

**Town of Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee  
Minutes of January 12, 2026 Meeting held at Town Office**

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

Hajjar called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.  
Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Siudut to approve the January 7, 2026 meeting minutes; approved 5-0-2 (Kelly and Arida abstaining)

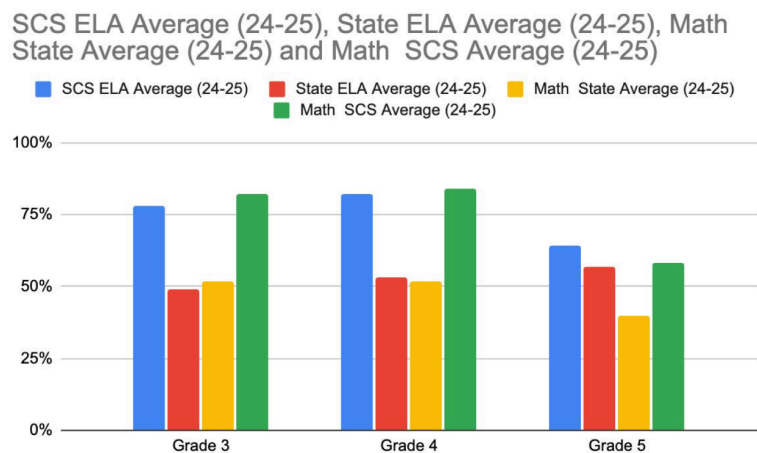
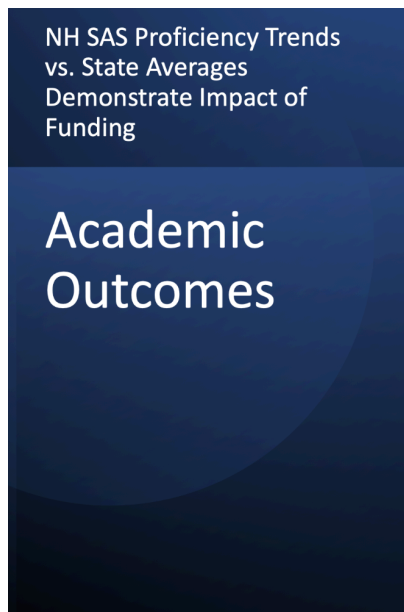
**Selectboard Report** - Letty Bedard

- \*No updates since our last BudCom meeting.
- \*Hajjar forwarded budget and tax cap information to the Selectboard; Hajjar will attend the next Selectboard meeting to discuss. There is a discrepancy between our and their Code Enforcement budget; Selectboard is correct but Hajjar feels it is not worth re-opening to change.

**Swasey Budget**

Hajjar thanked Hebert and the Swasey Administration for providing the information he requested. All materials presented can be found at <https://www.brentwoodnh.gov/agendaview.aspx?aid=14645>. All members of the Swasey school board were present, as well as Swasey Principal Ron Kew, SAU16 Assistant Superintendent Renee Beauregard-Bennett and SAU16 Chief Financial Officer Mollie O’Keefe.

Hebert presented FY2026-2027 school year.



2024-2025 SAU 16 State Assessment Scores-From Centralized Reporting System.

The board discussed 3 budget options: Option 1 would retain the same programming as this year (highest cost 6.14% increase) - Option 2 (modest reductions 5.4% increase) - Option 3 slimming down, to include

eliminating an unfilled teacher position and increasing class sizes (3.5% increase, most of which is health/dental insurance).

## Major Changes

<u>Category</u>	<u>Change</u>
Salary (with FICA & NHRS)	\$ 1,526
Health/Dental	\$ 257,591
Special Ed Tuition	\$ (35,000)
Student Body Activities	\$ 15,000
Software	\$ 10,000
Office of Superintendent	\$ 4,333
Electricity	\$ (30,000)
Facilities/ Maintenance	\$ 21,804
First Student	\$ 13,280
Bonds	\$ (4,712)
Food Service	\$ 2,747
All Other	\$ 7,310
	\$ 263,879

\*Kelly asked about Special Ed tuition reduction of \$35K: Kew said last year it increased to \$60K, in anticipation of need, which did not happen. There will be a Warrant Article to add to the SpEd CRF.

\*Hajjar asked about Aides salary increase: monies were moved out of para line into aides line. The increase in Substitute line is expectation of maternity leaves.

\*Hajjar asked about Student Body activities: Kew stated this is a new line. In years past, students attended overnight camp; they now attend a day camp and this line will ensure all families can attend.

\*Kelly asked about speech salary: there is one full time position, the half time position is contracted out.

\*Kelly asked about software: this is due to increase in expenses and new investments in subscriptions.

\*Hajjar asked what the health insurance buyout is: Bedard noted it is contracted at \$1200 for single \$1600 for couple and \$2000 for family.

\*Hajjar asked about the Maintenance increase: Kew said the amount is what was spent this year.

\*Niemiroski asked about food service aid salary: there is a change in staffing.

\*Bedard asked about the food service fund: Kew said the Nutrition director is working hard to get good pricing and to increase participation; looking for grants etc.

### Public Comment

Tina Morales. Asked about the extra duty stipend; no amount shown in prior years: Kew said staff is paid extra for extracurricular activities they lead. O'Keefe said these amounts were moved from other lines to better reflect actual costs.

Morales asked about the Equity Support line: this is a stipend for SAU-wide committee

Morales noted the enrollment numbers are much lower than when her kids attended.

Morales asked how pre-k is funded. Kew said it is funded by other peers as well as special ed.

O'Keefe said revenues for that are not shown in this budget but are included in the revenue reports presented in the fall.

Liz Faria. Appreciates moving funds into appropriate categories. Asked about the academic outcomes; concern about the drop from grade 4 to grade 5.

Hajjar questioned class size data provided in the previous packet. How many classes of each grade; Hajjar feels 12.8 is low. Hebert said there were 3 teachers per grade but after analyzing this year they dropped 5th grade to 2 teachers (19 and 18 students). For next year, they reduced a teacher for 2nd grade. Kew said the targeted class size is 15-18 students for 1st-5th grade. Anticipated class sizes for next year Kindergarten size 15; Grade 1- 16; Grade 2- 19; Grade 3- 15; Grade 4- 16; Grade 5- 17.

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	<b>SCS FY26 Budget</b>	<b>SCS Proposed FY27 Budget</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
General Fund	\$ 7,296,301	\$ 7,549,391	\$ 253,089	3.47%
Food Service	\$ 162,413	\$ 173,203	\$ 10,790	6.64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,458,715</b>	<b>\$ 7,722,594</b>	<b>\$ 263,879</b>	<b>3.54%</b>

Grants \$ 135,709

**Total FY27 Appropriation (Article 1) \$7,858,303**

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Discussion on grants. Funds must be appropriated in order to be claimed. Kelly asked for a printout of grants; O’Keefe said they do not know what grants they will receive. Bedard asked how \$135,709 was chosen. O’Keefe said they used \$3.5M (slightly less than last year) and split proportionately to each school. Bedard asked for a report of grants. O’Keefe said she can’t provide that because grants are district-wide. Kew said grants monies are used for professional development, some other stipends. Kelly requested a report of what grants come in.

Discussion about IDEA grants, which must be spent on special education. Kelly asked how a contractor brought in for special services is paid. O’Keefe said payment can’t go through Swasey budget because those funds are not in our budget; the SAU pays the expenses then submits to state for reimbursement. Bedard asked if they could run grant activity for 2026; Mollie would have to figure out what the grant activity numbers are. Kelly asked why not use a higher number; O’Keefe said it will make the total appropriation look excessively high.

Motion by Kelly, seconded by Niemiroski to approve Swasey appropriation \$7,858,303; passed 7-0

**Teacher Contract warrant article.** School board member Kate Bonafede reviewed the many small and few large changes compared to the previous agreement. Some changes include adding CAGS to teacher’s pay (once-per year stipend of \$1500); FMLA; bereavement leave clarification; insurance contributions to HRA (this was a result of HealthTrust rules changes); summer work compensation; personal days increased from 3 to 4; change to retirement payout; reduction in force. All details can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/4jldUUS>.

Siudut asked what happens if this is not approved by the voters; the current contract would remain with no raises.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Total year over year fiscal impact

Year	Increase over Previous Year
2026-2027	\$198,259.97
2027-2028	\$174,463.75
2028-2029	\$144,077.04
2029-2030	\$145,767.28

Wage Increases

Year	% Increase
2026-2027	3.25%
2027-2028	3.5%
2028-2029	3.5%
2029-2030	3.25%

Public Comment

Liz Faria asked for clarification of changes to health/dental in teachers contract compared to the overall budget. The percentage in the contract does not change; however plans changed as well as the contributions to HRA.

Liz Faria expressed concern about changes to bereavement. School board member Brian Duffy said this change was incorporated in the last para contract. It was confirmed there is no limit to the number of bereavements; Bonafede is confident the teachers will be respectful.

Motion by Kelly, seconded by Niemiroski to recommend Article 2 collective bargaining agreement for 2026-2027; passed 7-0

**Spec Education CRF warrant article.** Hebert said the target for this fund is \$250,000 which is what one student would cost. The funds for this warrant article would come from unassigned fund balance. Higgins said we had fully funded this, but the anticipated cost has increased; once the goal is reached they won't ask for more.

Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Arida to recommend \$20,000 from unreserved fund balance; passed 7-0

**Tech CRF warrant article.** Hebert said the \$10K request would meet their target of \$50K. The funds for this warrant article would come from unassigned fund balance.

Bedard stated if there were not enough in the unreserved fund balance to fund all requests, they would be funded in order.

Motion by Kelly, seconded by Niemiroski to recommend \$10,000 from unreserved fund balance; passed 7-0

**Solar credit-related warrant article.** The district applied for the IRS rebate, it was approved, but it has not been received.

The decreased electricity line in the budget was a result of the solar panels.

Beauregard-Bennett said the original request was to use the rebate to pay down the bond, but it is not legal to do that. When the money is received it will increase the end of year fund balance. If it is received prior to June 30, the rebate will be a reduction in taxes raised.

Hajjar asked if the school can carry over a fund balance: no it cannot.

Bedard suggested establishing a CRF with or without the funds. Bedard suggested using the funds over a few years, rather than a big pay in one year. Niemiroski suggested proposing a warrant article to establish a CRF for 1\$; then another warrant article to put the funds in the CRF if/when we get them. O'Keefe will talk to their attorney and DRA this week to find out options. She will advise Hebert, who will keep this Committee informed.

Arida thanked Principal Kew for his work and time in Brentwood. Kelly asked how principal search is going. The job has been posted, applications will be accepted until this Friday; interviews will be held on the last Thursday in January.

### **Public Comment**

Ched Miller. The report by SAU was impressive. Recommended things not spent be removed. We over-appropriated; whatever can be saved, should be saved.

Miller noted we are not required to provide transportation to students living within 2 miles of school.

Tina Morales asked what the unspent fund balance was. Hebert said just under \$200K. Last year's warrant articles totaled \$30K which came out of unreserved fund balance.

Morales said the Students First Act requires school districts to post average cost per pupil, average class size, and admin salaries, in 3 places within 7 days of district meeting (March). She appreciates the large amount of information presented tonight.

Liz Faria. Public hearing for town and school budgets is February 5 at 6 pm at the Rec.

Swasey school district meeting is March 2nd at 6pm at Swasey School.

Faria reminded the Committee that when warrant articles are funded from an unreserved fund balance, be sure to say no *additional* tax impact, rather than no tax impact.

Niemiroski asked about the ability to record/stream the public hearing at the Rec. Hajjar will meet with the new Rec director to ensure all equipment will be available and working for that.

Motion by Kelly, seconded by Niemiroski to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm; passed 7-0.

**Upcoming Meetings** - Meetings are public and livestreamed on Brentwood's YouTube channel.

Jan 26 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Meeting

Feb 5 at 5 pm: Budget Committee Meeting at Rec Center

Feb 5 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Hearing at Rec Center

Feb 13 at 6pm: Budget Committee Public Hearing (IF NEEDED) at Rec Center

Mar 2 at 6pm: Swasey School District Meeting

Mar 14: (potential) Town Meeting

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Siudut, Secretary