

REGULAR SESSION

APRIL 14, 2026

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 South Kingstown High School, in and for said Town on the 14th day of April 2026 at 7:06 PM.

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

1. REGULAR SESSION

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance is given.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT

The Land Acknowledgement Statement is read.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll Call of the Town Council is taken and all members are present.

Roll Call of the School Committee is taken and all members are present.

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

3. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Notice having been duly given, a Public Hearing, with School Committee participation is held relative to the Town Council's Preliminary Budget for FY 2026-2027 as adopted on March 18, 2026. This Public Hearing will address all funds contained within the Town Council's Preliminary Budget.

James Manni, Town Manager presents an overview of the budget hearing and adoption process in accordance with the Town Charter. The second required Public Hearing with the School Committee will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2026. The Town Council will consider any petitions filed for revisions to the Preliminary Budget and adopt its Final Budget at a Public Hearing on Monday, April 27, 2026.

The Town Manager reviews the preliminary adopted operating budget highlights and summary of FY 2026-27 personnel costs. The Town Manager notes that Skill Based Incentives, which are job related trainings and certifications, offered to union employees may change wage increase percentages beyond what is listed.

Brian Silvia, Finance Director reviews a summary of estimated net assessed property values, less exemptions, the proposed tax levy and its purpose, and the impact of the tax levy up to the State cap of 4%.

REGULAR SESSION

APRIL 14, 2026

The Town Manager reviews the median assessed values for single-family properties, and notes that the Town cannot increase the tax levy past the State cap of 4%. He further explains the exemptions required by the State necessary for the Town to exceed the 4% tax levy cap.

The Finance Director reviews the property tax need to support School and Town operations, the proposed tax levy breakdown and allocation summary excluding motor vehicles, noting years in which a statistical or full property revaluation occurred, a summary of changes enacted during the Preliminary Budget Adoption including Human Services/Outside Agencies (HSOA) allocation, year-end projections for the current year, and the debt obligations of the Town including existing School Debt and projected Future School Debt.

The Town Manager restates the Debt Service Obligations by year.

The Finance Director reviews a summary of all Town Fund and General Fund Expenditures and Revenues.

The Town Manager reviews the FY 2026-27 Preliminary Adopted Budget.

The Finance Director explains slides showing the School Operating Fund and summary of Historical Tax Transfer for Education.

Discussion ensues relative to the School Operating Fund Expenditure and the time period indicated by the FY 2025-26 Actual Expenditure value and encumbrances not accounted for.

Patricia Proctor, School Chief Financial Officer, notes that there is a higher budget surplus than originally predicted.

Discussion ensues relative to the surplus budget amount and when a final value will be known.

The Finance Director reviews the Special Revenue Funds, Enterprise Funds, proposed budget amendments due to updated healthcare and dental rates, proposed budget amendments to the Senior Center Operating Fund, and impact of updated health and dental rates for side funds including the Senior Center, Recreation Center, Neighborhood Guild, Water Division, and Wastewater Division.

Discussion ensues relative to the Town of Narragansett discontinuing a cost share to the South Kingstown Senior Center and clarification of Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) reimbursements noted under School Housing Aid.

Superintendent Podraza begins the School Department presentation and thanks the Town Council, School Committee, Town Manager, and residents. He reviews funding challenges including the reduced Governor's Budget and rising costs of healthcare, tuition rates, student transportation, and new supplies and equipment. He outlines the goal to continue all school programs without making any cuts and notes that the School District is committing \$1.0 million of the Fund Balance to Operations. The School Department has prioritized Capital Improvement Projects reimbursable through RIDE to ensure financial stability.

Discussion ensues relative to clarification of capital expenditures and reimbursements for FY 2026-27, the need to bundle Capital Improvement Projects to realize maximum RIDE reimbursements, and approved projects including the High School, athletic fields, Broad Rock Middle School, Peace Dale Elementary School, Matunuck Elementary School, and West Kingston Elementary School. It is

REGULAR SESSION

APRIL 14, 2026

noted that bundling of projects is difficult to achieve because of year-to-year maintenance of effort and the need for projects to be under contract as of December 30, 2024.

The Finance Director confirms that reimbursements from RIDE are deposited into the Debt Service Fund and may be moved into the School Capital Fund as needed.

Discussion ensues relative to the projected School year-end Fund Balance.

Council President McEntee reviews discussion at the April 13, 2026 Town Council meeting related to the Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) Account being superfunded as of the close of FY 2025-26. He presents a plan for the Town to contribute approximately \$580,000 of OPEB funds to the School Department with an agreement that the School contribute approximately \$760,000 in OPEB funds as well, plus the addition of monies from the Unassigned Fund Balance to reach the School Department's funding goal.

Discussion ensues relative to clarification of OPEB, the funding strategy presented by President McEntee, and whether the use of OPEB funds is viable for multiple years.

4. Public Comments

Council President McEntee invites residents to come forward with comments.

The following residents comment in opposition of School program budget cuts:

Bob Trager
Nicole Gardner
Evelyn Gray
Nichole Mulanaphy
William Nikitas
Julie Geary
Jonathan Sigman
Samuel Crump
Elise Nikitas
Laura Thakral
Christian Blaney
Janelle Geaber Morelli
Cadence Hallock
Sadie Lang
Sam Cadman
Orin Shear
Nara Shear
Mya Hubbard
Katie Garvin
Lucia Hubbard
Karen Discuillo

Dorald Bealey comments on the tax transfer to the School Department, declining student enrollment, proposed program cuts, and offers a comparison of the South Kingstown School budget items to other municipalities, including personnel costs, healthcare, and per pupil tuition costs.

REGULAR SESSION

APRIL 14, 2026

Council President McEntee reviews a second Public Hearing being held on April 15, 2026 and the Final Budget Adoption schedule.

Adjourn 9:32 pm.

Emily R. Houle
Town Clerk