

**Town of Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee Public Hearing
February 12, 2023, at Brentwood Recreation Center**

Members: Jack Mitchell (chair), Michelle Siudut (secretary), Anthony Phillips, Gabbie Kelly, Letty Bedard (Swasey rep), Jon Morgan (selectmen's rep)

Excused absence: Alina Arida (away on business)

Jack called the hearing to order at 6:32 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Jack introduced the Budget Committee members.

Budget Presentation

Jack explained the Committee had 20 meetings to discuss town budgets and warrant articles. There is an overall increase of 3% / \$718,192 over last year; which would be a \$387 tax impact for a \$400K home. Jack went through his powerpoint, which will be posted to the Town website.

There are 40 Town departments. Largest increases are Healthcare (\$159,793/39%), Police (\$189,836/10%), Highway (\$51,137/7%), Government Buildings (\$33,650/50%), General Government (\$28,099/70%), Library (\$22,158/7%), Insurance (\$20,484/15%). Smaller increases are in Snow & Ice (\$19,141/9%), Welfare (\$18,000/243%), Recreation (\$17,596/19%), Fire (\$15,834/2%) and Waste Disposal (\$10,513/7%), Election (\$10,175/139%), Rubbish Collection (\$8,621/3%), Planning Board (\$7,349/7%), Town Administration (\$7,239/6%), Code Enforcement (\$7,009/9%), Finance (\$6,508/6%), Tax Collector (\$5,989/8%), Information Systems (\$2,852/4%), Recycling (\$2,737/4%), Town Clerk (\$2,080/3%), Town Meeting (\$1,200/43%), Cemetery (\$698/5%), Assessing (\$120). Level funded budgets were Debt Service/TAN, Legal, Mosquito Control, Executive Office, Emergency Management, Zoning Board, Budget Committee, Joint Loss Management, Animal Control, Street Lighting and Health Officer. Reduced budgets included Conservation, Debt Service/interest, Regional Associations, Debt Service/Principal.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is updated annually, looking 6 years out.

Warrant Articles. The largest requests are for capital reserve funds for Highway Vehicles (\$150K planning for 3 vehicle purchases over 6 years); Fire Vehicles (\$50K for aerial equipment; if a grant cannot be obtained, we may not purchase); Town Building Maintenance (\$50K, this covers all town buildings; planning for new windows/furnace at Rec); new CRF for Public Safety radios (\$30K), IT Hardware (\$30K), Police Facility (\$25K), Revaluation (\$25K), Town Bridges (\$25K).

The Town's current outstanding debt is \$1.35M, which includes \$600K on fire station, \$500K for land/easements, \$250K for Prescott Road. The \$3M conservation bond approved last year has not yet been utilized.

Swasey operating budget is a 6.3% increase. Swasey warrant articles include solar panels (\$850K), and debt service for the solar panels bond (\$21,250). Two additional Swasey warrant articles for Special Education CRF (\$20K) and a new Technology CRF (\$10K) would be funded by unreserved fund balance.

Brentwood's share of the \$68.5M Co-operative School budget is 15% or \$10,450,910. The Co-op proposed budget decreased 1%. When combined with the Town and Swasey, the overall total (bottom line) is up 3%/\$718,192 from the prior year. If the Co-op default budget is voted, the overall increase is 2%/\$533,764.

Revenues are yet to be determined. So the *tax impact* may not be the actual *tax increase*. Jack reviewed inflation/tax increases from 2020-2023, showing inflation rising 18% and the tax rate increasing 1.47%.

A slide was presented to show upcoming meeting/election dates.

Resident Questions/Comments

Jim Berlo stated increases for 2021 - 2022 were 11.8%, and 12.17% for 2023. He is concerned that constant increases will not be sustainable.

Liz Faria asked why some salary increases were much higher than the 5% approved by BOS. It was answered there were wage adjustments and increase of hours.

Liz Faria asked whose decision it was to combine WAs (IT Hardware, Revaluation, Town Building Maintenance, Fire Vehicle, Bridges), why, and is it legal. It was answered the BOS, to make the meeting move more quickly, and that it is legal. It was stated that the amount for any of the CRFs in that warrant article would be subject to change by a vote at Town Meeting.

It was confirmed that the budget number passed at town meeting is subject to change by the BOS, as long as the bottom line doesn't change.

Jim Berlo asked for the actual expenditures for last year, without warrant articles. Karen Clement said it will be printed in the Town Report, available in March.

Eric Turer asked for an explanation about a slide which indicated money received from the County. It was explained that was money *paid*, not received.

Liz Faria inquired about the road change at the Rec, asking who made that decision. It was explained that was a request from the Rec Department to BOS, as a safety issue.

Question if the slideshow would be posted. Answer, yes it already is.

Hearing adjourned at 7:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Y Siudut, Secretary