

**Town of Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee
Minutes of November 10, 2025 Meeting held at Town Office**

Members Present: Jim Hajjar (Chair), Michelle Siudut (Secretary), Alina Arida, Kat Niemiroski, Gabbie Kelly, Letty Bedard (Selectboard rep), Dan Hebert (Swasey rep)

Hajjar called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.
Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Bedard to approve the Oct 27 2025 meeting minutes; approved 6-0-1.

Selectboard Report - Letty Bedard

- *Selectboard approved no more than 2.8% increase in any salary, COLA and merit combined.
- *New police chief and new fire chief have been sworn in.

Swasey School Report - Dan Hebert

- *Results of Spring 2025 NHAS assessments (3rd -8th grade) to determine academic growth and instructional strategies, as well as funding, are in. Swasey scored 75% scored proficient or above in both math and ELA. The state averages are 48% for math; 53% for ELA.
- *Swasey School Board had a public budget workshop during which 3 scenarios were presented.

Budgets

Planning Board (01-4191-13). Hajjar modified the salary to 2.8% instead of 3% for land use administrator salary, per the recommendations of the Selectboard. Question about overtime hours - has been about \$1100 hours this year.

Niemiroski raised the salary issue. She found various inflation numbers of up to 3.4%. Niemiroski wants to maintain 3% salary increases, rather than decrease to 2.8% which was approved by the Selectboard. Discussion ensued.

Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Arida, to approve the original request of \$120,061 which maintains the 3% wage increase. Siudut and Hajjar stated support for a 2.8% increase.

The salary lines typically are broken out for 13 weeks at the current rate, then 39 weeks at the new rate. Bedard said April raises are not guaranteed, if a new BOS is elected they may not approve those raises. Niemiroski amended her motion to \$119,548, an increase of \$4,841 or 4%; seconded by Hebert.

Paul Kleinman BOS chair stated that regardless of what this committee approves, ultimately the BOS will determine the raise amounts, which they have agreed to max at 2.8%.

Siudut said there have been years when there were no raises.

Arida asked Kleinman what their plan B is if there is a mass exodus of employees.

Mark Kennedy (employee salary in discussion) expressed distaste for the lengthy discussion, asked the committee to move the vote.

Ched Miller did HR for 47 years; sometimes raises are not fundable; we must also adhere to the cap.
Motion passed 4-3

*Cemetery (01-4195-25). Motion by Arida, seconded by Niemiroski to approve \$13,538 which would include a 3% salary increase, (xx) -xx%; motion passed 4-3

*Welfare (01-4442-35). Laura Hajjar was present for questions. Siudut asked how much has been requested through Community Assistance (Regional Associations), Laura stated \$18000. Bedard suggested increasing the Direct Assistance Line. Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Arida to approve \$21,124, which is an increase of \$2,217 or 11.7%; motion passed 5-2

*Code Enforcement (01-4240-20). Building Inspector Chuck Marsden was present for questions. He was hired Sep 22. This budget includes two 3% salary increases in 2026. Discussion about adding lines for \$1 each for driveway fee and test pit fee; clarifying these are placeholders in case income from inspection fees do not cover the costs, which has happened in the past. Marsden was not concerned about this, as the fees will be increasing. Hajjar said these two lines have been funded in the past. Kelly asked why this was not a revolving fund, the answer was unknown. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Hajjar to approve \$108,090, an increase of \$ 15,619, or 17%; motion passed 5-2

*Town Administrator (01-4130-02). Julie Stevens was present for questions. The Assistant line has been added, but is being removed from the Finance budget. There are no salary increases for TA or assistant. Motion by Siudut, seconded by Arida to approve \$197,608, which is an increase of \$75,666 or 62%; motion passed 7-0

*Finance (01-4150-09). Julie Stevens was present for questions. The Treasurer annual salary is flat funded at \$32,000. Also included in the salary line is \$2400 with the hope of adding a deputy treasurer who would come in once a month, and cover for the treasurer when that person is unavailable. The Deputy Treasurer is funded at \$25/hr for 8 hours each month. Bookkeeper line is reduced, as those duties will now fall under the TA Assistant. Kelly asked Stevens if the proposed plan will be enough, Stevens replied yes. Bedard recommended Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer be switched to hourly to better reflect the hours spent on those positions. Hajjar shared a screen of history of salary appropriations, which saw a 174% increase FY24 to FY25 in this budget, with an effort to understand the salary increase as compared to what he is actually doing. Arida questioned the size of the finance departments in the towns Hajjar compared to. Hajjar feels the position is overfunded for what we need - we don't need a CPA. The position was expected to be 12+/-/week; which Julie feels is an accurate amount of hours to get the job done; Stevens also said it is difficult to find a treasurer. Kelly said the average of \$51 (\$32K/12hrs per week) per hour is reasonable for the responsibility and liability of this position. Arida asked about transitioning BMSI. Stevens said they have started training, and it should be in place by year end. "The books" are still needing to be cleaned up. The CPA who was hired completed reconciliations through 2024. Auditors hope to finish next week. 2025 has not been reconciled, but Stevens is using the CPA ending balance to start 2025 recs. Bedard said BOS has submitted an estimated revenue number in order to set the tax rate. Arida asked Stevens if, in our current situation, 12 hours/week for the treasurer is adequate; Stevens replied yes. BudCom would recommend the Treasurer go to an hourly pay, rather than stipend. Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Arida to approve \$70,000, with a recommendation that the Treasurer position be switched to hourly; this is a decrease of \$55,790 and 44.4%; passed 6-1

Public Comment

Ched Miller asked how we will be within the tax cap. He said others he has talked to are expecting the budget and all warrants no greater than 104% of 2025.

Hajjar explained our tax impact for 2026 cannot be more than 4% higher than last year, to include warrants. Any warrants beyond that 4%, would need to be approved by $\frac{2}{3}$ majority.

Ched expressed concern about the impact the new municipal building on North Road will have on the county portion of our tax bill. Bedard stated that building may require additional fire/ambulance/police expenses to the town.

Motion by Siudut, seconded by Arida to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm; passed 5-0.

Upcoming Meetings - All meetings are open to the public and livestreamed on Brentwood's YouTube channel.

Nov 17 at 6pm: Budget Committee meeting

Dec 8 at 6pm: Budget Committee meeting

Dec 15 at 6pm: Budget Committee meeting

Feb 4 at ?pm: (potential) Budget Committee Hearing - location/time TBD

Mar 2 at 6pm: Swasey School District Meeting

Mar 14: (potential) Town Meeting

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Siudut, Secretary