

**Town of Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee
Minutes of February 5, 2026 Public Hearing held at Rec Center**

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

At 6:03 pm, Hajjar welcomed 50-60 residents and 5-10 non-resident employees. He thanked the Town Administrator, Selectboard, department heads, budget committee members and his wife for their cooperation and support throughout budget season. Members of the Budget Committee introduced themselves. Hajjar explained the purpose of tonight’s hearing, to review proposed town operating budget, warrant articles, Swasey School budget, Coop budget, county tax, state ed tax - and tax impact; and the estimated tax effort. He explained the process of how the budget was developed, and he reviewed the tax impact vs tax effort.

The full slide presentation can be viewed on the town website at <https://bit.ly/4a0k3st>; a recording of the meeting can be viewed on the town YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/@townofbrentwoodnh>

The town operating budget totals \$6,413,964 which is a \$358,004 or 5.3% reduction from the FY2025 budget. This results a -.30 cent/\$1000 tax impact.

The two highest budgets are Fire and Police. The Fire Department has 24/7 coverage with 4 groups of 2 firefighters; their budget increase is 2.6%. The Police department includes 10 FT staff; they reduced their budget by 9.7% by eliminating a part-time position and a reduction for a vehicle.



Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee

FY2026 Town Operating Budget – Top Ten

Account Name	FY2025 Appropriation	Bud Com FY2026 Approved	Bud Com Increase	Bud Com % Increase
Fire Department	\$ 1,256,541	\$ 1,288,790	\$ 32,249	2.6%
Police Department	\$ 1,345,911	\$ 1,215,756	\$ (130,155)	-9.7%
Recycling+Trash	\$ 628,529	\$ 710,788	\$ 82,259	13.1%
Highway/Snow Removal	\$ 909,421	\$ 572,782	\$ (336,639)	-37.0%
Ins_Benefits	\$ 582,725	\$ 519,254	\$ (63,471)	-10.9%
LIBRARY	\$ 358,990	\$ 345,119	\$ (13,871)	-3.9%
Debt Service	\$ 273,392	\$ 269,261	\$ (4,131)	-1.5%
Town Administrator	\$ 121,942	\$ 197,608	\$ 75,666	62.1%
Insurance_Property	\$ 186,111	\$ 196,120	\$ 10,009	5.4%
Recreation	\$ 116,483	\$ 141,250	\$ 24,767	21.3%

- These budget accounts total \$5.5M or 85% of total
 - o \$350,000 of Highway budget moved to road paving warrant
 - o Moved admin assistant position from Finance to Town Admin
 - o Police removal of part time positions under new Chief
 - o Recreation Program Coordinator moved from warrant to budget

February 5, 2026

FY2026 Brentwood Budget Public Hearing

7

Trash/recycling is the third highest budget line. Committee member and Trash Subcommittee chair Kelly presented information on the town’s trash & recycling budget and asked support for a warrant article to

fund an additional 6 months of manual trash pickup. This will allow our committee additional time to research other options to determine what is best for Brentwood. If the down does not approve this warrant article, we will go to automated pickup mid-year.

Hajjar then reviewed additional warrant articles with appropriations.



Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee

FY2026 Warrant Articles

Warrants	FY2026	Tax Impact per \$1000	Increase on \$650K Home
Manual Waste Collection	\$ 24,950	\$ 0.02	\$ 13.31
Multi-Purpose Municipal Building CRF	\$ 125,000	\$ 0.10	\$ 66.71
Highway Vehicles/Equipment CRF	\$ 150,000	\$ 0.12	\$ 80.05
Road Repair	\$ 350,000	\$ 0.29	\$ 186.78
Master Plan	\$ 8,500	\$ 0.01	\$ 4.54
Capital Reserve Funds	\$ 160,000	\$ 0.13	\$ 85.38
Additional Fire Fighters	\$ 225,703	\$ 0.19	\$ 120.45
Total	\$ 1,044,153	\$ 0.86	\$ 557.22

- If residents wish to keep manual trash/recycle pickup, they must approve warrant or town will switch to automated pickup on July 1st
- Moved road repair paving (roughly 2 miles of roadway annually) from budget to a warrant
- Additional 24x7 per diem firefighter to provide three-person engine company staff on all shifts (effective April 1st or ¾ full year funding)

February 5, 2026

FY2026 Brentwood Budget Public Hearing

12

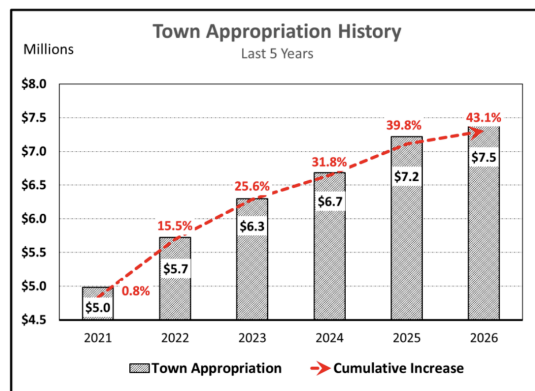
Hajjar explained the max appropriation to remain within the tax cap which voters approved last year was \$7,516,583, a \$298,504 increase over FY2025.

The 2026 proposed operating budget and warrants were flat budgeted; however the addition of the citizen petition for additional fire fighters resulted in an overall increase of 3.3%. Total town appropriation for 2026 operating budget and warrant articles is \$7,458,117; which is an increase of \$240,038 with a tax impact of \$.20/thousand.



Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee

Total Town Appropriation History



- History of increases
 - 2021 0.8%
 - 2022 14.8%
 - 2023 10.1%
 - 2024 6.1%
 - 2025 8.0%
 - **2026 3.3%**

February 5, 2026

FY2026 Brentwood Budget Public Hearing

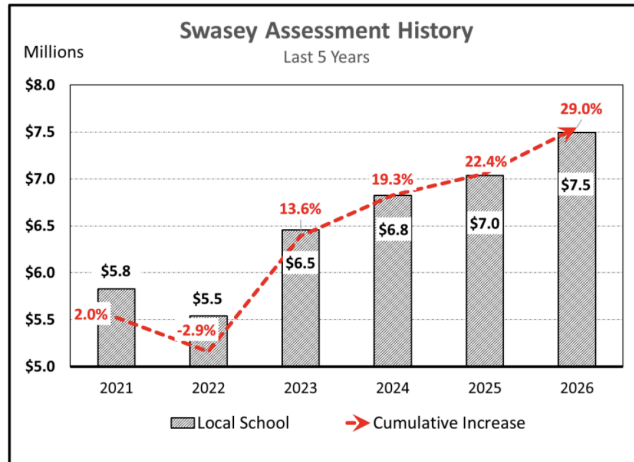
16

Hajjar then reviewed the Swasey School budget and warrants which total \$8,086,563; an increase of \$597,848 or 7.98%. Budget drivers include health insurance increases and a collective bargaining agreement for teachers. He noted that Swasey students continue to outperform the state averages in ELA, math and science.



Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee

Swasey Local School Assessment History



History of increases

- 2021 2.0%
- 2022 -4.9%
- 2023 16.5%
- 2024 5.8%
- 2025 3.1%
- 2026 6.6%

February 5, 2026

FY2026 Brentwood Budget Public Hearing

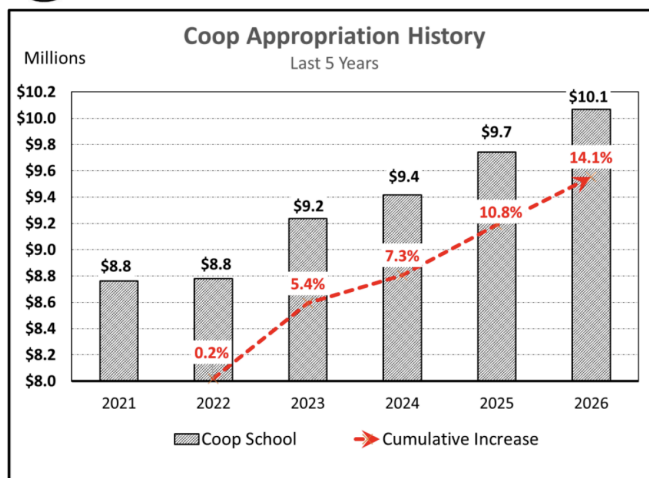
19

Next, Hajjar outlined the Co-op School budget and warrant (including expected reductions from grants) at \$66,470,561, an increase of \$2,586,014 with primary drivers of over \$1.2 million for salaries and \$1M for health/dental.



Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee

Coop School Assessment History



History of increases

- 2022 0.2%
- 2023 5.2%
- 2024 1.9%
- 2025 3.5%
- 2026 3.3%

February 5, 2026

FY2026 Brentwood Budget Public Hearing

22

Voters at the polls will be presented the proposed budget (\$73,125,524) and a default budget (\$72,384,095) at a difference of \$741,429. The proposed budget would have a tax impact of \$.27/\$1000, while the default budget would have a tax impact of \$.18/\$1000.

Hajjar reviewed the Estimated Tax Effort of town and local education, as well as the county and state education tax apportionments. These were estimated with 4% revenue growth, no use of unreserved fund balance and keeping war service credits and actual overlay the same as last year. Our current town tax rate is \$17.13; he estimated the 2026 town tax rate at \$18.07.

In summary, the Budget Committee recommends the Town Operating budget of \$6,413,964.

The Budget Committee recommends the following warrant articles:

- Raising \$24,950 to continue Manual Waste Collection
- Adding \$125,000 to the Multi-purpose Municipal Building Capital Reserve Fund
- Adding \$150,000 to the Highway Vehicles/Equipment Capital Reserve Fund
- Raising \$350,000 for road repairs
- Adding \$8,500 to Master Plan
- Adding \$160,000 total to the Information Systems Hardware CRF (\$30,000); Revaluation CRF (\$25,000); Maintenance of Town Buildings CRF (\$25,000); Fire Vehicles CRF (\$50,000); Public Safety Radios CRF (\$30,000).

The Budget Committee voted 3-3-1 on the warrant article to fund additional firefighters for 9 months at \$225,703.

The Budget Committee recommends the Swasey School budgets and warrants at \$8,086,563.

All residents are encouraged participation in the following:

- Swasey School District Meeting on Monday, March 2 at Swasey School at 6 pm
- Brentwood Town/School Elections on Tuesday, March 10 at Swasey School, from 7 am to 7 pm
- Brentwood Town Meeting on Saturday, March 14 at Swasey School at 9 am.

Public Comment

Jim Berlo: Noted the Swasey School budget is \$7,858,303. In October there were 272 students which includes 13 preschoolers. He encouraged attendees to calculate the cost per student. He noted that the SAU budget is \$76M with 2248 students; he again encouraged attendees to calculate the cost per student. Performance results show 1 out of 2 students in middle & high schools are not proficient. Consider the 5.5% average increase will result in taxes doubling within 10 years.

Jen Jones. Questioned where ARPA funds are accounted for in our budget; approximately \$40K should have been applied to recycling costs in both 2025 and 2026. If those funds are not used as pledged, they will need to be returned to the federal government. Hajjar said we do not have clarity on how ARPA appropriations are shown; he will get an answer on this and if applicable we can adjust the operating budget at town meeting. Jones also asked what impact fees had been used, as those also could reduce the appropriation request.

Ched Miller. Requested more clarity on the waste situation if we go to automated, such as the number of barrels, etc. Kelly said Casella is preparing an informational flyer for residents with more details. Bedard said there will be additional information presented before and at town meeting to better understand the pending changes. It was stated that if households need more than one trash bin, there will be an additional annual charge; it had not been determined what that cost (estimated at \$200) would be or who would pay it (resident or town). Hajjar said if the town does go to automated, our current trash policy would need to be updated. Kelly said the changes would be similar to what the town of Hudson has posted on their website (all trash must fit in bins with lid closed; cardboard must be contained with the recycling bin not outside of it).

Jeff Donald. Asked why the Regional Associations budget is at 0; Hajjar said it was moved into the Welfare budget.

Motion by Bedard, seconded by Kelly to adjourn at 7:15; passed 7-0

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Siudut, Secretary