

Town of Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee
Minutes of January 26, 2026 Meeting held at Town Office

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

Attending remote: Alina Arida

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

Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Kelly to allow Arida to attend remote; passed 5-0

Motion by Kelly, seconded by Niemiroski to approve the January 12, 2026 meeting minutes; Arida- aye, Niemiroski- aye, Bedard- aye, Siudut- aye, Kelly- aye, Hajjar- aye; passed 6-0

Selectboard Report - Letty Bedard

*Selectboard voted to include several articles on the warrant, but they did not vote to recommend or not recommend. There were articles they did not approve for the warrant.

*Code Enforcement and benefits budgets were re-opened.

*Discussion about CRFs and revolving funds. Some items were paid for out of the operating budget rather than the appropriate CRF.

Budgets

The Selectboard voted to reduce the Insurance Benefits in lieu of line from \$6,600 to \$5,200. Library employees were receiving a higher rate than other town employees; this has been corrected. Motion by Kelly, seconded by Siudut, to re-open Insurance Benefits budget. Motion by Bedard, seconded by Kelly, to approve \$519,254, which is a decrease of \$63,471 or 10.9% from the 2025 budget. Arida- aye, Niemiroski- aye, Bedard- aye, Siudut- aye, Kelly- aye, Hajjar- aye; passed 6-0

Motion by Bedard, seconded by Siudut to re-open the Code Enforcement budget; Arida- aye, Niemiroski- aye, Bedard- aye, Siudut- aye, Kelly- aye, Hajjar- aye; passed 6-0. The salary, FICA and retirement lines were calculated incorrectly in the previously approved budget. Motion by Bedard, seconded by Kelly to approve \$107,933, which is an increase of \$15,462 or 16.7% over the 2025 budget. Arida- aye, Niemiroski- nay, Bedard- aye, Siudut- aye, Kelly- aye, Hajjar- aye; passed 5-1

Warrants

Appropriations for the following warrant articles, if approved, will fall within the tax cap.

**To see if the Town will raise and appropriate \$24,950 for the continuation of manual collection of waste and recyclable materials.*

This appropriation would fund manual trash collection past the 6 months that is in the operation budget. Discussion about whether this Committee's vote is based on finances or opinion.

Trash Subcommittee chair Kelly said trash/recycling is the town's 3rd largest expense (after police and fire)- \$711,000 - 10% of our operating budget. 40% of trash is food waste. The Subcommittee would like time to explore other scenarios to deal with waste; see what other towns do. Discussed some drawbacks of switching to automated - new bins (additional up front and annual cost if residents want a different

size bin), new process, new rules, getting locked in to something that may not be best suited for Brentwood.

Siudut concurred with Kelly. She suggested encouraging residents to consider the many opportunities to repurpose items rather than throw them away, and to be mindful of what is bought and what ultimately needs to be disposed of. She would like a better understanding of what is recycled; is it economical and is it as environmentally conscious as it was years ago? Bedard suggested a cardboard-only bin at the Highway Shed.

Niemiroski feels we will eventually need to go to automated; but the additional cost is within the tax cap. Arida asked about the current contract; we are in year 2 of 5, so can anticipate a minimum \$50K increase each year for 3 more years.

Arida asked what the trash subcommittee's time frame is for recommendations. Kelly said the subcommittee's goal is to explore other options; there is no specific date, but we will collect data and present info as soon as possible. Arida suggested talking to counsel to see if we can even get out of the contract, or change it and what that would cost.

Bedard said regardless of what the taxpayers vote, the next SB could make a different decision.

Town Administrator Julie Stevens said Casella will be presenting pro/cons of automation at tomorrow's Selectboard meeting. Additional barrels will cost \$200 per year, and may also require an additional pickup fee. Her understanding is that we may be able to get out of the contract if the total cost does not get budgeted for.

Siudut expressed disappointment in the hasty signing of the current contract, without other considerations. Bedard said if they didn't sign the contract, there would have been no trash pick up at all for the start of 2025.

Public Comment

Ched Miller said the warrant should be clear that voting YES limits the capacity of what you can throw away.

Jim Berlo said this Committee needs to express support or no support. Hajjar explained our discussion is to determine if we want to recommend or not recommend this warrant article.

Hajjar hopes Kelly will have a slide or some sort of presentation to clarify concerns, and that it is not just about the \$25K.

Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Kelly, to recommend the warrant. Arida- recommend, Niemiroski- recommend, Bedard- abstain, Siudut- recommend, Kelly- recommend, Hajjar- recommend. Vote to recommend passed 5-0-1

**To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$125,000 to be added to the existing Municipal Building Capital Reserve Fund.*

There is currently \$124,878 in the fund. TA Stevens said there are pending expenses to be paid from this fund. Bedard said engineering costs will use much of the fund. Bedard said the Selectboard's intent is to present building plans in 2027; she is unsure how that amount was decided. Hajjar suggests once the engineering costs are paid, any funds remaining in the CRF be spread over a number of years to offset the bond payment.

Public Comment

Discussion about the name of the CRF. Jim Berlo said at the 2024 Town Meeting, what had started as the "Police Facility CRF" was changed to "Multi-Purpose Municipal Building Capital Reserve Fund". He suggests the Selectboard look at all buildings in town and see what other options may exist. He asked that we stop funding things when we don't have all the information. Hajjar said the Building Committee's plan is for a police station only.

Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Kelly to recommend the warrant article. Arida- recommend, Niemiroski- recommend, Bedard- abstain, Siudut- not recommend, Kelly- recommend, Hajjar- recommend. Vote to recommend passed 4-1-1

**To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$150,000 to be added to the existing Highway Vehicles/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.*

There is currently \$16,051 in this fund. Niemiroski asked what are we saving for and when?

Jim Michaud SB/Highway liaison said there is no specific vehicle being considered however we need to rebuild this fund as it is almost empty and new trucks are very expensive (\$250K with equipment).

Niemiroski wondered if the amount should be higher. Bedard said if a truck is replaced every 2 years, this amount should be sufficient.

Motion by Kelly, seconded by Niemiroski to recommend the warrant article. Arida- recommend, Niemiroski- recommend, Bedard- abstain, Siudut- recommend, Kelly- recommend, Hajjar- recommend. Vote to recommend passed 5-0-1

**To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$350,000 for the purpose of public road repair and maintenance.*

This amount was removed from the Highway Department budget. This amount will repave 2 miles of road. Question as to why this is not a CRF; Bedard said a CRF would be tied to a particular project(s). Question as to why this was removed from the departmental budget; Bedard said in the operating budget it is not dedicated for a purpose but as a warrant article it is.

Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Bedard to recommend the warrant article. Arida- recommend, Niemiroski- recommend, Bedard- abstain, Siudut- recommend, Kelly- recommend, Hajjar- recommend. Vote to recommend passed 5-0-1

**To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,500 to be added to the Master Plan Expendable Trust Fund under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a for the purpose of updating the Town's Master Plan.*

There is currently \$8,742 in this fund. The anticipated cost to update the Master Plan is \$60-80K. Hajjar said RSA recommends the plan be updated every 5-10 years.

Public Comment

Jim Berlo questioned who is in charge of creating changes; what is the benefit to the taxpayer? He suggested a better understanding before voting to spend more money. Hajjar stated RSA

recommends the plan be updated every 5-10 years. Bedard said formerly the town planner did the updates, we will hire someone to update it.

Ched Miller- was on board in 90s, master plan provides direction,

Motion by Niemiroski, seconded by Arida to recommend. Arida suggested contacting the planning board to get a better understanding of how this process works; Arida withdrew her second. Bedard seconded the notion. Arida- not recommend, Niemiroski- recommend, Bedard- abstain, Siudut- not recommend, Kelly- recommend, Hajjar- recommend. Vote to recommend passed 3-2-1

Other Business

Hajjar clarified that after we close the hearing we cannot make changes, however we can make a change at the hearing.

Bedard said Selectboard will be voting on additional warrant articles.

Budget Committee can vote on remaining warrant articles at the Feb 5 meeting, which will be held before the public hearing.

Public Comment

Ched Miller noticed only short-term disability is budgeted for and questioned long-term disability options; Bedard said long-term disability is paid for by employees.

Motion by Siudut, seconded by Niemiroski to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.

Arida- aye, Niemiroski- aye, Bedard- aye, Siudut- aye, Kelly- aye, Hajjar- aye. Motion approved 6-0

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

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