

Town of Brentwood
Budget Committee Meeting at Brentwood Town Office
Meeting Minutes of December 16, 2019

Present: Keith Levitsky (Chair), Liz Faria, Melissa Hanlon, Melissa Litchfield, Kris Magnusson, Bob Mantegari, Michelle Siudut

Visitors: Jim Clark, Scott Dennehy, Allison Higgins, Joyce Keegal, Heather Lindsay, Thad Riley, Edie Shipley, Elza Silva, Lisa Swasey, Janice Wiers, Ron Wofchuk, Kim Woods, Ron Kew (Swasey principal), Mollie O'keefe (SAU Finance), Chris Andriski (SAU representative)

Keith called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Motion by Bob, seconded by Melissa H to discuss the minutes of the December 9 meeting. Melissa L noted a correction on her statement that there is no cap on the number of credits; there *is* a cap on hours and the amount they can spend, each year, per employee; this is contractual.

Motion by Bob, seconded by Kris to approve minutes, as amended; passed 6-0-1

Updates from Selectmen

Bob said there is an RFP out for waste management.

Selectmen are expecting Police budget at tomorrow's Selectboard meeting.

Budgets

Swasey. Motion by Bob, seconded by Melissa L to re-open discussion for the Swasey budget.

A printout of committee member questions and answer sheet was distributed.

Melissa said an audit report was provided to Keith, who will email (too large to print out). It was asked if there were any irregularities. Melissa said the only comment was regarding food service.

Liz F said she spoke to Liz McConnell asking where/when will the town receive the \$478K that is supposed to be coming back to us as a result of a budget compromise. McConnell said the school should get \$37,734 this year and \$374,500 next year. Karen received \$33,055 in October for the town as unanticipated revenue; the Selectmen voted for those monies to be returned to the general fund.

A printout by the SAU16 Superintendent showed town by town amounts that should be received. There are conflicting reports from the state as to how much money is coming back to the towns and schools; there is no clear understanding of how/when Brentwood will receive any further funds.

Bob expressed displeasure over inaccuracy in numbers, ie the overall increase is not 2.78% as presented by the SAU administration, but is actually 3.47%, when including warrant articles. Bob stipulated the need for accurate and consistent presentation of numbers.

Motion by Bob, seconded by Kris to reduce budget by \$15K to \$5,940,301.05; this reduction was suggested as line 11-1100-50111 Retirement not being necessary; reduction passed 4-2-1

Additional questions/answers were reviewed.

Kris expressed concern over the Coop costs in the Swasey budget which are out of our control. Specifically the 30% increase for the Office of the Superintendent. A position was added last year - the Assistant Director of Special Education for the entire district. This position was initially paid for by a grant, but now is part of the budget, which accounts for the large increase.

Remaining questions were reviewed. Kris suggested Swasey coordinate with the town to see if any services could be reduced/combined.

Motion by Bob, seconded by Melissa H to approve \$5,940,301.05; which is a 3.41% increase; passed 6-1-0.

Kris revisited her desire to have the BudCom write a letter to SAU and Coop Boards about continual rising costs. Motion by Bob, seconded by Michelle to have Kris present a draft letter to the Committee; passed 5-2-0

Conservation Commission. Motion by Bob, seconded by Kris to discuss. Edie Shipley presented the budget, which is less than last year. There is a reduction in the "annual" line which is a Conservation Fund they like to keep at \$75K. The \$150K warrant article which passed last year will come back to the town because that easement did not pass. Motion by Bob, seconded by Liz to approve \$19,674, a decrease of \$740 and 3.6%; passed 6-0-0 with Kris recusing.

Fire Department. Motion by Bob, seconded by Kris to discuss.

- Looking for staff increase and increase in hours. Most of the increases are salaries/wages and related costs (taxes, retirement, health insurance). When Chief Bird was promoted the Department "lost" half a position. The increase is primarily for a new hire and all that goes with. Start is around \$48K (total comp \$56K). The Department currently has one live-in (who is obligated to be on call 2 nights per week and does maintenance around the station in exchange for rent; he is also available on other nights for which he would be paid if called out) and considering another. Raises are approximately \$1/hr. Melissa H asked the Chief if this staffing request was adequate or

would there be additional need in the future. Hard to say, but with the increased population it's likely there will be more need. But hopefully per diems can be reduced as the staff becomes more complete. Current staffing includes 2 admin (Chief and secretary); 2 fulltime (hourly); 27 others.

- Calls are about the same as last year; hard to project going forward, but we do have new development at 3 Ponds.
- There was discussion about county home calls (which are the majority of calls) and if we can request reimbursement from the county. We do bill for those, but Medicare determines what we pay and it's unclear if costs are actually covered.
- Kris asked Chief if he has considered a county or regional force - chief said that usually is not more efficient.
- The Department will also be putting forth a warrant article for command vehicle, unsure of the cost. Impact fees are paying bond, hoping some will be left for command vehicle. This will be the Chief's vehicle, commuting from Hampton.

Motion by Bob, seconded by Keith to approve \$442,737, a 8.2% decrease (16.6% increase if health insurance amount is included); passed 6-1-0

Kris asked the selectmen to reach out to the county to discuss some sort of compensation for *all* the property and services the town provides to the county, which are heavily born by Brentwood residents.

Library. Motion by Bob, seconded by Liz to discuss. They had 5 computers and one-year of IT service donated; now they need to pay for the IT, which is the reason for the large increase in computer line. In addition, Comcast was providing free service to library and they won't be any longer. There is also \$8K increase in salary and benefits; there are 2 full-time salaried employees, 4 part-time and 2 pages. Discussion about hours, should they be decreased? Librarian said they are consistently busy. Motion by Bob, seconded by Melissa L to approve \$245,826.46, a 5.1% decrease (8.5% increase if health insurance amount is included); passed 5-1-1

Motion by Kris, seconded by Michelle to adjourn; meeting adjourned 9:12 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

December 23, 2019 at 7 pm - Municipal Budget Committee Meeting

January 13, 2020 at 7 pm - Municipal Budget Committee Meeting

January 20, 2020 at 7 pm - Municipal Budget Committee Meeting

January 27, 2020 at 7 pm - Municipal Budget Committee Meeting

February 10, 2020 at 6:30 pm - Municipal Budget Committee Meeting

February 10, 2020 at 7 pm - Municipal Budget Committee Public Hearing

February 11, 2020 - Snow date for Municipal Budget Committee Public Hearing

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Siudut, Secretary