

Town of Brentwood Municipal Budget Committee
Minutes of October 23, 2023 regular meeting, held at Brentwood Town Office

Members: Jack Mitchell (chair), Michelle Siudut (secretary), Alina Arida, Gabbie Kelly, Letty Bedard (Swasey rep)

Attending remote: Jon Morgan

Excused absence: Anthony Phillips (work)

Guests: Karen Clement, Police Chief Venture, Liz Faria, Daphne Woss, Ken Christiansen

Jack called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited. Motion by Letty, seconded by Alina to allow Jon to attend remotely. Voting in favor were Gabbie, Alina, Letty, Michelle, Jack.

Meeting Minutes

Motion by Letty, seconded by Michelle to approve the October 9 2023 committee meeting minutes as amended; voting to approve were Alina, Letty, Jon, Michelle, Jack; Gabbie abstained.

Selectmen's Report - Jon Morgan

Jack asked about the possibility of departments applying for grants. Jon said he and Karen Clement will be discussing the possibility of adding funds for grant writing assistance; it will be presented to Selectboard on Nov 21.

Swasey School Board Report - Letty Bedard

SAU admin budget was approved at \$7,278,081.55. This includes \$4M in grants, which is added here to be appropriated. The grant money is not for admin budget, it is for small grants, but they put it in this budget rather than separating it out to each school. This is a 2.97% increase over last year's budget.

The school board is considering a \$900,000 solar panel project. There is a 30% tax credit available from the federal government, which would be received 3-4 months after the project is paid for. Letty hopes to have a formal presentation for the BudCom next month.

CIP Update

Anthony is not present; Jack did not have any new information. It is unclear if the Planning Board has approved the CIP.

Police Department Update

Chief Ventura was present to give us a preview of what to expect in his budget.

- He filled the new position approved at town meeting last year with an in-house officer.

- He plans to encumber funds (approved by the selectboard) to hire another (10th) police officer, by year end. This new hire will already be certified.
- We discussed recent and upcoming promotions, which will be further discussed when the police budget is presented.
- Ultimate goal is 12 officers including chief. He aims to have a supervisor and an officer on every night.
- Question if there are shift differentials; yes \$1 for 2nd shift \$1.25 for 3rd shift. However, they are considering doing away with that and incorporating those differentials into regular salaries to make accounting easier. There is also a different detail rate.
- Felonies First will go away Jan 1, which means our prosecutor will likely be busier (60%town/40%transient traffic). Prosecution/arrest rate has increased 40% in 5 years. Chief wants to increase her salary by \$6K for next year. She also serves Windham, Epping, Fremont. Chief will lower overtime and uniforms line, to accommodate her raise.
- Purchasing fuel from the state has saved \$7K.
- Chief will ask for level funding outside of salary increases and canine. There will be \$160K increase for officer salaries, plus merit increases and pay adjustments. The \$40K that was cut from last year's budget will also be added back in.
- He hopes to ask for municipal building funding in 2025, but will not ask for another new officer in 2025 unless he receives a grant. He would then likely request another officer in 2026. There is a municipal building committee meeting on Oct 31st at 1:30 pm at town office. Chief likes the idea of building new PD and town office on BRC land. He sees advantages of round-about. Things still to think about: crosswalk, light, blinking light. Jon Morgan talked about the Bridging Communities grant that has been applied for.

Budgets to Review

Emergency Management. The budget request is level funded at \$14,875. Letty asked about creating a revolving fund for the Seabrook station line; Karen said they are working on that. Motion by Alina, seconded by Gabbie to approve \$14,875. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Legal. The budget request is level funded at \$37,127. Although there is \$13K unspent for this year, Karen expects 2 cases to go to trial in 2024. Motion by Letty, seconded by Gabbie. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Waste Collection. The budget request is \$490,323 (an overall increase of \$21,871 or 4.67%). This is a combination of Recycling \$70,462 (increase of \$2,737 or 4.04%), Rubbish Collection \$261,372 (increase of \$8,621 or 3.41%) and Landfill/Disposal Fees \$158,490 (increase of \$10,513 or 7.35%). These are all contractual. Landfill fees budget is based on 8-month average;

also includes rental fees; tonnage rate will be adjusted in July. Collection rate will not change, however if tonnage decreased we could potentially see a cost reduction.

Our current contract expires Dec 2024. This budget is almost 10% of our town operating budget. Discussion ensued about various ways to reduce this cost: requiring purchase of bags; encouraging/offering composting options; encouraging residents to be more mindful of how they manage trash/waste; a community Free Give Away Day (combined day for folks to leave items at their driveway); a visual of what's in a trash bag, that could go elsewhere, and what the cost savings could be. Question as to what the encumbered funds from last year were used for: Karen said to clean up a site in town.

Liz Faria said the bag idea failed hugely in the past. Liz Faria asked Karen how much money we saved by closing one dumpster over the summer; Karen did not know offhand.

Motion by Letty, seconded by Gabbie to approve \$490,323. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Executive Office. The budget request is level funded at \$25,005. Motion by Michelle, seconded by Gabbie to approve \$25,005. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Assessing. The budget request is \$47,901, which is an increase of \$120 or .25%. Motion by Alina, seconded by Letty to approve \$47,901. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Welfare. The budget request is level funded at \$7,407. Our welfare director is Sue Benoit. A lot of the applications that are submitted get covered through the Regional Associations funding. Motion by Letty, seconded by Gabbie to approve \$7,407. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Planning Board. The budget request is \$116,742, which is an increase of \$7,349 or 6.72%. The majority of the increase is for Glen Greenwood's compensation; he is getting a raise and is adding another day in the office.

Liz F asked if over time for staff is paid or comp time. Karen said if a staff person works over 40 hours, they get 1.5 hours comp time for every hour.

Question as to what the encumbered funds from last year were used for: Karen said PlanNh. Motion by Letty, seconded by Alina to approve \$116,742. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Zoning. This budget request is level funded at \$1,402. Ken Christiansen was present. Letty asked about their work, Ken said they sometimes meet monthly, sometimes not for 6 months. Motion by Letty, seconded by Alina to approve \$1,401. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Budget. This budget request is level funded at \$500. Michelle suggested the secretary line be reduced, but that did not proceed. Motion by Letty, seconded by Gabbie to approve \$500. Voting in favor were Alina, Letty, Gabbie, Jon, Michelle, Jack.

Old/Other Business

Bylaw changes. We have not yet received the opinion of Counsel.
Gabbie/Alina are scheduled to meet with Karen on Friday.

New/Other Business

Discussion on MS documents. Question as to the Interfund transfers on MS-434. Question as to where the impact fees are shown; Karen said they are not in any of the MS reports, they are kept in a separate account. Question as to an in/out transaction with Rec; Karen said it was removed by mistake, so replaced.

Discussion on how to better explain/present budgets. Karen is researching what other towns are doing to get people out and to better inform voters. Michelle stated information on all warrant articles are included in the Brentwood Newsletter. There was discussion about the low quality of the visual of the budget committee hearing and how that may be rectified.

Motion by Michelle to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Upcoming Meetings. The following schedule has been revised since our last meeting.

Oct 30 2023 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Meeting. Potential budgets to discuss: Conservation, Cemetery, Information Systems, Regional Associations

Nov 13 2023 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Meeting. Potential budgets to discuss: Debt Service, Recreation, JLMC

Nov 20 2023 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Meeting. Potential budgets to discuss: Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Town Meeting, Election & Registration, Town Admin, Finance

Nov 27 2023 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Meeting. Potential budgets to discuss: Highway, General Government, Government Buildings

Dec 4 2023 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Meeting. Potential budgets to discuss: Fire, Library

Dec 11 2023 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Meeting. Potential budgets to discuss: Police, Animal Control, Insurance

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Siudut, Secretary