

March 31, 2025

City Council

Proceedings by Authority

State of New York
City of Jamestown
Police Training Room

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A Public Hearing of the Mayor of the City of Jamestown, New York was held on Thursday, March 31, 2024 at 6:45 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council President Dolce, Councilman Sheldon, Councilwoman Brackman, Councilman Paterniti, Councilman Reynolds, Councilman Faulkner, Councilman Bonfiglio Councilman Daversa, Councilman Russell

MEMBERS ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: Mayor Kimberly A. Ecklund, City Clerk/Treasurer Jennifer John, Corporation Counsel Elliot Raimondo, Comptroller Ericka Thomas, Deputy Director of Public Safety/Police Chief Scott Forster, Deputy Fire Chief Matt Coon, Director of Development Crystal Surdyk, Deputy Director of Development Kasie Foulk, Acting Director of Public Works/Acting Director of Parks and Recreation Mark Roetzer, Police Officer Jeremy Maggio, Executive Assistant to the Mayor Joseph Calimeri.

Council President Dolce called the Public Hearing to order and asked City Clerk/Treasurer Jennifer R. John to read the Public Hearing Notice.

202503A00.01

Notice is hereby given that The City of Jamestown's CDBG and HOME FY 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 Annual Action Plans have been amended and will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) pending a mandatory 30-day public review period beginning Wednesday March 5th, 2025.

A public hearing will be held Monday March 31st, 2025 at 6:45 pm in Council Chambers located on the Second Floor of the Municipal Building.

The draft amended plan will be available beginning March 5th, 2025 in the Department of Development and the Office of the Mayor, on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building at 200 East Third Street, Jamestown, NY 14701. Additionally, it will be made available online at www.jamestownny.gov. All comments regarding the Annual Action Plan Amendments will be accepted by the Department of Development, Municipal Building, Fourth Floor, Jamestown, NY 14701, in writing until, or at the Public Hearing.

Any person with a disability requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the public hearing should call (716)483-7612 with their request prior to the scheduled hearing.

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Clerk/Treasurer John noted that no correspondence had been received by the close of business on March 31, 2025.

Council President Dolce asked if anyone would like to speak on behalf of the proposed Annual Action Plan Amendments.

202503A00.02

Josiah Lamp Director of Housing and Emergency Services of Chautauqua Opportunities, as well as the Chairman to the Chautauqua County Homeless Coalition appeared before the council to express his support of the amendments and the project as a whole. They believe in this project and feels that it will be very transformative to the community and help with the homelessness problem.

202503A00.03

Lisa Schmidfrerick Miller of 112 Westminster Drive, Jamestown, and Chairperson of the Healthy at Home Chautauqua Healthy Housing Coalition, appeared before the council to speak on the potential reallocation of funds to the Gateway Lofts site preparation. She has been in similar situations with grants in the past and applauds the work by the city to identify that they would not be able to spend down the funds within the funding period and proposing a reallocation plan that is an equally beneficial use. The site preparation of the location is very important and benefits residents of Jamestown and in the surrounding areas.

202503A00.04

Dr. Lillian Ney of 88 Gordon Street, Jamestown, appeared before council to speak in favor of the proposed amendment. The environment has changed a lot, on the federal and local levels and this strategy to use these funds on a project that is many years in the works is a good use. She did express concern that the funds if left unspent would be rescinded. She urged council members to see the urgency and appropriate the funds in this manner.

202503A00.05

Doug Champ of 225 Bowen Street, Jamestown, appeared before the council to ask if the Department of Development has submitted a request for the grant to be extended, allowable for up to one year for all or any of the remaining unspent HOME funding. He continued to read the regulations and believes that the allocation is a moot point. He believes there are other options for the funds and they should have been presented earlier.

Ms. Surdyk responded to Mr. Champ's comments by stating that an extension has not been sought as there has been a lot of funding has been rescinded. HOME funding is uncertain with the current political climate. They have been advised to spend the funding down as soon as possible, preferably with shovel ready projects.

202503A00.06

Mike Jabzynski of Prospect Street, Jamestown, appeared before the council to note that he is not in support of the proposed reallocation amendment. He did wish to note that he and his wife donate to Meals on Wheels, St. Susan's Kitchen, etc. He thinks it important to put money back into the Jamestown housing stock.

202503A00.07

Rich Jabzynski of 130 Martin Road, Jamestown, appeared before the council to note that he is not in support of the proposed reallocation amendment. He knows that the project will continue regardless of the proposed funding.

There being no further public comment, Council President Dolce opened up the floor for questions and comments from council members.

202503A00.08

Councilman Bonfiglio spoke before council to note that he went twice to speak with Ms. Surdyk and Ms. Foulk regarding the proposed funding. He wished that more council members would have done the same. The Department of Development staff provided him with a lot of good information and facts. His biggest worry is that the funding will be lost if not spent, like the unspent \$1 million that was rescinded just recently.

202503A00.09

Councilman Russell spoke before council to discuss the \$640,000 to be spent down before it is rescinded. He asked if the reason the money is to be lost is due to the Department of Development's not filing an extension?

Ms. Surdyk responded, that no, that was not the case. The breakdown from year to year and their separate remaining allocations shows remainders in terms of what projects were able to be funded and funds expended. Each project varies in cost, and then any remainder roll over to the next year with five years given to expend the funds. Since 2020, the Department of Development has expended more in grant funding than in the prior twelve years, and have never had to give back any unspent funds.

Mr. Russell asked Mr. Ald to explain the PILOT process and discuss details surrounding the currently unexecuted PILOT agreement. Mr. Ald provided the PILOT guidelines and details as to how the amount of the agreement is reached.

Corporation Counsel Raimondo also responded to Mr. Russell regarding the PILOT agreement and the current assessment of the building. The current Assessor, Heather Deyell is working on the assessment, therefore the PILOT will be changed as well. It was noted that the City of Jamestown does not see the full amount of revenue from the PILOT agreement from the previous deal. In the new agreement, the City of Jamestown would be the sole beneficiary of the PILOT funds.

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Councilman Russell asked Mr. Ald if all of his paperwork is complete and in order, and all of his investors were set and funds were finalized. Mr. Ald stated that they are working to get to that point. The investor has provided a letter of intent to invest which is satisfactory to New York State, allowing STEL to proceed to the next step. Around July, the investor will have to put forth a higher level of intent, proposing terms to their investment, etc. The process takes about six months of give and take with the investor and New York State. In February of 2026, everything will be complete and ready to go. There is still much to be done, but if awarded, the \$640,000 could be used within a couple of months to prepare the site, and get the sub slab depressurization system installed, remove contamination around the culvert, provide soil remediation. All of those can be subprojects that can begin right away. If not awarded, the money will need to be borrowed to complete the work. New York State Brownfield Tax Credits aren't reimbursed until three years after the building is complete.

Mr. Russell concluded his statements and questions by noting that he feels the \$640,000 could help his elderly neighbors instead of this project. He knows this project is going to go through and feels they can line up their own funding.

202503A00.10

Councilman Paterniti spoke before council to express his thoughts. He believes that in order for Jamestown to succeed, it needs to become investment friendly. When this happens, it creates jobs, which is imperative to the growth of the community. A PILOT is important, because they do not have to pay that. These funds are beneficial to the taxpayers. Mr. Paterniti noted that the City of Jamestown agreed to reallocate funds to STEL, STEL did not ask for the funding.

202503A00.11

Councilman Bonfiglio asked for clarification for the cost of remediation. He asked if the amount is \$3 million?

Mr. Ald noted that yes, the cost of the Brownfield Cleanup Program, etc., is approximately \$3 million. A Remedial Action Investigation has been completed, resulting in a plan being set up to clean up the site. The DEC must approve the plan. \$100,000 has already been spent to determine the plan.

Ms. Surdyk noted that all HUD funding, specific HOME funding is very restrictive on how it is used. There is a backlog and waiting list for projects to be completed. HOME funding requires a full inspection and renovations from top to bottom. Ms. Foulk provided information on how the funds are spent. Ms. Foulk added that in the council packets, all of the programs and information could be found.

202503A00.12

Councilman Faulkner spoke before council, and asked Ms. Surdyk if everyone who applied to programs, received assistance, or did the department run out of funds?

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Ms. Surdyk noted that programs usually run out of money, but the \$640,000 would not be able to be given to those that had been denied in other programs. There are some instances where some of the funds could be expended, but the staffing in the Department of Development and the time it takes makes the feat not feasible. Ms. Surdyk reiterated that these funds would be greatly beneficial to the Gateway Lofts project.

Council President Dolce adjourned the Public Hearing.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jennifer R. John
City Clerk/ Treasurer