

Town of Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee
Minutes of December 8, 2025 Meeting held at Town Office

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

Absent: Gabbie Kelly (excused)

Hajjar called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Arida to amend and approve the November 17 2025 meeting minutes; approved 6-0. The November 24 2025 minutes were not forwarded to the Committee prior to this meeting; these minutes will be discussed and voted on at the next meeting.

Selectboard Report - Letty Bedard

*The Selectboard re-opened several budgets for approval.

*Tax bills have been mailed.

Swasey School Report - Dan Hebert

*The Swasey Board approved their budget at a 3% increase (with health/dental increase being greater than the overall increase). An unfilled teaching position and a para position were removed. This budget will be presented to this Committee on Jan 12.

*Reiterated academic rankings, as printed in Brentwood Newsletter.

Budgets

Highway (4312-21). Road Agent Wayne Robinson was present. Currently there are 3 full-time employees. The Selectboard removed \$350,000 from the budget for Road Construction; this will be presented as a separate warrant article. Motion by Arida, seconded by Hebert to approve \$474,891, an overall decrease of \$337,656 or 41.6% from 2025 budget; approved 5-1 (Niemiroski voting nay)

Snow and Ice (4312-22). Road Agent Wayne Robinson presented. The Selectboard will be encumbering \$35,000 from this year's budget for next year's sand/salt line. The seasonal workers are receiving a 2.8% increase. Wayne said it is getting more difficult to get plow drivers. Wayne said he ordered 2250 ton of salt for 2025; he is requesting 3000 ton for 2026. Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Arida to approve \$97,800, an increase of \$1,016 or 1.1% over 2025; approved 6-0

Library (4550-49). Library Director Janice Wiers, Treasurer Melody Santos and Trustee Jeff Donald were present. Hajjar shared statistics (these are posted on the town website) comparing libraries in similar municipalities (similar population, similar valuation). Weirs stated she has done comparisons with seacoast towns which show different statistics. She noted that when she started in 2018, an electronic door counter was used (every time a person passed the eye); they now count manually unlike other libraries so other libraries may show higher attendance. Janice said Brentwood does not have a high poverty rate; towns that have more poor would show a higher library usage.

Programs was at 332 now at 116; Janice didn't know how programming was counted prior to 2018, but at that time they had 8 employees. They now have fewer employees but they are doing more.

Bedard noted the Brentwood population in one of the documents is higher than our actual population; Janice said some data is auto-populated by state.

Janice said this budget shows a decrease in staffing: currently there are 2FT, 3 library assistants, 2 pages left and were not replaced; 1 page on Sat. This makes it hard if someone is sick.

The 2026 budget is a 3.8% decrease from the 2025 budget, due to staffing/benefits reductions.

Hajjar’s presented research and data documents.

Library Budget Appropriations from Similar Municipalities

Year	EntityName	Population	4550-4559 - Library	Per_Capita	Rank Pop	Rank Appropriation	Rank Per Capita
2024	Greenland	4098	\$431,768	\$105	0%	100%	100%
2024	Brentwood	4773	\$335,150	\$70	44%	88%	88%
2024	Danville	4628	\$316,697	\$68	22%	77%	77%
2024	Northwood	4700	\$222,523	\$47	33%	66%	66%
2024	Fremont	4874	\$190,622	\$39	66%	33%	55%
2024	Nottingham	5421	\$209,200	\$39	100%	55%	44%
2024	Chester	5300	\$202,850	\$38	88%	44%	33%
2024	Candia	4203	\$160,000	\$38	11%	22%	22%
2024	Deerfield	4967	\$154,186	\$31	77%	11%	11%
2024	Newton	4833	\$147,195	\$30	55%	0%	0%
Average others			\$ 226,116	\$ 49			
Average / Brentwood pop			\$ 47				
Average x Brentwood pop			\$ 231,584				
Brentwood less ave			\$ 109,034				
Brentwood % diff to ave			33%				

- Brentwood’s FY2024 budget appropriation of \$335,150 was 2nd highest
- The average appropriation of the nine other similar Rockingham county towns was \$226,116. Brentwood’s appropriation is \$109,034 (33%) higher than the average.
- Brentwood budgeted \$70 per person which is \$22 (31%) higher than the \$49 per person average of the other towns

Year	Town	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours	4550-4559 - Library Budget	Budget / Hr (52 wks)	
2024	Greenland	10am-8pm	10am-5pm	10am-5pm	10am-8pm	10am-5pm	9am-3pm	CLOSED	49	\$431,768	\$169	
2024	Brentwood	2pm-7pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-6pm	9am-1pm	9am-1pm	CLOSED	40	\$335,150	\$161	
2024	Fremont	10am-4pm	1pm-7pm	9am-5pm	1pm-7pm	9am-5pm	9am-2pm	CLOSED	39	\$190,622	\$94	
2024	Candia	2pm-8pm	10am-8pm	2pm-8pm	10am-8pm	5pm-7pm	10am-2pm	CLOSED	38	\$160,000	\$81	
2024	Deerfield	10am-5pm	10am-7pm	9am-6pm	9am-5pm	CLOSED	9am-1pm	CLOSED	37	\$154,186	\$80	
2024	Danville	12pm-8pm	12pm-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	CLOSED	10am-1pm	CLOSED	35	\$316,697	\$174	
2024	Northwoods	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	CLOSED	10am-1pm	CLOSED	35	\$222,523	\$122	
2024	Nottingham	CLOSED	10am-5pm	10am-8pm	10am-8pm	10am-2pm	10am-2pm	CLOSED	35	\$209,200	\$115	
2024	Chester	3pm-8pm	10am-8pm	3pm-8pm	10am-8pm	1pm-5pm	CLOSED	CLOSED	34	\$202,850	\$115	
2024	Newton	12pm-6pm	9am-1pm	12pm-8pm	CLOSED	9am-3pm	9am-1pm	CLOSED	28	\$147,195	\$101	
									Median	35.0	Median	\$115
									Difference	5.0	Difference	\$46
									% Diff	14.3%	% Diff	40.4%

Year	Town	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total Hours	4550-4559 - Library Budget	Budget / Hr
2024	Brentwood	12pm-8pm	12pm-8pm	10am-6pm	10am-6pm	CLOSED	10am-1pm	CLOSED	35	\$226,116	\$124

- Brentwood library is open 40 hours per week, which is 5 hours (14.3%) more than the median 35 hours of all other similar town libraries.
- Brentwood library budgeted \$161 per library operating hour. This is \$45 (40.4%) more than the median \$115 per hour of other similar libraries.
- If the Brentwood budget was the average of the similar towns (\$226,116) and the library was open 35 hours per week, the budget/hr would be \$124 or just about the median of the similar towns.

Additional documents are shared with the public on the town webpage at <https://www.brentwoodnh.gov/agendalist.aspx?categoryid=12621>

Public comment/responses are in italic:

Bill Dunham. If he takes out a book and then returns it, is that 2 visits? *Janice said this is not a visit, it is a circulation number*

Candidate night - is each person who attends counted as a visit? *Janice said yes, those are visits*

The state shows 1824 registered users; this is 39% of the town population, which seems high; does the library purge their records? *Janice said the state asks the listed be updated every 3 years; she does so annually*

Library data said 1289 (28%) town residents have used a library card in the last 12 months; would this be accurate? *Janice said she is very stringent about the numbers they use; the State data asks for patrons over 3 year period.*

Ched Miller. The focus has been on how much the library is being utilized; he asked if a study has been done to chart the hours the library is most used? Suggested focusing on high-use time periods. *Jeff Donald stated closing for a few hours will not reduce the budget proportionally.*

Janice said most of the budget is fixed costs (heat, media, etc). Hajjar said the biggest part of their budget is salaries. Janice said if staffing is reduced they can't do their jobs adequately.

Regarding high use times, Janice said it runs in waves - Tu, We, Th are always very busy (story times, Th even are adult programs), Fri/Sat are hit or miss.

Hajjar projected decreasing library hours by 5 hours, could bring the library budget down to \$314K. Arida, Niemiroski argued that salaried positions cannot be reduced.

Jessica Balukas. Heavy user of library; books; book club; staff needs time to do tasks as well as dealing with library users. Efficiencies may be available, but this is a small budget in the scheme of things.

Liz Faria. Suggested changing hours. When she has visited the library over the last year (1pm or 3pm) there is generally NO ONE there - more staff members than patrons.

Can you get downloads when the library is not open? *Janice said yes, with a valid library card. Digital options do come with costs.*

Jim Berlo. Regardless of which department we are talking about, at some point we will run out of money if we try to provide everything everyone wants. We have the same population as we did 11 years ago; yet our town budget has doubled. Maybe every department needs to have a reduction.

Kathy Beggin. Huge supporter of the library but suggested having less hours may be beneficial.

Tzuo Law. Confirmed Hajjar's numbers were correct (he checked them). The budget has gone up according to inflation; so the library is actually spending less over 8 years. Maybe attendance is down because we are under-spending. Programs are not the focus, it's about people getting books. He compared to Hajjar's towns for circulation; they are comparable.

Kat Niemiroski. Digital media is huge for her; she's probably taken 100 titles out; she doesn't have to go to the library to get them. Data doesn't capture everything.

Betsey Ibitson. Thinks the number of registered users is not correct.

Hebert talked about impact & outcome. We need to consider our investment in people. Cutting hours is counter-intuitive to that. Janice boasted a collection of testimonials from email, etc.

With consideration that the library could be open less hours, motion by Hajjar, seconded by Siudut, to approve a budget amount of \$315,000; failed 2-4 (Hajjar and Siudut voting aye)

Motion by Arida, seconded by Hebert, to approve \$345,119.29, a reduction of \$13,870.71 or 3.8% from the 2025 budget; passed 4-2 (Hajjar and Siudut voting nay)

All of the following budgets were re-approved by Selectboard and approved with a 2.8% wage increase. Niemiroski and Arida stated they do not support the salary reductions.

Cemetery (4195-25). Motion by Hajjar, seconded by Siudut to approve \$13,522; which is a decrease of \$218 or 1.6% from 2025 budget; passed 4-2 (Niemiroski and Arida voting nay)

Welfare (4442-35). Motion by Siudut, seconded by Hajjar to approve \$21,168, which includes a \$50 increase in the community assistance line. The total is \$2,261 or 12% increase over 2025 budget. Arida asked the difference of salary change, which is \$5. motion passed 4-1-1 (Bedard abstaining, Niemiroski voting nay)

Planning Board (4191-13). Motion by Siudut, seconded by Hajjar to approve \$119,446, an increase of \$4,739 or 4.1% over 2025; passed 4-2 (Niemiroski and Arida voting nay)

Town Clerk (4140-05). Motion by Letty, seconded by Hajjar to approve \$97,429.83; which is an increase of \$3,591 or 3.83% over 2025 budget; passed 4-2 (Niemiroski and Arida voting nay)

Tax Collector (4150-04). Motion by Letty, seconded by Hajjar to approve \$98,478.83, which is an increase of \$3,541 or 3.73% over 2025; passed 4-2 (Niemiroski and Arida voting nay)

Bedard asked if state adequacy grant numbers were correct. The document did not clearly identify the fact that adequacy from the state went down.

Bedard said the new average home valuation in Brentwood is \$647,000.

Public Comment/Other

Ched Miller: Requested the budgets show the actual date to, because that is helpful when determining the final number. We need to control spending; you need to consider other people in town who cannot afford what you may be able to afford. We can meet needs, but recognize limitations.

Bedard said Municipal Building Committee will be holding Q&A at 7pm on Thursday at Town Office.

Motion by Siudut, seconded by Bedard to adjourn; passed 6-0; meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

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

Mon, Dec 15 at 6pm: Budget Committee meeting

Mon, Dec 22 at 6pm: Budget Committee meeting

Wed, Jan 7 at 6pm: Budget Committee meeting

Mon, Jan 12 at 6pm: Budget Committee meeting

Feb 4 at 6pm: Budget Committee Hearing - Brentwood Rec

Feb 12 at 6pm: Budget Committee Hearing (if needed) - Brentwood Rec

Mar 2 at 6pm: Swasey School District Meeting at Swasey School

Mar 14: (potential) Town Meeting at Swasey School

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Siudut, Secretary