

Town of Brentwood
Budget Committee Meeting at Brentwood Town Office
Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2022

Present: Jack Mitchell, Michelle Siudut, Lois DeYoung, Letty Bedard (Swasey rep), Andy Artimovich (selectboard rep), Anthony Phillips, Alina Arida (by phone)
Guests: Chief John Ventura, Sgt Justin Doty

Jack called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Motion by Lois, seconded by Anthony to allow Alina to attend remotely; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Michelle- aye, Jack- aye; approved 6-0-0.

Motion by Letty, seconded by Lois to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2022 meeting as amended; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Michelle- aye, Alina- aye, Jack- aye; approved 7-0-0.

BOS Report

Andy said the Government Buildings budget has not been voted on because the custodial contract came in much higher than expected.

Swasey Report

The public hearing of the SAU Cooperative board will be January 10, 2023. At this meeting, the proposed Co-op budget will be decided.

Budgets

Police. Chief Ventura and Sgt Justin Doty were present. Sgt Doty has been a police officer since 2014, he came from the Lee PD and is currently patrol/admin in Brentwood.

Chief thanked Alina for her assistance in preparing this budget.

Staff currently consists of 8 full-time officers and 3 part-time officers. Chief would eventually like 12 full-time, to provide 2-person coverage 24 hours a day. Currently we have only one officer on duty from 10pm - 6am. Arrests have gone up 40% over last 5 years.

The fuel line is up just over \$14K. There has been an increase in miles driven since Chief came on, as he has a more proactive approach to having officers on the road and the department is also now fully staffed. Chief used a formula to come up with the fuel line based on an estimate used at \$3.61/gal. They now go to state DOT sheds rather than the highway shed for fuel.

Repair line is up about \$6K, maintenance schedule has been streamlined and we are now using only one repair facility. Chief will be looking at getting service done at Highway shed if possible. Overtime line is down; Chief felt that line was too high, especially now that we are fully staffed.

Investigator line reduced because officers do the investigating; Court fees reduced because officers get paid when they go to court.

Salaries. The total increase is almost \$43K (about 9.48%), this includes the 5% COLA and 2% merit. There are some departments offering very large sign-on bonuses. Chief is responding to that by adjusting the salary system to add \$2 for a 3yr employee, \$2 for a 5yr employee; education increases for \$1.50 for bachelor's degree, \$.75 for associate's degree; there is \$1/hr increase for approved special assignment permanent duty (canine, evidence tech). To replace/retrain officers is much higher than the cost of salary increases. The salaries for police range \$25.75/hour.

Question as to the cost for a canine. Chief reported Officer Kelly raised more money than needed, so the canine line is zeroed out for 2023 and will be funded by donations.

Motion by Andy, seconded by Lois to approve \$1,106,672, which is an increase of \$92,234 or 9.09%; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Michelle- aye, Alina- aye, Jack- aye; approved 7-0-0.

Animal Control. This budget is being reduced to a minimum, as officers are handling this task at this time. Motion by Lois, seconded by Andy to approve \$9, which is a decrease of \$5,991 or 99.85%; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Alina- aye, Michelle- aye, Jack- aye; approved 7-0-0.

General Government. Increases are in the town newsletter line (which had been approved by warrant article last year, rather than in the budget) and the long range planning line, which is for the Economic Development Committee. Question as to what the Economic Development Committee has accomplished: Andy said they have completed a business list, put out a couple of surveys, are creating quarterly breakfasts for business owners with a future plan to create a chamber of commerce so it funds itself.

Question as to what the Town events line covers - this is for holiday parties, employee perks, teambuilding.

Motion by Lois, seconded by Andy, to approve \$57,552, which is a \$24,136 or 72.23% increase. Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Alina- aye, Michelle- aye, Jack- aye; approved 7-0-0.

Michelle requested an explanation of the Miscellaneous Contracts line.

Letty suggested the Vehicle Repair line be moved to Code Enforcement budget, as that is the only vehicle accounted for in this budget.

Discussion about reviewing account lines within budgets to present a more accurate accounting, and making recommendations for changes for next year.

Health Officer. Motion by Lois, seconded by Andy to approve \$1; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Alina- aye, Michelle- aye, Jack- aye; approved 7-0-0.

Street Lighting. Motion by Lois, seconded by Andy to approve \$1; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Alina- aye, Michelle- aye, Jack- aye; approved 7-0-0.

Insurance/Liability, unemployment and work comp. Increase of \$5,416 or 4.05% to \$139,131. Currently there is no one on Workers Comp. Motion by Andy, seconded by Lois to approve \$139,131; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Alina- aye, Michelle- aye, Jack- aye; approved 7-0-0.

Insurance/Benefits. Health insurance went up dramatically, as the newly hired firefighters were moved into this budget; there were also selection changes.

Question about FICA/Medicare line being in this budget, why? Andy will get that answer.

Question as to how many employees receive health insurance: 25.

Motion by Letty, seconded by Michelle to table; motion withdrawn.

Motion by Lois, seconded by Andy to approve \$436,654, which is a \$104,523 pr 31.47% increase; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- aye, Alina- aye, Michelle- aye, Jack- aye; approved 7-0-0.

New/Other Business

Jack had distributed questions to consider for plans to help decrease the tax burden in the future. Departments seem to have brought salaries to competitive wages. Now that that's been done, how can we encourage responsible budgeting of departments going forward.

Anthony asked for revenue, increased assessed value. Jack has forwarded questions to our assessor and hopes to have answers for our next meeting.

Anthony said he feels this Committee has not done our job, as every budget just gets approved.

Michelle said we see salary increases, but a true compensation package would also include benefits and retirement. These should be considered when discussing employee compensation and retainment. She requested total compensation report from Karen but did not receive it. She asked if when comparisons have been done to other towns, are they comparing salary only or comparable benefit packages also.

Discussion about re-opening the Library budget. Motion by Lois, seconded by Michelle to re-open the library budget for discussion at a future meeting; Letty- aye, Anthony- aye, Lois- aye, Andy- nay, Alina- nay, Michelle- aye, Jack- nay; approved 4-3-0. Meeting date for this discussion will be Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 6 pm. The library will be invited.

Jack revisited the Eldery Exemption and suggestions. He will write a letter with suggested increases. This will not come from the Committee, but his as an individual. He invited others to sign on to the letter.

Motion by Lois to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Future Meetings/Dates of Importance

(Schedule of budgets to discuss is tentative and subject to change)

December 19 at 6 pm - Swasey School, Government Buildings, Mosquito

January 5 at 6 pm - re-open Library budget

January 10 - SAU Cooperative budget public hearing - proposed budget amount presented

January 30 at 6 pm - Warrant Articles

(February 7 - petition warrant article submissions due by 4 pm)

February 9 or 13 (snow) at 6 pm - Public Hearing

March 10 - School District (Swasey) meeting

March 14 - Town Elections

March 18 - Town Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Siudut