further discussion ensues relative to the potential surplus the district may have at the end of this fiscal year after the completion of the capital projects and expenditures of the current year, the proper percentage of the fund balance, and when the Town might expect to receive reimbursement from the State on any of the school projects identified in Stage I or Stage II of the school building project.

Council President McEntee invites public comments.

Bret Harrington is present and comments in support of the necessity of keeping up with facilities and asks that all proposed budgets be transparent and reviewed thoroughly for alternate options of funding.

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Discussion ensues relative to the current “hold harmless policy” and how it will affect State aid from the potential budget deficit at the State level.

Mr. Kilpatrick explains that for fiscal year 2025, an offset of approximately \$297,000 was received. This amount will shrink to approximately \$83,000 in fiscal year 2026 and the current expectation is that this amount will be \$0.00 in fiscal year 2027.

Discussion ensues relative to attendance initiatives, increases in attendance, and the recent graduation rate.

D. & E Mr. Podraza reviews an upcoming school building committee meeting that will take place in the Town Council Chambers on Thursday at 6:30 PM where the SBC will be looking to take action to approve the schematic design of the high school to send the same to RIDE for its approval. An update of the design for Curtis Corner and the athletic fields will be given at that meeting. A discussion will also take place to ensure that the Town Council will be involved at appropriate times so that they are continuously made aware of the happenings within the school building project.

Adjourn at 8:32 PM.

ADJOURNED,

Nichole C. Romane
Town Clerk