

Selectboard Minutes
December 16, 2025

Present: Paul Kleinman, Chair
Letty Bedard
Andy Artimovich
Jim Michaud
Bob Mantegari

At 6:00 Kleinman called the Public meeting to order.

Daphne Woss, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, came forward with a sincere “Thank you” to the Police Department for assisting a resident who had locked themselves out of their home. Not only did the Police assist the resident gaining access to the house, but they also did some snow/ice removal for the individual. Kleinman added that the community involvement that Chief Murch has shown and brought to the force has been refreshing and welcomed!

Mantegari motioned to approve the manifest. Michaud seconded the motion; all were in favor.

Mantegari motioned to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Michaud; all in favor.

At the prompting of a resident, Dusty Bunker, the Board discussed the Elderly Exemption criteria and amounts. The Board had some questions regarding how many residents are currently approved for the exemption, what the average property tax increase was this year, and what other towns are doing. The Board will table discussion until they get answers to these questions. Stevens informed the Board that there are some changes coming from the State regarding the Veterans Credits and they can discuss that when we receive more information.

The following budgets were discussed and voted on by the Board:

- Mantegari made a motion to reopen the Recreation budget. Michaud seconded the motion; all voted in favor. Mantegari made a motion, seconded by Michaud, to approve the budget in the amount of \$141,250. All voted in favor. A motion was made by Mantegari to approve the Employment agreement with the Recreation Director candidate. Michaud seconded the motion; all voted in favor.
- A motion was made by Mantegari to approve the Animal Control Budget in the amount of \$10. Motion was seconded by Artimovich; all voted in favor.
- Mantegari made a motion, with a second by Michaud, to approve the Street Lighting Budget in the amount of \$1. All voted in favor.
- A motion was made by Mantegari, seconded by Michaud, to approve the Mosquito Control budget in the amount of \$29,200. All voted in favor.

Kleinman updated the Board regarding the property identified as Map/Lot #216.035.000 that they discussed issuing a Cease & Desist to last week. The property owner has submitted a new Site Plan Application to the Planning Board. Michaud made a motion, with a second by Mantegari, to table further discussion until after that hearing. All voted in favor.

The Board continued their discussion from last week regarding the Land Use Change Tax for the River Run Development. The Assessor had forwarded the emails that had taken place regarding the proposed tax assessment, as requested by the Selectboard, and were the basis of her recommendation to the Board. They questioned the origin and content of the emails as they were expecting to see emails between the former assessor and the property owner but that was not the case. Stevens will inquire if there are any emails coming from the former assessor that back up the information that is being used to determine the assessed Land Use Change Tax for Phase II of the Development. It is her understanding that Summers, our current Assessor, will return next week with the Authorization and Warrant for the Land Use Change Tax.

A conversation took place between the Board members about the status of the Highway Shed and what still needed to be done for its completion. Stevens shared a couple estimates that Road Agent Robinson had received. Michaud commented that he thought it was Robinson's intent to purchase insulation and he and his employees were going to install it themselves during down time in order to save the Town some money. The Board requested that Robinson attend next week's meeting.

Stevens inquired how the Board would like to handle the completion of a questionnaire that the auditors have asked the Board to fill out. They asked that she send a copy to all Select Board members and they can give her feedback to be used in its completion.

The Board members shared Committee updates.

- Kleinman mentioned that Rob Wofchuck will be taking over as Conservation chair.
- Bedard said that the Budget Committee approved the Police Budget. Bedard continued that the Committee had questions regarding the use of the Revolving Fund to purchase police vehicles or if it would require a new Capital Reserve Fund. Stevens will do some research. Bedard also mentioned that if they want to raise the limit of the Detail Fund, that will need to be voted on at Town Meeting. The Budget Committee also discussed the calculation for the 4% Tax Cap.
- Michaud reported that he went to the Police Standards and Training Board with Chief Murch that morning and he was unanimously voted in and is approved to go to the training for Law Package starting in January.
- Mantegari said the Recreation Committee meets tomorrow night. Artimovich will attend as Mantegari is unable.

At 7:00pm Kleinman opened public comment.

- Jim Hajjar, Chair of the Budget Committee, addressed questions regarding the 4% Tax Cap. He said the department heads and the Selectboard have done a great job with the budgets. Regarding the Tax Cap amount, Hajjar explained that the net required tax effort can not exceed \$5,505,061,
- Police Chief Murch said that he needs Form C signed for the application of academy enrollment. Artimovich made a motion, with a second by Mantegari, to sign the form. All voted in favor.
- Mantegari read into the minutes a letter addressed to the Board from Alina Arida. A copy of the letter is attached.
- Michaud commented that he is the Board member that was referenced in the letter and he appreciates the letter.

- Michaud discussed the Information Session for the Municipal Building that took place last week. Questions about the Building can be sent to: newbuilding@brentwoodnh.gov. Bedard mentioned that The Selectboard needs to make a decision about bond amounts and length.
- Artimovich suggested we reach out to Josh Bertoulin regarding a contract to have the Cross Room A/V system maintained.

At 7:25pm, Mantegari made a motion to go into Nonpublic per RSA 9a-A:3II(a). Michaud seconded the motion; all voted in favor.

At 8:00pm, Mantegari made a motion to come out of nonpublic, seconded by Artimovich. All voted in favor. Motion made by Mantegari, seconded by Michaud to seal the minutes. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Stevens

To the Members of the Budget Committee,
the Select Board,
and the Citizens of Brentwood:

It recently came to my attention that a member of the Select Board, acting as a private citizen, made a social media post following the Budget Committee meeting on Monday, December 8, 2025, suggesting that an unnamed Budget Committee member should apologize to the Chair for what was described as unprofessional conduct. I would like to address this concern directly.

We are all passionate about our town and the services it provides. It is only natural that members of any committee will, at times, disagree in their views. Over the years, there have been many spirited and even heated discussions around the table, which is a common part of deliberation and decision-making. If the Chair felt disrespected during our exchange, I sincerely apologize for any misunderstanding, as that was not my intention. My intent was to address the substance of the proposal and its potential impact on town services and employee morale. With that context, I would like to clarify my comments.

The library submitted a FY2026 budget that included a 5% reduction from FY2025, not only meeting the 4% cap approved by voters but going beyond the Select Board's guidance to level-fund. In contrast, the Chair proposed an additional cut of roughly \$30,000, reducing the library's budget by over 12% and carrying broader consequences for staffing, programming, and services.

In that context, reducing library hours by five per week was suggested. While such a reduction can sometimes be reasonable, I was concerned with the method proposed. Based on my experience in finance and HR, standard practice is to begin with part-time hours to minimize the impact on full-time salaried employees. Had the reduction proposal come from part-time positions, the savings, at the rate of \$17 per hour plus taxes for two employees, would have totaled about \$10,000 annually.

However, the proposal focused instead on reducing the hours and compensation of all library staff, including full-time salaried employees. In my view, this approach is not typical and could reasonably lead to broader structural changes. As has been noted in prior discussions on similar issues, decisions that affect the level or availability of town services should be made by voters at the annual Town Meeting. While boards and committees play an important role in budget review and oversight, the authority to determine the scope and level of town services rests with the community and its legislative body. If residents wish to propose changes to services or staffing levels, they may do so through the warrant article petition process, allowing voters to decide.

Regarding my later comments about re-opening other budgets to reflect Select Board proposals for reductions under \$100, it is important to note that every organization sets thresholds for financial materiality. Previously, the town's de-minimis standard, meaning amounts too small to materially affect the overall budget, was measured in the thousands. That may have changed under the current Select Board and the new Town Administrator, and I would welcome updated guidance. Even so, a \$5 annual salary reduction offers no meaningful benefit to taxpayers while risking unnecessary harm to overall employee morale.

In the spirit of aligning more closely with the Select Board, as has been encouraged, I respectfully request that the Budget Committee Chair ask the Select Board to provide clear guidance on what constitutes a de-minimis amount. The term has been used frequently by current members of the Select Board, often in reference to amounts far greater than \$5. Applying consistent standards to determine what budget changes are meaningful across all departments and committees would promote clarity, fairness, and uniformity.

Lastly, I would like to address a social media post made by a member of the Select Board following the Budget Committee meeting on December 8, 2025. I became aware of the post only after another resident reached out, concerned that something serious had occurred during the meeting. While the post was

presented as personal, once elected, our words, whether spoken in person or online, are rarely interpreted purely in that way. This concern has been raised in Select Board discussions over the years, including by the current Board members, and applying that standard consistently would benefit the town. While I respect his right to share his perspective, I would have welcomed the opportunity to discuss those concerns during the meeting or privately afterward. Social media posts do not always reach the person being discussed or support meaningful resolution. I genuinely admire his commitment to professionalism and decency in communication, especially among elected officials. I hope he carries those values into all public settings by raising concerns whenever unprofessional conduct arises, as we would all benefit from such an honorable standard.

I kindly request that this letter be entered into the official record and included in the meeting minutes. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. I am committed to constructive collaboration and to serving our town with integrity and diligence.

Sincerely,

Alina Arida

Member, Brentwood Budget Committee