

Selectboard Minutes

March 28, 2023

Present: Jennifer Jones, chair
Andy Artimovich, vice-chair
Jon Morgan
Paul Kleinman
Russ Kelly (via zoom)

At 6pm, Jones called the meeting to order.

Officer Matt Kelly introduced the newest addition to the Brentwood Police Department, K9 Maggie. Chief Ventura thanked the town for their community support and shared his delight in the milestones that have been reached. A photo of present selectboard members, the Chief, Officer Kelly, and K9 Maggie was taken.

The Board signed the payroll and accounts payable summary register.

Morgan motioned, seconded by Artimovich, to allow Kelly to attend remotely. Artimovich – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Artimovich motioned, seconded by Morgan, to accept the consent agenda which consisted of public minutes from 03/21/2023, recreation manifest, treasurer's report (found at the end of these minutes), and the following building permits:

- James & Wendy Kennish, 36 Middle Road, Solar
- Peter & Judith Quatrala, 6 Three Ponds Drive, Electrical
- Jason & Samantha Garon, 31 Brook Crossing, Minor Projects – shingle replacement
- Ambrose Kizza & Stefanie Beaver, 9 Mary Vey Circle, Solar
- Warren & Mary Beth Graham, 132 Lake Road, Electrical
- 3 Ponds LLC, 44 Three Ponds Drive, Electrical
- Andrew Carpenter, 98 Dudley Road, Minor Projects – shingle replacement

Artimovich – aye; Kelly – abstain; Kleinman – aye; Morgan – aye; Jones – aye.

Morgan requested there be a minor change to the minutes from 3/21/2023. He requested the word “of” be replaced with “against” on page 5 in the next to last paragraph. The sentence will now read: “Morgan requested something be done about the constant badgering and attacks against town employees.”

Jones gave a statement as new chair of the board. She thanked the other board members for electing her chair. Jones mentioned she is the third female chair in Brentwood's history. She expressed her desire for the meetings to run professionally and efficiently. Jones reminded those in attendance that a selectboard meeting is not a public hearing. She listed some of her desired changes which include not reading AP and payroll checks aloud any longer, moving public comment to the beginning of the meeting, and possibly delaying votes on “hot topics” until the following meeting. Jones stated one of her goals is to have an increased level of transparency about what will be discussed at meetings by publishing the entire packet ahead of the meeting. She believes it will allow people time to reach out ahead of the meeting to voice their opinions, if they are not able to attend in person.

Jones explained by moving public comment to the beginning of the meeting, it will allow residents to share their thoughts and opinions before the board deliberates. She plans to have a three-minute time limit. Jones believes this is done across many boards. She reminded those in attendance that public comment is your chance to freely express your thoughts and opinions and address the board, but the board may choose not to respond. Jones stated residents speaking during public comment can say what they want, but requested they are polite and kind. She hopes these changes will increase transparency and requested the public bear with the board as these changes are implemented. Jones reminded everyone that starting next week, the summer schedule begins with meetings being held on the first and third Tuesday of each month.

Chief Ventura, police chief, was present to offer an update on New England Dragway (NED). He explained there was a meeting with NED which was also attended by Andy Avelis, resident and stakeholder, Chief Wallace from Epping PD, Lydia Perry, assistant general manager and Paul Lorenti, NED manager. Ventura shared that as a result of the productive meeting, there is agreement that Brentwood

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PD will be handling Route 27 for all major events and Epping PD will do all inside details. He stated if Brentwood PD cannot fulfill the outside detail, Epping will be the first choice and he believes that will be reciprocated for inside details if Epping PD cannot fill their slots. He recommended that the board sign the permit as written to allow them to get their race season underway.

Jones stated she was glad the situation was worked out. Ventura expressed his appreciation for the full support of the board. Jones asked if the department could anticipate being able to handle filling the majority of the details. Ventura responded he believes they will be able to handle most of them and plans to fill openings with departments who use similar detail rates, in fairness to NED. He explained he has no desire to use towns who charge higher rates for weekend work or charge what he considers an unfair detail rate. Morgan asked where Epping PD fits in the scale of charges. Ventura stated he believes Epping PD is close to what Brentwood charges.

Kleinman asked if there is a written contract or if it was a verbal agreement. Ventura responded he did not desire to write a Memorandum of Understanding (MOA) and believes the permit as written should suffice. Kleinman requested an opportunity to read the permit. As he was reviewing it, Jones confirmed with Clement it was standard language used on prior permits. Morgan motioned, seconded by Kleinman, to sign the permit allowing NED to operate from April 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024. Artimovich – abstain; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

After board discussion, it was decided the following board members would be the designated representatives for the following committees:

- Budget Committee → Jon Morgan with Jenn Jones as the backup board member
- Conservation Commission → Andy Artimovich
- School Board → Jenn Jones
- Planning Board → Paul Kleinman
- Library → Russ Kelly
- Recreation → Jon Morgan
- Building Committee → Jenn Jones
- Joint Loss Committee → Jenn Jones
- Communications Subcommittee → Russ Kelly
- Energy & Efficiency Committee → Russ Kelly
- ZBA → Russ Kelly

Jones explained the Communications Subcommittee had created a process for applying for an opening on committees which included filling out the Statement of Interest and supplying a letter or resume. The applications would then be reviewed by and voted on by the board. Jones read from Section R. Appointments of Town Officials in the Selectboard's handbook which states ... "Ultimately decisions to appoint should be made based primarily on a candidate's qualifications, experience, track record and ideology, even when considering re-appointments." She suggested using the new process to fill any current or upcoming vacancies on committees.

Jones requested the board review who is currently serving, what vacancies will be opening, and when term limits expire for all boards at next week's meeting.

Morgan stated he believes this is a proactive process. Kleinman asked for clarification of the form. Clement showed him a sample. Jones explained the form and process. Artimovich added there have been questions about when terms expire and he believes this process will help them get a handle on open spots. Jones asked if the positions and terms were listed anywhere. Karen Clement, Town Administrator, explained they are listed in the town report.

Jones next moved to the proposed budget. Clement stated the proposed budget at Town Meeting was \$5,525,898 which was amended to \$5,355,050 creating a \$170,848 deficit. She outlined the modifications as follows:

- Eliminating TAN (Tax Anticipation Note) for \$29,999
- Reducing Government Building: Building Maintenance line by \$18,051 and funding that with money from the CRF
- Reducing the Benefits: Healthtrust line by \$ 27,798
- Utilizing \$10,000 from the Highway: Salt line which can be offset by using the money from the expendable trust fund

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- Reducing \$20,000 from Highway: Road Construction
- Reducing \$40,000 from the police salary line which can be off-set due to an officer being deployed
- Reducing \$20,000 from the fire budget from the radios, salary, fuel and heat lines
- Utilizing \$5,000 from the Library Programming line by reducing programming

Kelly stated he had no questions about the proposal. He thanked Clement for her efforts and going right to work the next day to solve the deficit.

Additionally, Clement explained that road agent, Wayne Robinson, has proposed closing the recycling center from Memorial Day through Labor Day to reduce dumpster rental costs, compaction fees, hauling fees, tonnage disposal, and reducing staff overtime. Jones asked how much the savings could be. Clement responded it could be a \$5,000 savings. Jones acknowledged the town is looking for cost savings where they can be found. She asked other board members if they had concerns about using that as potential extra cost savings. Artimovich requested a compromise on the recycling center. He suggested maybe having recycling open 1 day a month at the least. Jones asked Robinson if summertime brings a higher amount of usage. Robinson responded the utilization rate is higher in the spring/summer.

Artimovich suggested limiting the recycling to scrap metal, brush and leaves during the hours of 3pm-4pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was mentioned that as an alternative, the Raymond Transfer station can be utilized by residents.

Morgan motioned, seconded by Artimovich, to accept the budget changes as listed. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Jones asked if Budget Committee will be officially notified. Clement responded they will be and she will file the Report of Appropriations.

Morgan discussed ARPA funds and exploring their use. He explained the voters agreed to a budget with an 8.7% increase and residents have verbalized their desire to use ARPA funds for one-time expenses and not off-set the budget. Morgan believes both can be accomplished. Jones explained when ARPA rules were first outlined there were very detailed instructions, certain categories where money could be used and lots of paperwork. She went on to explain, in April 2022, final rules were published allowing municipalities to take a standard deduction if they received less than 10 million dollars in funding. Jones shared that Brentwood received about \$400,000 allowing the town to take the standard allowance and following less strict rules. She described information recently obtained from legal counsel that would allow ARPA to be used on capital improvements instead of just for “general government service”.

Artimovich expressed his concern for the safety and liability issue at the library. He suggested some of the ARPA funds be used to protect the town’s well-being. Jones conveyed her thoughts to pull \$121,000 originally planned for salary increases in the budget which is now off set by the reduction of the budget and possibly add the \$149,000 remaining ARPA funds to try to resolve the safety issue at the library. Kleinman explained he visited the library because he wanted to see the situation for himself. After viewing it, he feels the amphitheater area is a liability. Kleinman stated he would like to see a proposal and bottom-line number. Morgan stated he agrees with Artimovich and Kleinman conceptually, but he expressed the need for more information.

Clement explained ARPA funds must be committed by 2024 and expended by 2026.

Kleinman questioned if a vote was necessary. He argued it was money just sitting in an account. Jones responded the board has in past voted on how to use the funds.

Morgan motioned, seconded by Artimovich, to not use \$121,000 of ARPA funds to off-set the budget and use it for capital improvement projects. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – abstain; Jones – aye. Motion passes 4-0-1.

Morgan motioned, seconded Artimovich, for a letter to be drafted and sent to the library trustees expressing the possibility of using ARPA funds and the request for a proposal. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Liz Faria, South Road, requested the scenic road signs be put back up on South Road. She stated posted scenic roads have different rules including a higher fine for littering. Clement responded that Robinson put the signs up on Monday.

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Artimovich had no committee updates, but shared details of the South Road intersection meeting held on Thursday. He stated both he and Kleinman attended. Artimovich explained there were many “heavy hitters” and communicated that there is a lot of planning that must go into making changes. He shared the state police have committed to speed enforcement.

Ventura added he is working on the illuminated signs. He also shared the State Police are down 80 troopers of the 300 for the entire state. He does not believe they have additional resources to focus on just Brentwood’s intersection. Ventura assured residents the process is moving forward to make the intersection safer, however, reminded people it is a process.

Kleinman believes it is Councilor Steven’s end goal to get a light at the intersection. Ventura applauds her efforts and hopes it can be accomplished.

Kelly had no committee updates. He welcomed Kleinman to the board, thanked Artimovich for his leadership over the years, and congratulated Jones on becoming chair. Kelly expressed appreciation for the all the research Jones has done. He expressed excitement about working together.

Morgan had no committee updates.

Kleinman had no committee updates.

Jones shared she attended the Budget Committee meeting in Artimovich’s place. She explained it was a goal setting meeting with a desire to fine tune the budget and to ensure that items are on the correct lines. Jones shared another goal was to improve communication and education of the committee of what’s in the budget. Additionally, she explained Jack Mitchell was renominated as the chair and Michelle Siudut was renominated as the Secretary.

Janice Wiers, library director, thanked the board for working to help make the library space safe.

Liz Faria, South Road, expressed her concern about moving public comment to the beginning of the meeting. She believes it will leave some items unresolved. Jones responded the plan is to hold off on big votes or issues, when possible. Faria asked what the proposal is for the library. Jones responded she is unsure and it will depend on what is presented. Lastly, Faria asked what TAN is. Jones responded it is Tax Anticipation Note and is money set aside to cover a shortfall in money while the town waits for taxes to be paid in December.

Lois DeYoung, Crawley Falls, stated she believes the library only needs \$30,000 to make the amphitheater safe.

Becky Dunham, Block Drive, asked about the status of the permits for the county. She believes the town should not waive the fee. Clement responded that she spoke with Jude Gates to obtain the contact information. She explained the fire marshal’s office has not yet responded.

Jim Hajjar, Mohawk Lane, expressed his satisfaction with the request for a proposal from the library to remedy the amphitheater. He thanked the board and Clement for looking into the ARPA funds again.

Jones explained when a resident requests to be on the agenda, they will be expected to write a blurb that can be added to the packet which will allow the public to be informed about that agenda item prior to the meeting.

Kim Leo, Lebreux Street, asked about the demolition of the Castles. Jones responded it is outside the purview of the board. Artimovich explained New England Dragway sold that part of their property.

At 7:20pm, Morgan motioned, seconded by Artimovich, to go into non-public for personnel and legal. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

At 8:02pm, Artimovich motioned, seconded by Morgan to seal the minutes and go into public session. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

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At 8:02pm, Artimovich motioned, seconded by Morgan to adjourn. Artimovich – aye; Kelly – aye; Morgan – aye; Kleinman – aye; Jones – aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamera Peek

WEEKLY TREASURER'S REPORT			
DATE:		3/28/2023	
General Fund:		TD BANK	
Previous Balance:		5,597,064.68	
Deposits:		29,026.49	
Payroll:		34,113.12	DDP: \$31,926.68
			CHK: \$2,186.44
FICA:		7104.57	
A/P:		32,658.75	Reg A/P Cks \$32,658.75 NHRs \$
			Swasey \$ CO-OP: \$
Transfer to Impact Fees		3,618.00	
Admin CC Pd			
Trans to Rec CC			
Account Balance:		5,548,596.73	
Interest Earned YTD:		33,926.41	
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Joyce A. Gallant, Treasurer			