

Town of Brentwood
Budget Committee Meeting at Brentwood Town Office
Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2022

Present: Jack Mitchell, Michelle Siudut, Alina Arida, Lois DeYoung, Letty Bedard (Swasey rep), Andy Artimovich (selectboard rep), Anthony Phillips

Guests: Fire Chief Bird, Janice Wiers, Liz McConnell, Steve Dawson, Russ Kelly

Jack called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Motion by Alina, seconded by Letty to approve the minutes of the November 28, 2022 meeting as amended; 5-0-0

BOS Report

No updates.

Swasey Report

Letty reported the Swasey School Board approved 2024 budget of \$6,460,079.53; this is a 6.32% and \$383,965.67 increase.

Budgets

Fire. Chief Bird presented; the budget is 5.22% increase which includes COLA and merit raises for Chief and his secretary. Secretary is a certified EMT, she also helps with various projects, grants, etc. She is full-time and also goes on calls as a certified EMT. Andy stated the Selectmen approved use of \$100,000 of ARPA funds to offset the salary line of this budget.

Chief said the Fire Department is fully staffed at this time, with a total of 35, which includes 8 per diems. Most staff are cross-trained for fire and EMS.

Question if new hires make any sort of commitment in return for the town paying for training; Chief said not at this time but we currently only pay for EMT training. Other training may be paid for an employee who has been on staff for more than one year.

The overtime line is a large increase: chief said a lot of overtime was coming out of the salary line, so the overtime line is going up but the salary line is going down for more accurate accounting.

Question if pay matrix is being used, Chief said somewhat but feels this needs to be modified, not this year but in the future.

891 calls last year, 896 this year to date.

Motion by Andy, seconded by Alina \$1,011,455, approved 5-1-0.

Library. Director Janice Wiers presented. A 25-page full-color glossy package was distributed. Andy explained the BOS approved a higher number than what is being presented tonight, as the Library did not include NH Retirement reduction that is set to occur in July.

Staff has been rearranged, and hours have increased so as to not hire an additional person. The current staff is agreeable to an increase in hours.

This budget gives a 36% wage increase to the Library Director, 50% wage increase to the Assistant Director, and 8/28/29/30% wage increases for the rest of the library staff.

The Library has seen an increase in patrons over 2019 numbers, based on number of daily patrons and new patrons who get new cards. Collection numbers includes movies, books, and even digital because people need help getting digital services.

Question has to how many staff are on at one time: 2-5 staff depending on the day.

Motion by Andy, seconded by Alina for \$326,914.88; approved 4-3-0

New/Other Business

Letty distributed information and explanation of how tax burden is calculated for the cooperative school budget, in direct proportion to the number of students for each town. The calculation is always based on a 2-year spread of attendance.

Liz Mcconnell asked if SAU will be able to report usage of vouchers? Letty is unsure if that number can be identified.

Steve Dawson asked about SWEPT (state-wide education property tax) amount fluctuating. Letty said the SWEPT tax only ever goes down, as the valuation of the state continues to increase. The state claims SWEPT and adequacy together.

Jack distributed recommendations for elderly credits, which have not been adjusted since 2017. Per RSA you must be a NH resident for 3 years to qualify for elderly exemption; 5 year resident for disability exemption; 1 year resident for veterans exemption. Brentwood does not have a length of residency requirement to qualify. Exemptions currently apply to less than 2% of our population; if properties are in Trust there may still be opportunity to qualify. Discussion if this is the purview of this Committee; the Selectmen are considering recommending changes.

Motion by Lois to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.

Future Meetings/Dates of Importance

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

December 12 at 6 pm - Police, Animal Control, Insurance, General Government, Benefits,
Government Buildings, Health, Street Lighting

December 19 at 6 pm - Swasey School

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

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