

Shannon L. Hume
President
At Large

Charles B. Ryan
At Large

Julia C. Flaherty
District 1

Steven A. Sciascia
District 2



David M. Ringius, Jr.
Vice President
At Large

Donna L. Connors
District 3

Stephen C. O'Brien
District 4

Meredith Boericke
District 5

Lawrence C. Mackin, Jr.
District 6

OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL – AGENDA –

Tuesday, JANUARY 19, 2021 • Horace T. Cahill Auditorium, Town Hall • Starting Time: 7:30PM

Governor Charles Baker has declared a state of emergency in Massachusetts to support the state's response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus). According to the Town of Braintree's "Temporary Emergency Policy for Remote Participation Under the Open Meeting Law Pursuant to Massachusetts Executive Order of March 12, 2020," the Town Council will meet fully remotely for the health and safety of Councilors and the public during the Massachusetts State of Emergency. The Town Council will be using Zoom software to run meetings online for the immediate future. The Town continues to monitor the situation through the Health Department and specific questions should be directed to the Public Health Nurse at 781-794-8094 or Marybeth McGrath, Director of Health, at 781-794-8095.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86958136571>

Or Telephone: US: +1 312 626 6799

Webinar ID: 869 5813 6571

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86958136571>

COUNCIL MEETING COMMUNICATIONS

- Agenda/Documents link to website: <https://braintreema.gov/AgendaCenter>
- Email: towncouncil@braintreema.gov
- Meeting Notice Posting link: <https://ma-braintree.civicplus.com/calendar.aspx?CID=43&showPastEvents=false>
- Facebook: [Braintree Town Council](#)
- "How Do I" sign up to receive meeting/town information: <https://braintreema.gov/786/Sign-up-for>
- To be added to the Town Council Agenda Distribution list please send an email request: scimino@braintreema.gov
- Zoom Webinar Questions: If you want to ask a question but cannot access webinar - call direct: 339-987-2726

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 001 21 Council President: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Citizen of the Year Award

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- October 20, 2020

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR AND TOWN BOARDS

- 012 20 Council President: COVID-19 Update

OLD BUSINESS

- 20 071 Town Clerk: Polling Locations or take up any action relative thereto (Table to February 2021)

NEW BUSINESS

- None

Refer to the Committee of Ways & Means

- 21 002 Mayor: Acceptance of Donations or take up any action relative thereto.

Topics the Chair does not reasonably anticipate will be discussed

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Next Council Meeting scheduled on: [Tuesday, February 2, 2021 @7:30pm](#)

ADJOURNMENT



Shannon L. Hume
President
At Large

Charles B. Ryan
At Large

Julia Camille Flaherty
District 1

Steven A. Sciascia
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OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

(zoom webinar)

MINUTES

A meeting of the Town Council was held via Zoom Webinar, on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 beginning at 7:30p.m.

Council President Hume was in the chair.

Clerk of the Council, Susan M. Cimino conducted the roll call.

Present: Shannon Hume, President
David M. Ringius, Jr., Vice-President
Charles Ryan
Julia Camille Flaherty
Steven A. Sciascia
Donna L. Connors
Stephen C. O'Brien
Meredith L. Boericke
Lawrence C. Mackin, Jr.

Others: Ed Spellman, Director of Finance
Christine Stickney, Director Planning & Community Development
Marybeth McGrath, Director Municipal Licenses & Inspections
James Arsenault, DPW Director
John Thompson, Assistant DPW Director
James M. Casey, Town Clerk
Steven Leary, Assistant to the Mayor
Chris Sodoti, Property Owner

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RESOLUTIONS

- 044 20 Councilor O'Brien: Resolution Regarding Elder Affairs & Veteran Services Committee

Council President Hume stated we will be taking a few items out of order this evening. First is the Resolution which has been proposed referring to the incorrect Town Council Rule #'s. I spoke with Councilor O'Brien and this will not be taken up this evening. Councilor Flaherty does have a comment she would like to make.

Councilor Flaherty stated I would like the residents of Braintree to know that I am sorry about the comments I made on a Facebook post. Although it was not intended to be malicious, it was certainly thoughtless. I have been called to account for this on Facebook and in person. It is clear to me that there are times when we are called upon to do better, to be better and this is mine. I have apologized for this comment on Facebook and to Veterans in person. Now I offer my apology to the Town Council and to the residents of Braintree. The work of the Committee on Elder Affairs & Veteran Services is important to me and I am committed to working hard on behalf of the residents that this committee is meant to serve. I take my position as chair of this committee very seriously. There has never been a more important time for us to advocate for our elders and our veterans.

To that end I have been asked to give a little update on the committee's progress so far. First the committee is subject to all open meeting laws that the Town Council is subject to. We can't get together over coffee and just talk about our ideas. It has to be a publically posted meeting with a formal agenda, in the presence of the clerk of the council with minutes taken and so on. There are meant to be two resources in Town Hall for the chairperson to use as guidance for what items the committee should pursue. One is the Director of Elder Affairs and the other is the Veteran's Services Officer. Most of the time I have been in office there has been no Veteran's Services Officer. I have reached out to Sharmila Biswas, Director of Elder Affairs. What Sharmila Biswas has stated seniors really need is senior housing. I put a call into Marta Googins who let me know the current wait time for senior housing in Braintree is about 2 years. To me that has demonstrated need. Due to the pandemic everything seems to shut down in March and after the summer things calmed down and I called a meeting. That meeting was to give residents an opportunity to share ways they think this committee could be a greater service to the community. One idea was 90 Pond Street as housing for seniors with veteran preference. I did meet with the Mayor on this issue. To be very clear this committee could not unilaterally decide where senior housing with veteran preference or any housing could go in Braintree. What we can do is give a platform for residents to share, discuss and share what the right path for Braintree on this would be. There has been no Veteran Agent in Braintree so I have gone to experts in surrounding Towns and here are some items I intend to pursue:

A Veterans Donation Fund which is a voluntary fund residents can contribute to and used to support our Veterans. Some towns host Veteran Fairs that they can gather and learn about services. We can lay the ground work so when it is safe to host something like this we can pull the pieces together quickly. Braintree is close to announcing a Veteran's Services officer. I look forward to meeting that individual. I am fully open to hearing additional ideas from residents. We can do it if we work together.

Councilor O'Brien stated he will withdraw this Resolution without prejudice.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Hume stated there is an update about a consultant coming on equity, diversity and inclusion. One has been chosen together with myself, Mayor Kokoros, Chief DuBois, and Superintendent Hackett. We are working on an agreement with KateWDiversity, Inc. a culturally proficiency coach has been selected. This is not a Town Council meeting open to the public. This is a training and consulting session for the Council, for Department Heads at the Mayor's request, and possibly School Committee as well.

President Hume congratulated the Braintree Public Schools for getting kids back to some type of in-person learning.

President Hume stated Petersen Pool documents and plans are on the Town website:

<https://braintreema.gov/454/Petersen-Pool>

Councilor Boericke announced Red Ribbon Week. This is the oldest drug awareness campaign.

Redribbon.org

James Casey, Town Clerk stated the November 3, 2020 Election is coming up. Each day until then we will be holding in-person voting at Town Hall. Each morning opening at 8:30am. Monday, Wednesday and Thursdays we are open until 4:30pm. Thursday we are open until 7pm. Friday, Saturday and Sunday we are open until 1:30pm. Call Town Clerk's office with any questions 781-794-8240.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- September 2, 2020 (TABLED to NOVEMBER 4, 2020 Town Council Meeting)

Motion made by Councilor Boericke to TABLE Minutes of September 2, 2020 to the next meeting

Motion: by Councilor Boericke TABLE Minutes of September 2, 2020 to the next meeting

Second: by Councilor O'Brien

Roll Call Vote: For (9 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O'Brien, Ringius, Ryan, Sciascia),
Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR AND TOWN BOARDS

- 012 20 Council President: COVID-19 Update

Marybeth McGrath, Director of the Department of Municipal Licenses & Inspections stated the Towns total number of cases is at 1,110. Halloween is coming up. I ask residents enjoy this in a safe manner. The recommendation is people still also utilize face coverings and gloves and carry hand sanitizer. Large gatherings are super-spreaders. It is being noted large gatherings (not to exceed 25 people indoors) are contributing to these rise in numbers throughout the state. We need to consider it is also flu season. We are currently in the yellow risk category. We are between 4-8 cases per day per 1,000 people.

There is a link to all things COVID on the Town website.

We also encourage the residents to take steps to help prevent exposure to any respiratory viruses, including seasonal influenza and Coronavirus by:

- Washing your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes and face.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning sprays or wipes.
- Stay at home when feeling sick.

For more information on COVID-19, visit the MDPH website at www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus and the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>

For questions, please feel free to contact the Town of Braintree Health Department:

Public Health Nurse at 781-794-8094 or Marybeth McGrath, Director of Health at 781-794-8095.

OLD BUSINESS

- **002 20 Council President: Town Council Rules or take up any action relative thereto**

President Hume referred to Councilor Ringius, Chairman of the Committee on Ordinance & Rules. Councilor Ringius, Chairman of the Committee on Ordinance & Rules stated he would like to table this item to the next Town Council meeting.

Motion by Councilor Ringius to **TABLE** to our next Town Council Meeting item 002 20 Council President: Town Council Rules or take up any action relative thereto

Motion: by Councilor Ringius to TABLE item 002 20 to our next Town Council Meeting

Second: by Councilor Ryan

Roll Call Vote: For (9 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O’Brien, Ringius, Ryan, Sciascia),
Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

Councilor Ringius left the meeting at 8pm.

- **20 068 Property Owner Petition: Request for Gas Installation to 86 Hancock Street or take up any action relative thereto**

President Hume stated property owner Chris Sidoti, President of Integrated Electrical Systems Inc. is in attendance. He recently closed on the property May 15th, 2020. The intention is to move their current offices and warehouse from 258 Willard Street in Quincy to 86 Hancock Street in Braintree.

President Hume referred to Councilor Ryan, Chairman of the Committee on the Department of Public Works.

Chairman Ryan stated the committee met this evening and voted unanimously favorable recommendation to the full Council. Property owner at 86 Hancock Street is requesting gas installation. He is relocating his electrical company from Quincy to Braintree. This street is under moratorium. We want to protect our streets. When a home owner or property owner wants to connect we try to help them. Curb to curb rehabilitation on the roadway is required. We are trying to protect our roadways but trying to bring new business to the Town of Braintree.

Chris Sidoti, stated I intend to put the streets back the way they were and live up to my side of the bargain.

Councilor Boericke asked why the paperwork from DPW did not recommend this project. Director Arsenault stated that is our typical answer because the Ordinances. If the street is under moratorium we never want to see fresh asphalt disturbed. Council has the right for a choice. We always put sufficient measures in place to address concerns.

Councilor Boericke asked how long this would take. Director Arsenault stated this is just a connection to the home and is a minor project and should only take a day. It is rather small work activity.

Councilor Boericke asked if there has been discussion/notification to abutters. I feel uneasy about any disruption to current businesses in the square and along Hancock Street. Director Arsenault stated when National Grid applies for a permit they submit a traffic plan and there will probably be police details for safety required. We meeting weekly with National Grid and do have purview over when they do the work.

Councilor O'Brien stated I welcome new businesses but this road was just done over in 2019. It was frustrating watching National Grid come in and dig up our streets year after year when they were just done.

Councilor Sciascia asked why there is the need to do this right now and not wait until 2023, 2024?

President Hume stated this property owner bought the property in May 2020 and would like to improve his property and put in gas heat. As Councilor Ryan put this moratorium into place and he stated we do make exceptions for residents and businesses to improve their property and improve the town. I do understand the concerns from Councilor O'Brien and this moratorium that was put into place so National Grid could not come in just anytime and dig up our roads. We wanted to get them to look at their projects ahead and set a schedule. It is our job to take care of our residents and businesses. Tonight we have a business that chose Braintree.

Councilor Flaherty stated this cost to repave the road will be the property owners. The cut in the road will not go down the entire road. We want to emphasize Braintree supports small businesses. I feel Mr. Sidoti will make a good faith effort to see our roadway is returned to the condition it deserves to be in.

Councilor Connors stated welcome to Braintree. This will be a first test in being a good neighbor.

Councilor Boericke asked if Mr. Sidoti could notify abutters.

President Hume asked Director Arsenaault to make sure National Grid does in fact notify abutters about this project.

Councilor Ryan stated we made the moratorium tougher for National Grid because we want them to pay attention to our capital program and road repaving plans. We are here to help homeowners and business owners in the Town of Braintree. I am trying to help the residents. That is who we are here to represent. The residents and business owners. This business owner wants to upgrade his facility this year. There is a time sensitive nature for this. He is only impacting right in front of his business and he will do curb to curb repairs. It is the right decision to support a business in tough times right now.

The following motion was read by Councilor Ryan for Order 20 068:

MOTION: To install a gas service line to the business at 86 Hancock Street with staff recommendations:

BELD: There are no underground electric utility conflicts or special requirements within the proposed scope of work.

DPW: Hancock Street is under the moratorium enacted by the Town in 2015 having been overlaid in 2019. For transverse trenches in a road resurfaced as Hancock Street was the moratorium is 5 years. Road openings may be made after 2024 without waiving the ordinance. Since the street is under the moratorium, I recommend that the petition not be granted. However, if the Council finds extenuating circumstances and there is no viable option to meet the business' needs without excavating the newly repaved street, I would recommend that the petition for this road opening only be granted if the following conditions can be met:

A temporary patch shall be placed immediately after the work. The street excavation should be saw-cut, backfilled and compacted in 8-inch lifts, paved to match existing asphalt depth (with a minimum depth of four inches) in two inch lifts to match the existing street grade.

After maintaining the temporary patch through one winter, a permanent patch shall be placed the following May. The permanent patch should be milled curb to curb as to provide at least five feet of overlap on both sides from the temporary patch, but for a length no less than fifteen feet, and machine laid with 2-inches of asphalt top course. Tack coat should be applied to milled surfaces and joints prior to paving. Finished joints should be treated with infrared or with a rubberized asphalt sealer, at the Highway Superintendent's discretion.

Similarly, the new concrete sidewalk may be patched temporarily with asphalt, but must be replaced in-kind the following May. Entire flags of concrete must be replaced if disturbed.

All thermoplastic pavement markings should be replaced in-kind following the permanent patching, and surety in the amount of \$5000 should be put in place to guarantee the satisfactory completion of the repairs. We also recommend that the following requirement be added to the permit, if it is to be granted:

“Neither National Grid nor any of its contractors is authorized to close any street or to close a direction of travel to facilitate their work without authorization from the Director of the Department of Public Works or the Highway Superintendent. The Chief of Police can also authorize a closure for a police or fire emergency. Construction zone traffic safety issues are to be addressed by using appropriate traffic control signs and devices and the use of police officers for traffic control to safely guide traffic through the work zone. If a closure is authorized by the DPW, it shall not be implemented until signs and police officers (where needed) are properly in place in conformity with the written plan prepared by the contractor’s engineer and approved by the DPW and Police Department.”

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to Approve Order 20 068

Second: by Councilor O’Brien

Roll Call Vote: For (6 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, Ringius, Ryan),
Against (2 - O’Brien, Sciascia), Absent (1 - Ringius), Abstain (0)

- **20 069 Mayor: Request for Appropriation – Smelt Brook Culvert & Fisheries Habitat Restoration or take up any action relative thereto (PUBLIC HEARING)**

Council President Hume asked is there a motion to Open the Public Hearing for Order 20 069?

Councilor Ringius made a Motion to OPEN the Public Hearing on Order 20 069

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to OPEN the Public Hearing on Order 20 069

Second: by Councilor O’Brien

Roll Call Vote: For (8 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O’Brien, Ryan, Sciascia),
Against (0), Absent (1 - Ringius), Abstain (0)

President Hume referred to Councilor Boericke, Chairwoman of the Committee of Ways & Means for a recommendation.

Chairwoman Boericke stated the committee met earlier this evening. The Smelt Brook runs through Weymouth Landing and after a century of development above the brook the towns of Weymouth and Braintree are collaborating on a rehabilitation of this natural resource. 60% funding is coming from Weymouth and 40% is from Braintree’s CPA funding. The CPA funds are collected by a 1% surcharge that all of us pay on our property taxes and a portion of which is matched by the State. There are specific conditions for use of these funds such as this. The committee voted unanimously a favorable recommendation to the Full Council.

Christine Stickney, Director of Planning & Community Development stated this is phase 1 and the second phase will come before the Council to add a park around the day-lighting.

Councilor Ryan stated this is great to have the smelt run up the brook. This will enhance the area and many people have been working actively on this for a long time. I have been working on this since I was a selectman.

Councilor O'Brien stated I am disappointed if Braintree is giving more funds out after being told the MBTA had given money to Braintree for this project but Braintree gave the money to Weymouth.

Christine Stickney, Director of Planning & Community Development stated in 2007 there were mitigation packages from the commuter rails who got stations. We split ours with Weymouth. Some of the funds were given to Weymouth for public parking. The day-lighting was to be a 13 foot cut. This plan was not going to work for the spawning. We petitioned DEP to relocate it to the area it will be today. The new location was 150 feet.

Councilor O'Brien stated there is documentation that has the Army Corp of Engineers working on this. Christine Stickney, Director of Planning & Community Development stated the Army Corp of Engineers has jurisdiction up to Pond Meadow Park. They put in a large pipe to eliminate the flooding that used to happen in the Landing. This is for habitat and the MBTA mitigation and overall Master Plan for the Landing.

Councilor O'Brien stated I will support this because the Landing can always use the help.

Councilor Sciascia stated this will be great for the residents, the businesses and the fish, I presume. Thank you Director Stickney. It is great to see these final pieces in the Landing take place.

Council President Hume asked if any member of the Council or General Public want to speak on Order 20 069?

Council President Hume asked if there is anyone else wishing to speak? Hearing none.

Council President Hume asked is there a motion to Close the Public Hearing for Order 20 069?

Councilor Ringius made a Motion to CLOSE the Public Hearing on Order 20 069

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to CLOSE the Public Hearing on Order 20 069

Second: by Councilor O'Brien

Roll Call Vote: For (8 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O'Brien, Ryan, Sciascia),
Against (0), Absent (1 - Ringius), Abstain (0)

The Motion for Order 20 069 was read by Councilor Ryan and seconded by Councilor O'Brien and Vote by Roll Call:

Motion:

That in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 44B of the General Laws and with the recommendation of the Community Preservation Committee, the appropriation of \$250,000.00 from the CPA Open Space Fund for the Smelt Brook Culvert & Fisheries Habitat Restoration Project (Phase I) in the Landing, located beneath Commercial Street running west to east (at #6 across to #5) at the corporate line with the Town of Weymouth, conditional on the funds expended under the direction of the Community Preservation Committee and the Director of Planning and Community Development.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to approve Order 20 069

Second: by Councilor O'Brien

Roll Call Vote: For (8 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O'Brien, Ryan, Sciascia),
Against (0), Absent (1 - Ringius), Abstain (0)

NEW BUSINESS

- None

President Hume asked is there a motion for the following to be referred to Committee(s):

Councilor Ringius read the following items for referral to committee(s):

Refer to the Education & Library Committee

- 045 20 Councilor O'Brien: An Analysis of the 2020-2021 Pandemic School Reopening or take up any action relative thereto

Motion made by Councilor Ryan to refer to the Library & Education Committee item 045 20

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to Refer to the Committee of Ways & Means Council Order 20 70

Second: by Councilor O'Brien

Roll Call Vote: For (8 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O'Brien, , Ryan, Sciascia),
Against (0), Absent (1 - Ringius), Abstain (0)

Refer to the Committee of Ways & Means

- 20 070 Mayor: Appointment – William J. Grove to Planning Board Member or take up any action relative thereto

Motion made by Councilor Ryan to refer to the Committee of Ways & Means Council Order 20 070

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to Refer to the Committee of Ways & Means Council Order 20 70

Second: by Councilor O'Brien

Roll Call Vote: For (8 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O'Brien, , Ryan, Sciascia),
Against (0), Absent (1 - Ringius), Abstain (0)

Topics the Chair does not reasonably anticipate will be discussed

It was proposed to cancel the November 4, 2020 Town Council meeting. This motion failed.

Motion made by Councilor Ryan to cancel the November 4, 2020 Town Council meeting

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to cancel the November 4, 2020 Town Council meeting

Second: by Councilor O'Brien

Roll Call Vote: For (3 –Hume, O'Brien, , Ryan,), Against (5 - Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Mackin, Sciascia), Absent (1 - Ringius), Abstain (0)

Councilor O'Brien requested as per 3-6(a) the Mayor come before the Town Council with the status and health of the Town.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Next Council Meeting scheduled on: **Wednesday, November 4, 2020 @7:30pm**

ADJOURNMENT

It was unanimously voted by roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan M. Cimino, Clerk of the Council

Meeting Documents

- Minutes of September 2, 2020
- 20 069 Mayor: Request for Appropriation – Smelt Brook Culvert & Fisheries Habitat Restoration or take up any action relative thereto (PUBLIC HEARING)
- 20 068 Property Owner Petition: Request for Gas Installation to 86 Hancock Street or take up any action relative thereto
- 002 20 Council President: Town Council Rules or take up any action relative thereto
- 044 20 Councilor O’Brien: Resolution Regarding Elder Affairs & Veteran Services Committee

On July 15, 2020 the Braintree Town Council approved the establishment of District Voting Centers whereby Districts 1 and 2 were relocated to Braintree High School, Districts 3 and 4 were relocated to East Middle School and, Districts 5 and 6 were relocated to South Middle School on a temporary basis; through December 31, 2020. This temporary relocation was available to municipalities through Chapter 115 of the Acts of 2020 § 11 to address public health concerns associated with the COVID pandemic. (Attachment #1)

During the hearing process several members of the council expressed concerns over voter acceptance of moving from “neighborhood” polling locations to “district voting centers”. (Attachment #2)

Soon after the council vote, social media posts were negative towards this change with comments concerning our ability of maintaining a healthy environment for both voters and election workers, lack of parking, and voter lines. During the seven-day State Primary Election in-person early voting period, August 22 to 28, a more positive tone towards the COVID election process was noted on social media from many of the 1,421 voters who cast their early ballots in-person for the September 1st Election. On Election Day, September 1st, the vast majority of posts were of a positive nature; election workers wearing masks and having a protective shield between themselves and the voter, sanitizing of voting booths and pens, lack of voter lines, smooth process and sufficient parking.

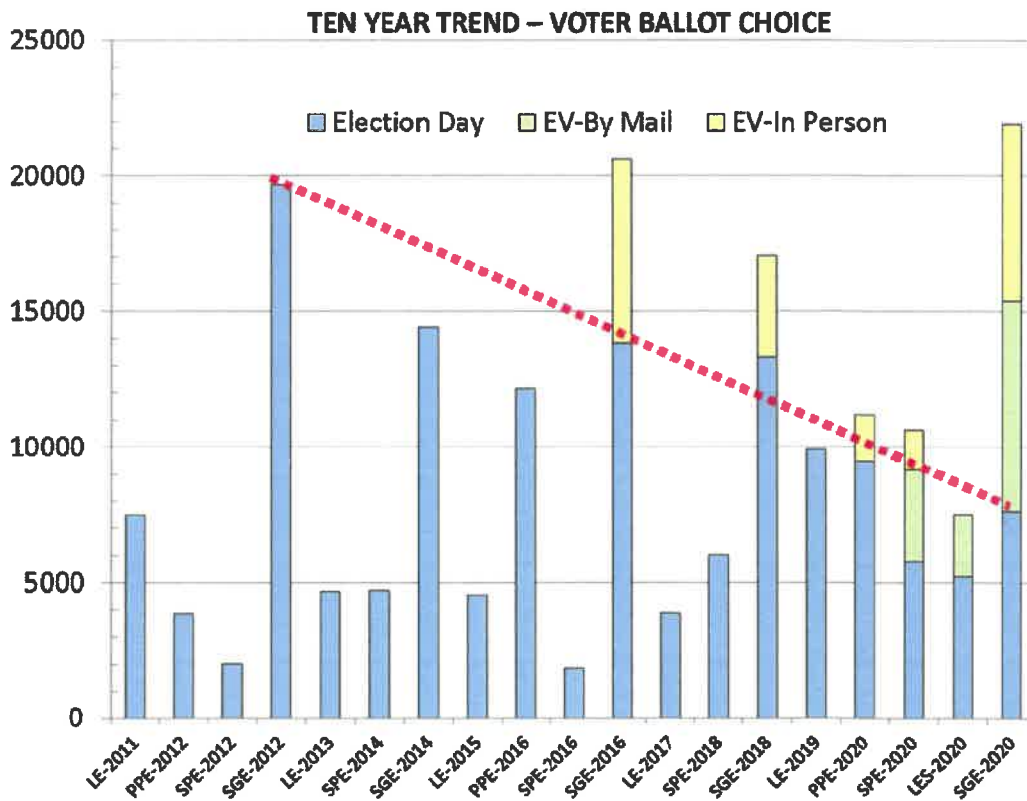
During the recent three elections, over 40,000 ballots were cast with more than half (21,414) cast early. As of the close of business on Tuesday, November 10th, “ZERO” COVID cases during the past three months were traced to election activities. A proud moment for all involved in the election process!

	Fall 2020 Election – Voter Turnout		
	State Primary Election September 1, 2020	Local Special Election September 26, 2020	State General Election November 3, 2020
<i>Registered Voters</i>	27,087	27,290	27,988
<i>Total Ballots Cast</i>	10,616	7,522	21,953
<i>Early Voted</i>	4,843	2,293	14,278
➤ <i>In Person</i>	1,421	n/a	6,520
<i>Election Day</i>	5,773	5,229	7,625

Beginning with the 2016 State General Election, Massachusetts voters were given the option to vote up to eleven days before Election Day. Nearly 7,000 Braintree voters took advantage of this new voter choice. The intended objective of its introduction was to increase voter turnout however, an increase in voter turnout did not materialize. It simply was a convenience for voters to avoid lines on Election Day.

Late July 2020, legislative changes in election laws to address COVID concerns were expanded to include a “vote by mail” option; giving voters a fifth choice to cast their ballots; absentee-by mail, absentee-in person, early vote-by mail, early vote-in person and on Election Day. The success of early voting, by mail and in-person, in 2020 will, most likely, be continued into the future for State Elections and, a local option for local elections.

As shown in the ten year trend chart below, Election Day voting has declined significantly with the introduction of more voter choices. With choices, come costs. With choices, less voters opting for Election Day voting.



Administratively, there are a number of benefits associated with district voting centers that the general public would not notice

- Staff support
 - Knowledge base of experienced election workers assisting new or less experienced workers in election laws and processes as well as on technical issues
- Delivery of absentee and early voted ballots
 - Efficient delivery of ballots received by mail on Election Day
 - 3 voting sites vs 12 voting sites
- Poll Books
 - Each polling location requires a separate secure wifi transmitter to communicate to the host center (Town Clerk's Office) on voter activity
 - More costly
 - ❖ District 2B and 3B are operated by private entities
 - ❖ Wifi access points in each polling location, other than the three voting centers, would require to be upgraded to support secure transmitter
- Election Day oversight
 - Opportunity of staffing each voting center with a precinct coordinator
 - ❖ Empowered to act on Town Clerk's behalf to resolve Election Day issues
- Election Day Coordination
 - Efficient and secure delivery of election day uncast ballots and equipment
 - Efficient and secure return of election day cast ballots and equipment
- Costs savings
 - Reduction of police details
- Less impact on schools
 - Elimination of polling locations at elementary schools

With Council Order 20 042 set to expire on December 31, 2020, polling locations will revert back to the polling location sites prior approval of Order 20 042.

District 1A – Braintree Town Hall

District 1B – Flaherty School

District 2A – Hollis School

District 2B – Hollis School*

District 3A – Ross School

District 3B – Braintree Yacht Club

District 4A – Elder Affairs Building**

District 4B – Morrison School

District 5A – Braintree Town Hall

District 5B – Liberty School

District 6A – South Middle School

District 6B – Highlands School

*Council Order #20 017 approved change to Hollis School for District 2B St. – Thomas More polling location in anticipation of the Local Special Election that was scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2020. A review of this change was agreed with Councilor Sciascia after the special election was held. (Attachment #3)

**Council Order 18 002 approved change to Elder Affairs Building for District 4A – East Middle School polling location due to East Middle School construction project. (Attachment #4)

With the recent success of the voting centers during the COVID pandemic and a continuing decline of “Election Day” voter turnout driven by multiple early voting options, I am requesting Council support for establishing permanent change to voting centers in lieu of individual voting centers.

PROPOSED MOTION

With the availability and suitability of East and South Middle Schools and Braintree High School and pursuant to M.G.L. C. 54, § 24, that the public convenience would be better served by relocating voting precincts as follows:

- **District 1A** – Town Hall, **District 1B** – Flaherty School, **District 2A** – Hollis School, be relocated to Braintree High School at 128 Town Street
- **District 3A** – Ross School, **District 4A** – Elder Affairs Building, **District 4B** – Morrison School be relocated to East Middle School at 305 River Street
- **District 5A** – Town Hall, **District 5B** – Liberty School, **District 6A** – South Middle School, **District 6B** – Highlands School be relocated to South Middle School

And it is further order, the existing polling place **District 2B** – Hollis School, currently located in a voting precinct not adjacent to Braintree High School at 128 Town Street and, the existing polling place **District 3B** – Braintree Yacht Club, currently located in a voting precinct not adjacent to East Middle School at 305 River Street, that the public convenience would be better served by relocating **District 2B** – Hollis School, to Braintree High School at 128 Town Street and **District 3B** – Braintree Yacht Club, to East Middle School at 305 River Street, and that a home rule petition be filed in the form set forth in the accompanying order.

*If above motion fails, the following motions are presented to address prior council orders to temporary relocate **District 2B** – Hollis School back to its original location, St. Thomas More Church – Community Center at 8 Hawthorn Road and **District 4A** – Elder Affairs Building back to its original location, East Middle School at 305 River Street.*

Motion 1 - UPON THE REQUEST OF THE BRAINTREE TOWN CLERK, THE TOWN OF BRAINTREE, THROUGH THE BRAINTREE TOWN COUNCIL, IT IS SO ORDERED: Pursuant to Council Order 20 017 the temporary relocation of District 2B polling location to the N. Eugene Hollis School at 482 Washington Street is now rescinded and has now been returned to the St. Thomas More Church Community Center at 8 Hawthorn Road.

Motion 2 - UPON THE REQUEST OF THE BRAINTREE TOWN CLERK, THE TOWN OF BRAINTREE, THROUGH THE BRAINTREE TOWN COUNCIL, IT IS SO ORDERED: Pursuant to Council Order 18 002 the temporary relocation of District 4A polling location to the Elder Affairs Building at 71 Cleveland Avenue is now rescinded and has been returned to the East Middle School at 305 River Street.

Attachment #1

Chapter 115 of the Acts of 2020 § 11

SECTION 11. Notwithstanding section 24 of chapter 54 of the General Laws or any other 294 general or special law to the contrary, the select board, board of selectmen, town council or city council may, by recorded and public vote, change any polling place to be used at the primary election or the general election at least 20 days prior to the date of the primary election or general election if it is determined that the public convenience or public health would be better served. If the select board, board of selectmen or town council determines that the public convenience or public health would be better served, they may house all polling places in a single building within the municipality, if such building is suitably equipped; provided, however, that alcoholic beverages shall not be served or consumed in that portion of a building used as a polling place, during voting hours or while ballots are being counted therein. In cities, the city council may designate polling places in non-adjacent precincts if they determine the public convenience or public health would be better served. In making a decision to change a polling place, the select board, board of selectmen, town council or city council shall evaluate and report on whether such change would have a disparate adverse impact on access to the polls on the basis of race, national origin, disability, income or age, and not later than 3 days prior to changing a polling place, shall make publicly available on its website and at the office of the town or city clerk a report on its evaluation. When the polling places have been designated pursuant to this section, the board of registrars shall post on the municipal website and at other such places as it may determine, a description of the polling places and shall notify voters by using an electronic means, to the extent available, such as via email or reverse 911 call.

Attachment #2

Council Minutes – July 15, 2020

OLD BUSINESS • 20 042 Town Clerk: Proposal to Create Election Voting Centers or take up any action relative thereto

President Hume referred to Councilor Boericke, Chairwoman of the Committee of Ways & Means for a recommendation. Councilor Boericke stated the Committee of Ways & Means met on Monday, June 29, 2020. The committee felt the District Voting Centers (South, East, BHS) would be a better alternative at this time. A favorable recommendation was made to the full Council with a vote of 4 in favor and 1 opposed to move from 11 locations to 3 district locations. This is a temporary change and will expire December 31, 2020. New this year voters will have multiple ways to cast their ballots, including vote by mail, absentee ballots in person or by mail, early voting and going to the polls. This will be a significant financial savings for our tax payers and protect the health and safety of our poll workers and the public. Town Clerk, James Casey stated elections are the largest service the office provides to the public. There are 27,000 eligible voters. This year the Secretary of State's office was mandated to mail to voters applications to vote by mail. Absentee applications now include a reason if anyone has any concern over the COVID pandemic they can apply for an absentee ballot. For the first time in-person early voting is available for a State Primary Election on September 1, 2020 for seven continuous days. Early voting is available for the November 3rd Election for 14 continuous days. Both include Saturday and Sunday mandated Early Voting. A pre and post sanitization of the polling locations is required which can be very costly. It can be \$1,000 per location. July 15, 2020 Town Council 4 of 12 Councilor Connors asked how to make sure someone does not vote more than once. Town Clerk Casey stated our poll pads will have the voter information downloaded and will let us know if someone has already voted or not. Councilor Connors asked about bake sales. Director McGrath stated we need to look into whether it would be permissible to have food available. There may be some specific guidelines as we get closer to the elections. Councilor Connors stated there are also no-bake "Bake Sales" for donations only. President Hume stated put up a sign with a Venmo account and no one has to be there in person. Councilor Ringius stated we are dealing with the right to vote and accessibility to vote and we have this crazy COVID crisis we have going on. At some point it would make sense to have 6 polling locations instead of 11. I am struggling with moving from 11 to 3 due to accessibility and the numbers we might have voting. We have 3 significant elections coming up. It is a heavy primary. We have the middle school vote. We have the presidential election. Town Clerk Casey stated a primary with a Governor's race is usually 30% turnout. Without a governor's race is about 17%. I feel voter turnout on the actual election day of September 1st will be lower than 17% because of mail in and absentee and early voting options. Councilor Ringius stated he has concerns especially with District 5 with Nursing Homes and accessibility to get folks to the polls. Town Clerk Casey stated the majority who come to Town Hall are driven. All these people have the ability to cast ballot early by mail, early in person or absentee. South Middle, East Middle and Braintree High School are all certified and are accessible. Councilor Ringius stated it is a guessing game on whether consolidating for having polling locations spread out is better and have less people coming into a building due to COVID. Town Clerk Casey stated one big concern is who are our poll workers? They are our seasoned residents. It is our seniors who are the only ones signing up. I have tried to recruit at BHS but got no response. Marybeth McGrath, Director of the Department of Municipal Licenses & Inspections stated I absolutely support going down to 3 polling locations. We are in the middle of a pandemic. The opportunity would

provide a more management scenario. His biggest hurdle will be to find staff members to man these sites. There will be more requirements now associated with COVID and the offering of an event like this to the public. Contact tracing would be a requirement. If you have fewer locations it would be far more manageable. Councilor Sciascia stated Clerk Casey has said he is concerned. I was the vote against this in Ways & Means. I couldn't wrap my head around going down to 3. All these reasons mentioned concern people. We are talking financial savings which should not be a concern. Councilor Flaherty stated this is a temporary measure. I am sure there will be careful tabulations on how this may or may not be affecting voter turnout. The next three elections are important. There is risk because of COVID but we can't not have them. It is our obligation to have it the safest possible way for our voters and the people working the polls. The 3 locations is the right thing to do but it is important to me that this will be re-evaluated again at the end of the year. It would be a terrible thing to discourage voting in Braintree. Also for many years Elementary Administrators and parents would like to not host the elections. You can't turn people away from the polls. It doesn't matter their criminal record.

Attachment #3A

Council Order # 20 017



Braintree Town Council

ORDER NO: 20 017 DATE FILED: JANUARY 21, 2020

REQUEST OF: TOWN CLERK

TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF DISTRICT 2B POLLING LOCATION

UPON THE REQUEST OF THE BRAINTREE TOWN CLERK, THE TOWN OF BRAINTREE, THROUGH THE BRAINTREE TOWN COUNCIL, IT IS SO ORDERED:

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 54, §24, that the public convenience would be better served during the March 3 and March 28, 2020 Elections by relocating to the Eugene Hollis School, 482 Washington Street (rear), the District 2B polling location which is currently located in the St. Thomas More Church Parish Hall.

YEAS: Boericke Connors Flaherty Hume Mackin O'Brien Ringius Ryan Sciascia

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

PASSED IN COUNCIL: JANUARY 21, 2020

PRESENTED TO MAYOR: JANUARY 22, 2020

A True Record, Attest:

1/22/2020
Date Approved

James M. Casey
James M. Casey, Town Clerk

Attachment #3B

Council Minutes – January 21, 2020

NEW BUSINESS (Continued) • 20 017 Town Clerk: Request for Temporary Relocation of District 2B Polling Location from St. Thomas More Church Community Center to N. Eugene Hollis School 482 Washington Street or take up any action relative thereto (SAME NIGHT ACTION REQUESTED)

James Casey, Town Clerk asked for Town Council vote for the temporary relocation of District 2B Polling Location from St. Thomas More Church Community Center to N. Eugene Hollis School 482 Washington Street. This is necessary due to 4pm scheduled church parish services on March 28, 2020 and a requirement for timely election notification to any changes to polling locations. There could be much confusion if both March elections were not to be held in the same polling locations. The most sensitive of action is Same Night Action Requests. I have no choice. I need to begin the notification process on this tomorrow.

Councilor Ringius made a Motion for Same Night Action Motion: by Councilor Ringius to approve Same Night Action on Order 20 017 Second: by Councilor Ryan Vote: For (9 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O'Brien, Ringius, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

Councilor Sciascia thanked Clerk Casey to make this a temporary relocation for these two elections and review this after discussion with residents.

Councilor Ringius read the Motion: UPON THE REQUEST OF THE BRAINTREE TOWN CLERK, THE TOWN OF BRAINTREE, THROUGH THE BRAINTREE TOWN COUNCIL, IT IS SO ORDERED: Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 54, §24, that the public convenience would be better served during the March 3 and March 28, 2020 Elections by relocating to the N. Hollis School, 482 Washington Street (rear), the District 2B polling location which is currently located in the St. Thomas More Church Community Center. Motion: by Councilor Ringius to Approve Order 20 017 Second: by Councilor Ryan Vote: For (9 – Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Hume, Mackin, O'Brien, Ringius, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

Attachment #4A

Council Order # 18 002



Braintree Town Council

ORDER NO: 18 002

DATE FILED: JANUARY 10, 2018

REQUEST OF: TOWN CLERK

UPON THE REQUEST OF THE BRAINTREE TOWN CLERK, THE TOWN OF BRAINTREE, THROUGH THE BRAINTREE TOWN COUNCIL, IT IS SO ORDERED:

Pursuant to M.G.L.54, §24, that the public convenience would be better served by relocating to the Department of Elder Affairs Building, 71 Cleveland Avenue, the District 4A polling location which is currently located in the East Middle School Gymnasium, 305 River Street.

YEAS: Bowes. Carey. Hume. Kokoros. O'Brien. Powers. Ringius. Ryan. Whalen

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

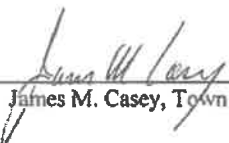
PASSED IN COUNCIL: FEBRUARY 6, 2018

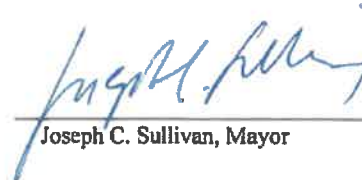
PRESENTED TO MAYOR: FEBRUARY 7, 2018

A True Record, Attest:

2-9-18

Date Approved


James M. Casey, Town Clerk


Joseph C. Sullivan, Mayor

Attachment #4B

Council Minutes – February 6, 2018

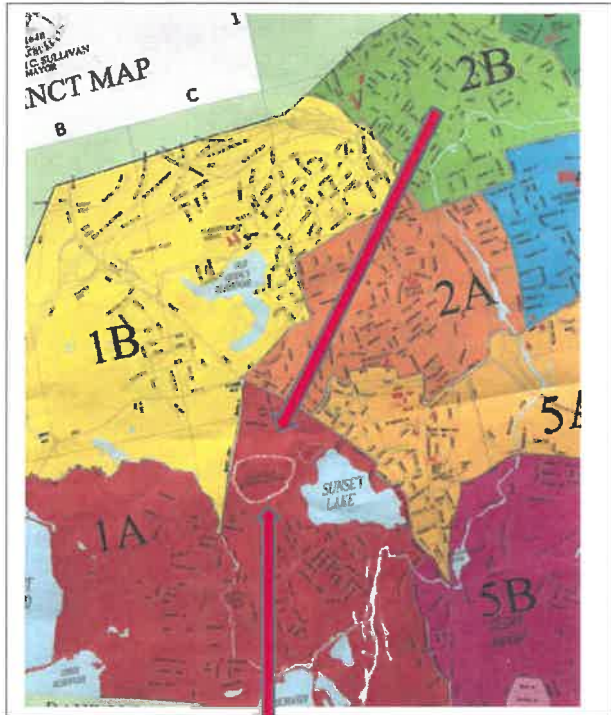
OLD BUSINESS • 18 002 Town Clerk: Temporary Relocation of District 4A Polling Location or take up any action relative thereto

James M. Casey, Town Clerk explained the East Middle School is being renovated. This was the polling location for District 4A. **The polling location will need to be temporarily relocated through the 2020 elections.** The new location will be the Department of Elder Affairs Building, 71Cleveland Avenue. OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL Charles B. Ryan President At Large Sean E. Powers At Large Shannon L. Hume At Large Thomas W. Whalen District 2 Thomas M. Bowes District 3 CHARLES C. Kokoros Vice President District 1 Stephen C. O'Brien District 4 David M. Ringius, Jr. District 5 Timothy P. Carey District 6 February 6, 2018 Town Council 2 of 4 Mr. Casey stated he spoke with Mayor Sullivan and the Director of Elder Affairs and all supported the move. ADA compliance has been approved. Postcards will be mailed out to note the changes to voters. Councilor Powers stated can we minimize the activities that take place on election days. Mr. Casey stated that was a concern at the Committee of Ways & Means meeting earlier this evening. That will be discussed with the Director of Elder Affairs to be sure no large events take place on election days.

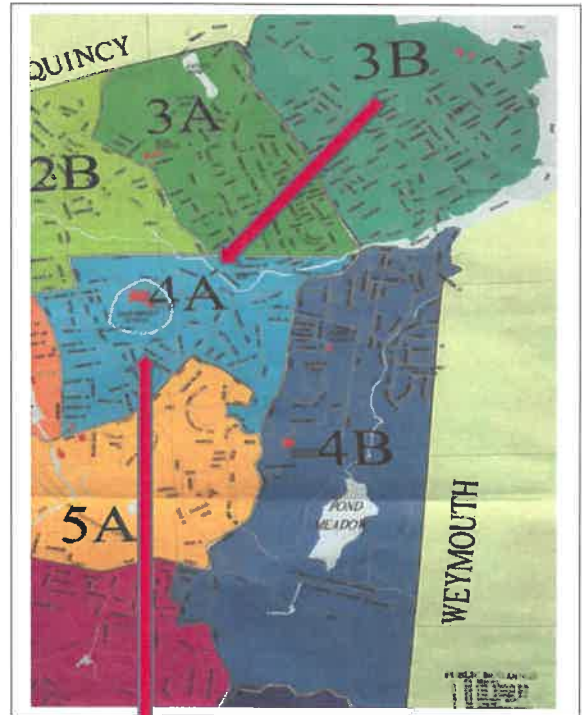
MOTION was read by Councilor Kokoros: UPON THE REQUEST OF THE BRAINTREE TOWN CLERK, THE TOWN OF BRAINTREE, THROUGH THE BRAINTREE TOWN COUNCIL, IT IS SO ORDERED: Pursuant to M.G.L.54, §24, that the public convenience would be better served by relocating to the Department of Elder Affairs Building, 71Cleveland Avenue, the District 4A polling location which is currently located in the East Middle School Gymnasium, 305 River Street. Motion: by Councilor Kokoros Second: by Councilor Powers Vote: For (9), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

Attachment #5

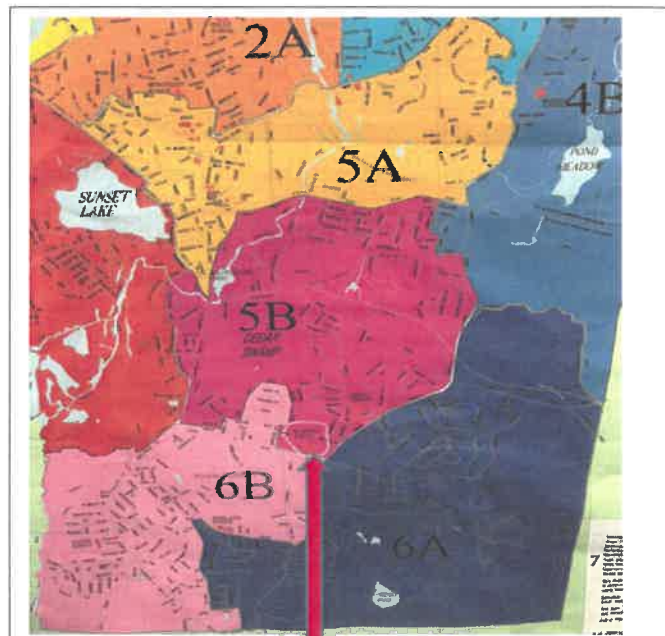
District Maps



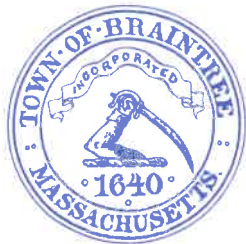
Braintree High School



East Middle School



South Middle School



Office of the Mayor

One JFK Memorial Drive
Braintree, Massachusetts 02184

Charles C. Kokoros
Mayor

781-794-8100

To: Shannon L. Hume, President of the Council
Susan Cimino, Clerk of the Council
James Casey, Town Clerk

From: Charles C. Kokoros, Mayor *CKK*

CC: Nicole I. Taub, Chief of Staff and Director of Operations
Dr. Frank Hackett, Braintree School Department Superintendent
Karen Shanley, Director, Human Resources
Vincent Fountaine, Veterans Services Agent
Sharmila Biswas, Director, Department of Elder Services

Date: January 13, 2021

Re: Acceptance of Gifts

President Hume, Clerk Cimino, Clerk Casey,

I am submitting this request for your consideration and acceptance of the following donations to be used for the stated purposes.

The first donation, in the amount of \$20,000.00, is from sisters Nancy and Grace Parlee and shall be used to start the Dottie and Bob Parlee Scholarship Fund. Dottie and Bob were lifelong residents of Braintree and graduates of Braintree High School—Dottie in 1942 and Bob in 1939. Dottie was a member of the Braintree High School band, where she played the trombone, and Bob was affiliated with the Drum & Bugle Corps. Nancy and Grace would like to establish a music scholarship in their memory with the following qualifications: 1) \$2,000 per year would be allocated, \$1,000 each for a male and female; 2) the funds must be related to music; and 3) the recipient must be a Braintree High School Graduate. Dottie and Bob loved Braintree and Grace and Nancy are excited to be able to honor their legacy by helping a Braintree graduate fulfill their dreams.

The second donation, in the amount of \$5,000.00, is from the “Friends of Charles Kokoros,” and shall be dedicated to the Town of Braintree-Department of Veterans Services, to be used as needed.

The final donation, in the amount of \$435.00, is also from the “Friends of Charles Kokoros,” and is to be used to benefit the Town of Braintree-Department of Elder Affairs for assistance to defray transportation costs for elder residents.

Accordingly, your review and approval of the following motion is requested:

MOTION: That the Town of Braintree be and hereby is authorized, in accordance with Section 53A of Chapter 44 of the Massachusetts General Laws to accept the following gifts upon the conditions attached and herein set forth:

<u>DONOR</u>	<u>GIFT</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
Grace and Nancy Parlee	\$20,000	Dottie and Bob Parlee Scholarship Fund
“Friends of Charles Kokoros”	\$5,000	Town of Braintree-Department of Veteran Services
“Friends of Charles Kokoros”	\$435	Town of Braintree-Department of Elder Affairs