

Selectboard Minutes
November 28, 2023

Present: Jenn Jones, chair
Andy Artimovich
Jon Morgan
Paul Kleinman
Russ Kelly (via zoom)

Jones called the meeting to order at 6pm.

Artimovich motioned, seconded by Morgan, to allow Kelly to attend remotely. All were in favor.

The Board signed the payroll and accounts payable summary register.

Kleinman motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the consent agenda which consisted of public minutes from 11/21/23, sealed non-public minutes from 11/21/23, recreation manifest, treasurer's report (found at the end of these minutes), and the following building permit:

- Jeffrey & Kathleen Donald, 83 Middle Road, Electrical

Artimovich – abstain; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Jones opened the meeting to public comment at 6:03pm.

Betsy Ibbitson, Scrabble Road, referenced discussion from last week's Selectboard meeting where holidays and accruals were discussed. She asked how many holidays the employees receive. Jones responded twelve. Ibbitson stated based on her work history, all employees were paid for the same number of hours for a holiday. She does not understand the need for 8, 10, or 12-hour holidays. Ibbitson stated it is not about the financial side of things and is more about the equity of it.

Jones closed public comment at 6:05pm.

Chief Bird, fire chief, was present to follow-up on the tabled earned time discussion from last week's meeting. Jones stated the discussion was tabled to allow for input from the public and for the board to have time to consider the proposal. She confirmed with Karen Clement, Town Administrator, that she had not heard from anyone on the topic. Jones reminded the board the discussion proposals included earned time accrual and a separate discussion on holidays.

Morgan asked what Artimovich's thoughts were on the earned time proposal. Artimovich responded he believes Brentwood's earned time accrual is low compared to many other communities. He stated he wants to see it fair across the board. Artimovich does not believe a fire fighter should get more earned time than a town hall or highway employee. Jones asked Artimovich on his thoughts of increasing the accrual by 5% for fire because they work 42-hour work weeks. Artimovich was agreeable to that.

Morgan asked what the tax impact would be for the increase of accruals. Jones stated she believes there would not be a significant impact. Artimovich argued that would be true for town hall and highway employees, but fire and the police department would need to back fill shifts. Chief Bird stated he would continue to use per diems to fill the spots. Morgan asked if that would continue. Bird responded he cannot guarantee what will happen in the future, but at this point it has been working great. Chief Ventura, police chief, responded overtime would not change to cover vacations.

Jones reminded the board, the significant amounts of vacation does not kick in until 10-14 or 15 years plus longevity. She asked how many employees are in that range. Clement responded there are 3 total employees. Morgan stated if the proposal would help keep employees here for 10-15 years, he supports it. Kleinman asked if the 5% (referring to fire department

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employees) was built into the chart. Clement confirmed it was. Kleinman stated he has had time to review the proposal and feels it is reasonable. He added he believes accrual time and holiday hours are connected. Kleinman believes holiday hours should remain as is, at 8 hours.

Artimovich stated he would like to see a 40-hour vacation buyout option for every employee added to the handbook. He explained he would like employees to be allowed to carry 80 hours per year and allow the town to buy back up to 40 hours. Clement asked if that would be a 50% buy back or a 100%? Artimovich responded 100%.

Jones asked what kind of financial impact that would create. Artimovich stated for police or fire, it would not have a financial impact because you would not be back filling a shift. Jones asked how much time could be carried over. Clement responded that employees can carry over 2 weeks under the current policy. Jones asked Artimovich how his town works. Artimovich responded Sandown allows a sick time buy out of 48 hours at the end of the year and a carry over of 80 hours of earned time. Morgan asked if that policy is only for emergency personnel. Artimovich responded it is a town policy.

Morgan asked what departments would have a financial impact. Clement responded town hall employees. Artimovich added library. Clement shared her hesitation with implementing that policy for 2024 is that many budgets have already passed the Selectboard and Budget Committee. This would not allow a buffer for adding that money in to cover that potential cost.

Jones suggested the policy be examined in the future. Artimovich expressed his concern being that over the last 3 years the buy out has been on a case-by-case basis, and he finds it unfair. Kleinman feels the decision should be deferred. He also feels he will be very stringent with any exceptions that might come before him. Kelly stated he supports Artimovich’s suggestion on the pay out and also understands the complications of passing it now because a number of budgets have already been voted on. Morgan echoed Kelly’s sentiments on the timing. It was decided to table the buyout discussion for the time being.

Morgan motioned, seconded by Artimovich, to approve the new accrual suggestions (shown here).

	Years of Service	Proposed Weekly Accrual	Proposed # of Days off	Proposed Annual Accrual
8 Hour Work Day	0-1	1.5	10.0	80
	1-4	2.3	15.0	120
	5-9	3.1	20.0	160
	10-14	3.8	25.0	200
	15+	4.6	30.0	240
10 Hour Work Day	0-1	1.5	8.0	80
	1-4	2.3	12.0	120
	5-9	3.1	16.0	160
	10-14	3.8	20.0	200
	15+	4.6	24.0	240
24 Hour Work Day	0-1	1.6	3.5	84
	1-4	2.4	5.3	126
	5-9	3.2	7.0	168
	10-14	4.0	8.8	210
	15+	4.8	10.5	252

Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Morgan asked Artimovich his thoughts on the holiday proposal. Artimovich stated he was in favor of the holiday for the 8 and 10 hour holidays but not the 12 hours for the fire employees. Chief Bird questioned Artimovich’s reasoning stating the employees are working a 24-hour shift and he is only requesting 12-hour holiday pay. Artimovich stated fire personnel get a check at the end of the year. Bird expressed he is pushing the incentive for the firefighters, not himself.

Bird added the holiday pay would increase his budget about \$5,000 and feels it is an incentive and gesture to personnel. He argued it is an incentive to help retain staff. Kleinman feels it is a nice gesture, but argued the accrual time was just increased.

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Bird responded it is a retention gesture. He explained he is battling against departments who offer union benefits. Morgan disagrees with the sentiment that things should remain the same “just because it’s how it has always been”. He believes the decisions the board makes should be framed in what’s in the best interest of the town. Morgan stated Brentwood has had some challenges in attracting and retaining emergency responders. He stated that the town is making headway under the current leadership, developed and professionalized policies, investing in the right equipment, and training the team. Morgan also admitted that employees are still being pulled away. He encouraged the board to be cognizant of the town being in competition with surrounding towns including south of the NH border where employees can make a lot more.

Artimovich stated holidays are part of the total compensation package. Morgan believes equity needs to be factored into the decisions and the right policies need to be in place. Kleinman believes a line needs to be drawn somewhere and feels the town has been generous with the vote on accruals. Jones asked Clement if people have voiced frustrations with holidays at exit interviews or in general. Clement responded she has heard people voice there is no incentive for emergency personnel to sign up to work on a holiday.

Artimovich shared he was under the impression full-time employees were paid time and a half for a holiday. He was not aware it was only for part-time per diem employees. He would like to see time and a half for emergency personnel working holidays. Jones suggested incentivizing working on a holiday rather than being paid extra to not work. Jones was in support of tabling it until after budget season. Morgan would like to know what other towns offer. The holiday pay and earned time buy out was tabled until after budget season.

Rebecca Dunham, Conservation Commission Chair, was present to discuss the Conservation budget.

Conservation Budget

- Budget reduction of 6.9%
- Level funding of most lines
- Decrease of annual appropriation line
 - Reduced to \$1
 - Money not needed to replenish conservation fund for 2024
- Increase of \$200 in professional training line
- Reduction of budget from \$13,652 to \$12,703

Jones asked about the easement line. Dunham explained it is currently being done by volunteers. She added Lise McNaughton has been in contact with the easement landowners to schedule the monitoring. Dunham added the volunteers hope to have all the monitoring completed by the end of December.

Jones asked if there would be official reports after the monitoring is complete. Dunham confirmed there is. She added the reports will go into the property’s files and will be offered to the owner as well.

Artimovich motioned, seconded by Kleinman, to approve the Conservation budget of \$12,703. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Janice Wiers, library director, and Liz McConnell, library trustee, were present to share the library budget.

Library Budget

- Budget increase of 5.4% from 2023 approved budget of \$317,992
- Media line increased

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- 10.9%
- Cost of books and ebooks/audio books has increased
- Electricity line increased
- Heating line remains level-funded
- Computer line increased
 - Due to printing costs increasing
 - Contract for 5 years
- Compensation line
 - 3% COLA and up to 2% merit
 - Substitute position added

Kleinman motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the library budget in the amount of \$335,150.18. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Karen Clement, Town Administrator, presented the General Government budget.

General Government Budget

- TAN (Tax Anticipated Note) moved into this budget
 - Moved from Debt Service budget
 - Added to Long Planning line
- Postage line increased by \$6,000
 - \$4,000 moved from Town Clerk budget
 - Additional increase to cover additional absentee ballots for 4 elections in 2024
 - Postage rates increase

Kleinman motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the General Government budget of \$68,077. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Clement presented the Government Buildings Budget.

Jones asked if the maintenance lines should be increased again or if it makes sense to have the Capital Reserve Funds (CRF) cover expenses. Clement responded bills paid from those lines are routine maintenance expenses and tend to be smaller amounts. Using the CRF requires tallying and then requesting funds from the Trustees of the Trust Funds. Clement would prefer to be able to pay it straight from the budgets.

It was discovered there were a few lines that were inadvertently eliminated when the budget was copied and pasted. Additionally, the rec commission is meeting tomorrow and there is a possibility the rec amount allotted for maintenance may be requested to change. The budget was tabled until next week.

Clement presented the board with a large event permit application for the Peach Project event to be held on December 8 & 9. Morgan motioned to sign the form. Kleinman seconded the motion. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Clement presented the board with an updated quote for the heat detection system for both highway buildings for fire prevention. She explained it would cover heat detectors, smoke detectors, pulse stations and horn strobes in both buildings. She explained the bid came in less than expected and added there may be some additional charges that could be incurred if pipes need to be laid underground.

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Morgan motioned, seconded by Artimovich, to use \$5,260 from the Capital Reserve Fund: Building Maintenance. Artimovich suggested the funds could come from the highway budget. Jones responded there are available funds and requested Morgan amend his motion. Morgan amended his motion. He motioned \$5,260 be expended from the highway budget for the heat detection system. Artimovich seconded the motion. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Artimovich had no committee updates.

Morgan shared the Budget Committee reviewed their by-laws recently and went with town counsel's recommendations.

Morgan shared the Rec Commission has a meeting tomorrow.

Morgan shared there is a meeting planned for Economic Development. The date has not yet been set.

Artimovich asked if all the budgets have been approved at the budget committee thus far. Morgan stated everything has been fine so far.

Kelly had no committee updates.

Kleinman had no committee updates.

Jones stated there will be a meeting of the Exeter River Advisory Committee tomorrow at 3pm for the Pickpocket Dam. She stated she would not be able to attend due to a work commitment. Jones asked if Dunham would be attending and would be comfortable reporting back to the town. Becky Dunham confirmed she was attending and stated she believed Robert Span would be attending as well. She was unsure if Eric Turer would be attending.

Jones stated she spoke with one of the Conservation Commission alternates who confirmed she would be willing to give up her spot as she has a standing conflict at this point. Jones added there are 2 alternate positions posted open on the website and encouraged people to apply.

Jones shared there will be a housing presentation by the Planning Board on December 7 at 7pm at the town hall. Potential housing, how to get more housing, and a grant will be discussed.

At 7:04pm, Morgan motioned, seconded by Artimovich, to enter non-public for hiring and personnel. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

At 7:36pm, Kelly motioned, seconded by Morgan to enter public session. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

At 7:36pm Kelly motioned, seconded by Morgan, to seal the non-public minutes. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

At 7:36pm, Kelly motioned, seconded by Morgan, to adjourn the meeting. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamera Peek

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WEEKLY TREASURER'S REPORT				
DATE:		11/28/2023		
General Fund:		TD BANK		
Previous Balance:		3,412,017.50		
Deposits:		526,737.66		
Payroll:		30,480.68	DDP: \$30,480.68	
			CHK: \$	
FICA:		7121.85		
A/P:		56,460.48	Reg A/P Cks \$59,416.01	NHRS \$
			Swasey \$	CO-OP: \$
Transfer to REC CC				
Pd Analysis Fee				
Voided Check 48578				
Transfer to Impact Fees				
Account Balance:		3,844,692.15		
Interest Earned YTD:		112,622.45		
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Joyce A. Gallant, Treasurer				