

Town of Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee
Minutes of December 9, 2024 Meeting held at Town Office

Members: Jack Mitchell (chair), Michelle Siudut (secretary), Kat Niemiroski, Brian Duffy (Swasey rep), Jennifer Jones (Selectboard rep)

Excused Absences: Gabbie Kelly, Alina Arida

Jack called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Meeting Minutes

Motion by Brian, seconded by Kat, to approve the November 25, 2024 meeting minutes; passed 5-0.

Selectboard Report - Jennifer Jones

The Budget Committee approved 2 budgets (Highway and Recreation) that were slightly different than what the Selectboard approved. The Selectboard re-voted and approved those two budgets to be in agreement with the Budget Committee.

Selectboard may re-visit the Town Administrator budget at their meeting tomorrow night.

Swasey School Report - Brian Duffy

Most of the solar panels are on the roof. The Swasey School District Meeting will be March 3. The Swasey budget was distributed to this board earlier today; it is on our agenda for next week.

Jack asked if the declining enrollment we see at Swasey is similar across the state; Brian was uncertain but suspects it is. Swasey continues to have the lowest cost per pupil in SAU16.

Budgets

Library - Library Director Janice Wiers presented. Two pages will be graduating; this budget phases out those 2 positions and replaces them with one assistant position for a total of 4 assistants. Hopes to encumber \$4000 of 2024 salary funds (from Assistant Director being out on disability) to start the new assistant position this year; it will be 20 hours/week. Assistant Director will be returning soon, but only part time. Compensation is up 8.7%: 2% merit, 3% COLA; plus the new position.

Current computers were donated several years ago; the computer line is increased to allow for regular replacement of computers. Other increases are for media, and telephone/wifi/internet.

Decreases in equipment & security; catalog & system maintenance; supplies (book covering supplies).

Jack asked how growth is measured; Janice responded people in the door and statistics (number of books or digital items checked out). Janice said the first 10 months of this year saw 11,197 visitors (they hand-count), 31,389 items circulated; 166 programs hosted with 2,355 attendees.

Exterior and interior painting and needs have not been addressed yet; they are included in CIP.

No warrant articles planned.

Motion by Kat, seconded by Brian, to approve \$358,990, a \$23,840 or 7.1% increase; passed 4-1.

Police/Animal Control - Presented by Lt Doty, who thanked Alina for her help in preparing this budget. Lt noted the draft budget he inherited was a 21.8% increase; he reduced it to a 14.38% increase.

Last year funds were encumbered to hire a new officer; funding for that position is now in this budget. Some merit increases were given, but not to everyone.

New admin asst was hired, with 30+ years of experience in Rockingham County.

2 Corporals will be promoted: Sgt Spitileri in January (has been here 5yrs) and Sgt Saltzman in July (has been here 3yrs, had prior FT exp). These promotions are included in the salary line as wage adjustments.

Administration line is for Chief (level-funded); and the LT (4% increase for cola & merit).

Added manpower for 4-6 events at Dragway as these events result in increased complaints and arrests.

State is doubling training requirements; Lt hopes to get staff certified to provide in house trainings.

Canine Maggie: may be increased costs but she has been used for drug searches and missing persons.

Lt acquired a grant for partial cost of bulletproof vests; these vests must be replaced every 5 yrs.

The prosecutor line is increasing by \$3K but she is still under paid. She is available 24/7; does training for dept; keeps officers out of court (which saves on salary and OT).

Tele/Comm - each staff person has a work/cell phone for communication and photos.

Fleet replacements - the hope is to turn over vehicles every 3 years (one new vehicle per year), which should eventually reduce the vehicle repair line. Vehicles drive 30K+ miles per year; plus hours of idle time. There are 9 vehicles in current use. Cost is about \$46K for a new Explorer. If they rotate vehicles more frequently, some accessories may be transferrable (not outdated).

We currently have 10 FT positions, including the open Chief position; and 3 PT positions. Lt is happy with current staffing, but is always looking at grants for another officer. We don't currently have room to increase staff, and we'd then need more vehicles.

Mold mitigation is happening. The patrol room has been moved to the former training room. The old patrol room will become a locker room. The locker room will become the records room (the current records room is tiny and potentially wet). A sump pump was installed to mitigate the water problem.

Question was asked about revenue: details do bring in income which pays the officers. We do receive some state grants, DUI grants for details.

Motion by Kat, seconded by Brian, to approve \$1,437,246, a \$180,738 or 14.38% increase; passed 5-0. Resident Jim Berlo asked about certain lines.

There was no update on the Municipal Building. At this time they are gathering data. There will not be a warrant for a new building in 2025.

Animal Control - Lt Doty presented. Motion by Jennifer, seconded by Brian, to approve \$10, a \$1 or 11.11% increase; passed 5-0.

Health Officer - The current health officer (Bob Mantegari) is serving through 2027; he attends approximately 5-6 calls per year. Other towns who have a deputy fire chief incorporate the health officer into that position. This may be something to consider if a deputy fire chief is hired. Motion by Kat, seconded by Brian, to approve \$1, level funded; passed 5-0.

General Government - Presented by Jenniofer Jones. Long range planning increase is for a grant writer hired at approximately 20 hours per week. Brentwood Newsletter funding is included for \$20K. Vehicle repair line is for Kip's vehicle. Town events decreased. Motion by Kat, seconded by Brian, to approve \$122,936, a 80.58% increase; passed 5-0.

Government Buildings - Jennifer presented. Increases include repairs to grange, land maintenance, fire alarm, contract for custodian (for this building and the Rec). Decreases in building improvements and town office repairs and maintenance lines.

Motion by Michelle, second by Brian for \$108,071. This includes a decrease in the Land Maintenance Fund line of \$1500. There was a motion by Michelle to further decrease the budget to \$100,571, but there was no second. A vote on the previous motion for the amount of \$108,071, an increase of \$7,611 or 7.6%; passed 4-1.

Resident Jim Berlo urged supporting further reductions.

Mosquito Control - Motion by Michelle to reduce the budget to \$30,000 but there was no second.

Motion by Brian, seconded by Kat, to approve \$30,200, level funded; passed 4-1.

Resident Jim Berlo asked about statistical data on spending this money; none was available. Michelle asked for reporting on this expenditure.

Town Administrator. Tabled at previous meeting

Old Business

Jack distributed a flyer created by Stef Lewendon to promote the public hearing. Stef was present to receive feedback. This will be published in the Brentwood Newsletter, on Facebook, and other places. Jack discussed his plan to use language that better explains the numbers we present - what they are and what they are not.

Jack went over his model 2025 Tax Rate Breakdown spreadsheet. There are some numbers that will be known at the end of the year, however many are estimated.

A P&L for the Brentwood Rec revolving account was distributed by email; these will now come quarterly. We do not yet know what company will do re-valuations; bids are due in January. Jack read a statement regarding revaluations.

Upcoming Meetings

Dec 16 2024 at 6 pm: Regular Meeting

Jan 27 2025 at 6 pm: Regular Meeting

Feb 3 2025: Regular Meeting

Feb 10 2025 at 6 pm: Regular Meeting

Feb 10 2025 at 6:30 pm: Public Hearing

Mar 3 2025 at 6 pm: School District Meeting

Mar 11 2025 7 am to 7 pm: Town Election

Mar 15 2025 at 9 am: Town Meeting

Motion by Kat, seconded by Brian to adjourn, approved unanimously; meeting concluded at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Siudut, Secretary