

CiF president Jaume Ferrer and Deputy Silvia Tur have issued their first joint valuation of the recent approval, by the Balearic Parlament, of the autonomous community's 2016 budget.

The two officials agreed Parlament's new ledger includes consideration for the island of Formentera and improvements upon the version initially presented in November.

On the trip to Palma Ferrer was also joined by Formentera's councillor of the presidential cabinet, Bartomeu Escandell. In addition to backing up Deputy Tur, the two men attended the debates and votes held on the matter.

Ferrer congratulated Tur on striking a balance between her work for both the Formentera Council and Balearic Parlament, as well as “her ability to ensure improvements to the proposed budgets, whose initial renderings were unsatisfactory”.

For her part, Tur heralded what she called “support for the issues Formentera puts forward” and “a will to engage in dialogue” on the part of the Govern's component political parties and Podemos. “The ensemble has made the completion of all our essential targets – indeed, the establishment of the 2016 pact – possible”.

Tur said next year's budgets are underpinned by an understanding of basic social necessities and assistance that holds true to the Govern's promises at the start of this legislative sitting”.

Sant Ferran school

According to Ferrer, the definitive version of the budget contains improvements to the draft originally brought to Formentera on 9 November by the regional minister of the tax office and public administrations, Catalina Cladera, director general of budgets and financing, Joan Carrió.

Ferrer added: “We were grateful to the Govern for coming to the island and explaining the proposed budgets - something the Partido Popular (PP), over the course of last legislative session, had never done. We also showed our appreciation for the Govern's efforts at finally making the new Sant Ferran school a reality. [The Govern] has included a €2.8-million budget line and plans to include another in 2017, putting their total financial commitment for the project at €3.7 million”.

But the Sant Ferran school was not the only basic financing concern that Ferrer remembers voicing on that day.

Improving waste management, tourism and transport

Ferrer points out that from the Palma representatives' November visit to today, “valuable work” between the Formentera Council and the island's deputy Tur has meant real improvements (including an additional €680,000 in funding) to the initially-floated version of the budget.

Take, for instance, the increase in Formentera's endowment for interisland waste transfer from €300,000 to €550,000. Ferrer holds fast, nevertheless, on Formentera's request that the Govern ultimately assume 100% of the costs, stating: “It is unfair that Formentera residents should have to shoulder transport costs”.

And then there is tourism, on which the Council and Councillor Alejandra Ferrer still hope to sign an agreement that will provide “fair and sufficient” funding to back the transfer of tourism promotions from the Govern Balear to the local island councils. The 2016 budget stipulates the Agència de Turisme Balear provide €300,000 to Formentera to help cover the Council's expenditures in tourism. Meanwhile, Deputy Tur reminded that in four years of the Bauzà government not one euro was put forth for this important issue.

The deputy also praised the fact next year's budget includes €60,000 to unblock the start of operations at Formentera's irrigation pond as well as a €70,000 line item to go toward transport.

President Ferrer and Deputy Tur indicated that after the holidays a press conference would be held locally to explain the Balearic community's 2016 budget in detail.