

REGULAR SESSION

DECEMBER 18, 2025

At a REGULAR SESSION of the Town Council 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 18th day of December 2025 at 6:10 PM.

PRESENT: TOWN COUNCIL

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

1. A. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to recess to Closed Executive Session pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(2) to discuss matters pertaining to litigation re: Police Department.

Regular Session is reconvened at 7:06 PM.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to seal the minutes of Closed Executive Session pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(2) to discuss matters pertaining to litigation re: Police Department.

Mike Ursillo, Town Solicitor notes that no votes were taken in Closed Executive Session.

Nichole C. Romane
Town Clerk

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2. REGULAR SESSION

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag is given.

Town Council President McEntee asks that a moment of silence be given for the victims of the Brown University shooting.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

The Land Acknowledgement Statement is read.

3. ROLL CALL

Roll Call is taken and all members are present.

The following members of the School Committee are present: Carol Vetter, Chair, James Restivo, Vice Chairperson, Michelle Brousseau, Kate Macinanti, Bradley Shear, and Stewart Lander. Paula Whitford is absent.

Also present: James M. Manni, Town Manager, Brian Silvia, Finance Director, Daniel Seger, Assistant School Superintendent, Patricia Proctor, Chief Financial Officer, School Department, and Michael Podraza, School Superintendent.

Consent Agenda is brought forward.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to approve the Consent Agenda as indicated by (CA) on same.

(CA) A. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant the Petition #13087803 to install a Pole (P.19-84) and anchor on the eastern side of Columbia Street at 153 School Street (Hazard School) and authorization of the Town Manager to execute an easement with Rhode Island Energy, 280 Melrose Street, Providence, RI 02907 to use the public property named for the purposes stated, that the work be done to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Services and notification to Town for municipal utility mark-out prior to pole setting, as further described in a memorandum from the Public Services Director to the Town Manager dated December 9, 2025, and entitled, "Rhode Island Energy Pole Setting Request, Pole P.19-84 - 153 School Street". Book 6, Page 31.

(CA) B. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to grant the Petition #14504481 of Rhode Island Energy and Verizon New England to relocate Joint Pole P.7 on the north side of Kersey Road 4 feet south towards edge of pavement for purposes to install sidewalks and to install a new 1" anchor at P.8 on the north side of Kersey Road and to use the public ways named for the purposes stated in said petition, that the work be done to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Services and notification to Town for municipal utility mark-out prior to pole setting, and that this approval is conditioned upon the removal of all existing double poles along the entire length of Kersey Road prior to new pole(s) placement; and any new double poles created as part of this request be removed within sixty (60) calendar days of new pole(s) placement. Said petition is further

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described in a memorandum from the Public Services Director to the Town Manager dated December 10, 2025 and entitled "Rhode Island Energy Pole Setting Request – Pole P.7 Kersey Road." Book 6, Page 32.

(CA) C. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to authorize a Grant of Permanent Easement to Rhode Island Energy, Service Request #14753002, at Pole #248 on Kingstown Road (Old Mountain Field) for the Installation, Operation, and Maintenance of Distribution Line and Related Appurtenances as further described in a memorandum from the Director of Leisure Services to the Town Manager dated December 12, 2025, and entitled "Rhode Island Energy – Easement - Pole 248 Kingstown Road - Old Mountain Field". Book 6, Page 33.

4. TOWN COUNCIL AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE JOINT INITIAL BUDGET HEARING

A. James Manni, Town Manager reviews the Town's budget objectives, schedule of budget meetings, the budget process as mandated by the Town Charter, the Town departments and services funded by the Annual Operating Budget, and an explanation of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Brian Silvia, Finance Director reviews the proposed CIP total project costs for FY 2027 - FY 2032, the CIP funding summary for FY 2027 – FY 2032, and the School Department's capital reserve.

The Town Manager reviews the property tax maximum levy and the impact of setting the levy at the 4% maximum allowable by State law, the property tax levy's 5-year history, the property tax summary's 10-year history, the maintenance of effort required by State law toward providing a minimum level of support for public education, and FY 2026-2027 budget drivers to maintain existing levels of service to Town residents.

The Finance Director reviews FY 2026-2027 revenue and expenditure projections, outstanding municipal debt for FY 2025-26 through FY 2031-32, a debt affordability study released by the State Treasury office, projected annual debt service payments for FY 2025-26 through FY 2031-32, the unassigned fund balance policy and guidelines, the projected Unassigned Fund Balance, and options for utilization of the Unassigned Fund Balance.

Discussion ensues relative to Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs) investment income, the ability to roll the Year 1 BAN in the amount of \$55,000,000 into the Year 2 BAN of \$65,000,000 to total \$120,000,000, State revenue sources and factors leading to a recent increase in the amount of revenue received by the Town, the timeline for the Town to review and approve CIP pay-go funds, transferring the unassigned fund balance to the Debt Service Fund over a three-year period, an explanation of overlay and abatements, projected annual debt obligations, debt service revenue offsets, the property tax amount needed to cover debt service payments, the timeline for the opening of the new EMS Station on Ministerial Rd., declining student enrollment in South Kingstown public schools but a higher number of students enrolled than anticipated, homeschooling, charter school, and private school enrollment, the projected new school debt, the function of the EMS Billing Fund, potential revenue created by the Community Paramedic Program, and the potential to add CIP funds for water infrastructure improvements.

Michael Podraza, Superintendent of Schools reviews the mission and vision of the School Department for stability, stewardship, responsiveness, and partnership, considerations for FY 2027 including unfunded State mandates, contract expirations, the uncertainty of Federal funding, and the School Department's priorities and goals.

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Council Member Bergner notes Town Council resolutions sent to the General Assembly relative to school transportation costs.

Discussion ensues relative to performing a bus route audit, the expiration of the current food service contract with Chartwells, the uncertainty of Federal funding under the current administration with no indication of what funding levels will be, the current amount of Federal funding, Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) reimbursement for projects, and budget drivers that are most connected to student outcomes.

The Superintendent reviews School Department strategic plan adopted priorities, current and projected enrollment in and out of district, enrollment trends and considerations, and staffing in FY 2026.

Patricia Proctor, Chief Financial Officer reviews FY 2026 revenue and expenditures.

The Superintendent clarifies what revenue and expenditures include, the maintenance of effort required to release State funding to schools, and makes closing remarks.

Discussion ensues relative to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs statewide, the application process to move a student out of district to pursue CTE programs not available in South Kingstown, classroom and overall school population sizes, potentially redistricting to redistribute the student population evenly, the use of Yondr pouches to restrict cell phone usage during the school day, and the possibility of offering a pre-AP and AP curriculum in the schools.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President McEntee invites residents to come forward with comments.

Jim O'Neill questions the Finance Director relative to the interest rate used for BAN calculations, the total cost of the school building project and whether all contracts are in place, and earned interest from BANs.

Vanessa Armando comments on class sizes increasing and creating in-house student support services to potentially save costs.

The Superintendent responds.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED: to adjourn at 9:36 PM.

Nichole C. Romane
Town Clerk