

**Town of Brentwood  
Budget Committee**  
Minutes of February 9, 2015

*Present:* Elyse Seeley (Chair), Bill Faria, John Lyon, Dianne Vosgien, (School Board Rep ), Malcolm Allison, Jeff Bryan (Selectmen Rep), Barbara Zvodar, Krista Steger (telephonically).

*Visitors:* Ken Christiansen, Jessie Hollister, Michael Morgan, Kim Woods, Michelle Siudut, John Mitchell, Susan Mitchell, Amy Wilson, Scott Dennehy, Tina Dennehy, Allison Yeagle, Katey Wilson, Gordon Wilson, Meghan Wilson, Paula Rushia, Sheila Lane, Lisa Swasay, Samantha Garon, Chad Goodrich, Ivonne Chartier, Amy Nicolai, Chris Cooper, Dan Hanlon, Melissa Hanlon, Liz Faria, Jen Roeder, Bridget Zacher, Sarah Keener, Jess Morgado, Amy Brown, John Sheppela, Rob Bergin, Justin Cooper, Jessica Paul, Lisa Brown, Erin Merrell, Emily Stucki, Cynthia Hartwett, Greg Postage, Kathie Babine, Melissa Wolfe, Seth Wolfe, Melissa Litchfield, Cindy Danielson, Liz McConnell.

Chairperson Elyse Seeley called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

1. Motion to approve draft minutes from January 26, Dianne/Jeff, Approved, as corrected 7-0-1.

**New Business:**

2. **WA – Bridge Repair:** Jeff explained that there was money left over from the Crawley Falls bridge work from deposits to the revolving fund. BOS is asking the town in a WA to restore this money to the Bridge Repair CR Fund and use it for bridge repair on Mill Road and culverts on Prescott Road. No tax dollars need to be raised if this money is kept for this repair work because this is surplus money. Motion to approve, in the amount of \$204,471.00, Jeff/Barb, approved, 8-0.
3. **School Citizen's Petition: To expand current Kindergarten program to an extended Day program.** Motion to not recommend, Bill/Malcolm. The School Board has voted to not recommend this program. Approved, in the amount of \$120,000.00, to not recommend, 8-0. Chair reminded everyone that this petition WA, as well as the other similar one previously voted are both subject to the “no means no” law.

**Old Business**

4. Public Hearing scheduled for 7:30 is recessed and postponed to the Thursday snow date due to snow emergency. Chair reminded all that she will open up the public hearing at 7:30 and stay until 8:00 pm to conform to guidelines, and recess the hearing until Thursday. This is to satisfy legal deadline requirements. We will adjourn this meeting and then open the public hearing.
5. Motion to reopen the Swasey School Operating budget, Bill/Dianne. Motion failed 4-4 .
6. Chair stated we have our new business and old business concluded.

7. Bill stated that he has new information to present to the board and that after we hear it people might change their minds about reopening the operating budget. He advised the chair she should allow him to present his new information. Chair reminded Bill that the motion to reopen has failed. She can conduct a roll call poll to see if people might be willing to change their positions. Chair conducted poll and some members stated they would be open to the possibility. She invited Bill to speak.

Bill distributed a copy of case law that references a case (George H. Baker & a. vs. Hudson School District & a.) where a budget committee recommended a budget that included the amount that would have been added by the 10% override. Bill felt we should not be recommending a number that he feels the school cannot operate with as it "reduces the staff by a third". He felt doing this is illegal and he knows Board members are doing this, if not illegally, unethically. Chair asked Bill to justify these public accusations and Bill said he knows it's true and then restated that you can't vote with the 10% rule in mind, referencing the law case repeatedly - "I hope we didn't do that". Barbara remarked she was new to this and is unfamiliar with the 10% limit. Bill further stated that he does not believe Budcom did what he believes is its job and reminded everyone he did not get to vote on the OB. Chair reminded Bill that he recused himself and he was told he didn't have to. Bill acknowledged this. Dianne provided a new table of class size ratios and felt the proposed budget yielded size ratios (22-25) above recommended ratios. This was compared to the ratios given by Ron Kew. There was disagreement about the state recommendations and the numbers behind the cut. Kristen said (had article sent by Bill in advance) she wants to give the town the ability to vote on the School Board's budget. Elyse listed the reductions that had been brought up by members, including curriculum coordinator, special ed, psych, retirement bonuses, etc. items related to enrollment changes. Bill agreed there was room to cut, "a little fluff" but not enough to undermine the School Board and felt we needed to propose a budget closer to their number. He began to question individual members about their votes and was advised by the Chair that he was out of order. Barbara stated that her votes reflected her thinking about what numbers she felt were reasonable cuts. Elyse reminded the Committee that our job is indeed to second guess the Board over financials. The voters will make the final decision.

Chair asked if Bill wanted to make a motion following his discussion.

Motion to reopen the school operating budget, Bill/Jeff, not approved, 4-4.

Chair declared the issue is closed.

8. Krista questioned the legality of the Chair voting. Chair stated that the law allows all members to vote. Krista would like to amend by-laws. Chair stated that we have a meeting after the town meeting with newly elected members and asked if she wanted to discuss that now or wait. Krista stated she would wait until that meeting to bring it up.
9. Bill stated he wanted to enter into the record the names of everyone who sent correspondence for and against the OB. Chair reminded that all correspondence to the Committee is entered into the record automatically.

Motion to adjourn, Jeff/Barb, approved, 5-3, adjourned 7:40pm

Chair presented Committee with draft budget forms for signatures.