

**Town of Brentwood**  
**Budget Committee Meeting at Brentwood Town Office**  
Meeting Minutes of March 27, 2023

*Members:* Jack Mitchell (chair), Michelle Siudut (secretary), Anthony Phillips, Alina Arida, Gabbie Kelly, Letty Bedard (Swasey rep), Jen Jones (selectmen rep)

*Guests:* Liz Faria

Jack called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited. Jack welcomed Gabby to her first meeting.

Jack confirmed that Mondays are still a good meeting night, and at 6 pm.

#### Committee Assignments

Michelle nominated Jack to be chair, seconded by Alina; approved unanimously.

Jack nominated Michelle to be secretary, seconded by Alina; approved unanimously.

#### Objectives

Jack asked each member what they hope to accomplish on the board. Gabbie said listening and working with departments, reviewing documentation, setting up systems. Anthony hopes to better utilize the capital improvement plan. Jen would like better explanation to the voters of what the increases are and why; also maintaining capital reserve funds. Alina wants to know that expenses are accurately listed in the appropriate lines. Letty also wants accurate categorization of expenses. Michelle would like the focus on relieving the tax burden for all residents rather than just exemptions for particular groups; would like the board to consider setting an increase cap. Jack would like improvement of and better utilization of CIP, discussions with Depts on how to keep costs to a minimum; he does not want large budget increases to be the norm. Jack also expressed concern about the large number of houses projected by Bruce Stevens.

The committee will consider setting a rate of increase for the overall budget; will do this in late summer, before budget discussions start.

#### Selectmen's Report

Jen was elected chair, Andy was elected vice chair. The Board will select committee assignments at tomorrow night's meeting.

The Board is continuing conversations with NE Dragway.

The Board is discussing what to do regarding fees for the new county building as fees have historically been waived for the county. There was much discussion about this, as there is a lot

of land already utilized by the county for which we get no revenue, we should explore revenue sources from this project in some manner.

Anthony asked how the budget reduction voted at Town Meeting will be addressed. Jen said the Board hasn't made a final decision but stated it would not be in salary or benefit lines. It was suggested that remaining ARPA funds be utilized to offset the reduction. Jones said once the changes are decided the Committee will receive a corrected budget.

#### Swasey School Board Report

Letty said the Board has not met since the election, they will meet next week. The Swasey budget and 3 warrant articles all passed.

Letty said the school has had their own CIP, but hopes to be included in the town plan going forward.

#### Meeting Minutes

Motion by Anthony, seconded by Alina to approve the committee meeting minutes from February 9, 2023; approved 5-0-2

Motion by Letty, seconded by Alina to approve the public hearing minutes from February 9, 2023; approved as amended 5-0-2

#### New Business

Gabbie asked if there has been an analysis of the next 5 years of new building tax revenue impact in comparison to expenses. The response was that there had been discussion but no real answers. Jack stated there is a lot the Committee doesn't know about revenue, so we do our best with expense data.

Jack stated two bonds should be paid off, which should have a positive impact. However, state adequacy is going down which could have a negative impact.

Municipal Facility. This is still in very early stages; considering building on the hill behind the fire station to include Police department and Town Offices; selling the current Town Office building. Chief Ventura wants to send survey and have public meetings to discuss further.

Michelle distributed contact sheet for updating.

Jack stated to Jen that the audio for selectmen's meeting is very low. Jen said Karen is working with their AV people to rectify, as residents have made the same complaint.

#### Public Comments

Liz Faria (South Road) inquired about the capital improvement plan. Jack explained that big ticket items in our current CIP are anything over \$11,000. The CIP is intended to be a 6-year plan, but should be reviewed every year. The Planning Board submits questionnaire to department heads each year, which is the basis for developing the CIP.

Liz asked if the \$221K ARPA funds are in budget. They are.

Liz asked if there will be a deep dive into employee health care? Alina stated there are only 2 companies who offer municipal plans, and what we have is very good.

Liz suggested the Committee review all warrant articles at once, so we see a big picture.

Liz inquired about cola, merit and additional wage adjustments; and the additional increases for fire and police.

Liz said salary comparisons were unfair because none of those towns were SAU16.

Liz asked what we pay to counties? Jen said that is a question for Karen.

Motion by Alina to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

April 6, 2023 at 7 pm: BudCom to attend planning board meeting to discuss CIP

May 8, 2023 at 6 pm: Budget Committee Meeting

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Siudut, Secretary