



Braintree Town Council

Committee of Ways & Means

One JFK Memorial Drive
Braintree, Massachusetts 02184

MEMBERS

Meredith Boericke, Chairwoman
Charles Ryan, Vice-Chair
Donna Connors, Member
Julia Flaherty, Member
Steven Sciascia, Member

MINUTES

January 29, 2020

A meeting of the Committee of Ways & Means was held in the Cahill Auditorium, Braintree Town Hall, on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 5:30p.m.

Councilor Boericke was in the Chair.

Assistant Town Clerk, Debra Starr conducted the roll call.

Present: Meredith Boericke, Chairwoman
Charles Ryan, Vice-Chair
Donna Connors, Member
Julia Flaherty, Member
Steven Sciascia, Member

Also Present: Charles C. Kokoros, Mayor
Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff
Ed Spellman, Finance Director
Dr. Frank Hackett, School Superintendent
Shawn McGoldrick, Town Auditor
Residents

The meeting was opened with the pledge of allegiance to the flag followed by a moment of silence for all those serving in our armed services, past and present.

Approval of Minutes

- December 17, 2019

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to APPROVE Minutes of December 17, 2019

Second: by Councilor Connors

Vote: For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

Old Business

- None

New Business

Councilor Boericke, Chairwoman of the Committee of Ways & Means outlined the purpose of tonight's meeting stating the Committee of Ways & Means will be reviewing the information from the Mayor's office on the Debt Exclusion and we will be making a recommendation to the full Council. We will have a full Public Hearing at the Town Council meeting next week on Tuesday, February 4, 2020. Tonight is about gathering information and answering all the questions we can. If we have further questions we will reconvene next week.

Mayor Charles C. Kokoros made a statement about the Debt Exclusion. The Mayor stated he felt the most responsible thing to do other than cut the Operating Budget dramatically is to do a Debt Exclusion. I have visited every school in our Town from boiler room to roof. There is a lot of important work that needs to be addressed. You cannot replace ceiling tile and rugs until you replace the roof. That is why we added the additional items including funding for roofs; a feasibility study for the High School; and funding to enhance security measures throughout the school system. This is an exciting point for Braintree.

Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff explained all of the Motions before you at this time are in part for the Special Election due to be held on March 28, 2020 and to ask the voters if they would support a Debt Exclusion on school related projects. Please note all documents relating to the Debt Exclusion and the necessary vote can be found online on the Town of Braintree website: braintreema.gov or contact the Mayor's office. There are two ways to increase revenue from residents. One is an override which is a permanent increase to the tax levy which never goes away and the other one is a debt exclusion which we are seeking this evening, which is a temporary increase to fund very specific projects. Once it is paid off it is removed from the taxpayer's responsibility. In order to place a debt exclusion on the ballot there has to be a 2/3rds vote of the full Council. That vote has to take place at least 35 days before the scheduled election. Ms. Taub stated if we do not vote by March 28, 2020 we might lose the MSBA funding of \$31 million for the building of South Middle School.

Ms. Taub stated there is opportunity for additional senior exemptions to be voted by Council. We also offer senior work programs and other opportunities to assist with additional taxes.

Ms. Taub described the estimated debt schedule and a breakdown of each project to be voted on. There will be 4 individual ballot questions that can each be voted yes or no.

Tonight is not about support for a debt exclusion. It is whether or not voters should have an opportunity to cast their vote whether for or against and whether or not the town should be authorized to borrow the funds for the projects only if the vote is affirmative in favor at the Special Election on March 28, 2020.

Shawn McGoldrick, Town Auditor discussed bullet points from his memorandum to Council President Hume dated January 14, 2020 and outlining the challenges without a debt exclusion.

Committee members asked questions on debt and funding.

Councilor Connors asked if all Debt Exclusion documents and questions and answers can be available online in one location for residents to easily get to information and read.

Councilor Sciascia asked if there could be smaller district meetings with staff and Councilors to hold with residents in a smaller meeting so they can be informed and ask questions.
Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff stated the Mayor's office will assist in the spread of information as the election gets closer.

Dr. Frank Hackett, School Superintendent stated the South Middle School proposal is in front of you. The commitment to the MSBA is to repurpose the South Middle School for educational use so we do not have to give any payback to MSBA. Options are being discussed for what to do with South. There are many uses we could use it for. Possibly a pre-K or Kindergarten facility or serve the districts in other ways as a school. It is the School Committees authority on this. This discussion would happen over the next couple years. This is a community conversation as well. All our roofs are 20-30 years and need to be replaced other than BHS, South and Ross. If the funding is not approved we have no funding source.

Chairwoman Boericke stated I would like to know the plan to continue funding the School Building Authority Capital Stabilization fund.

Ms. Taub stated I will get that information for the next meeting on February 4, 2020. There is a question whether or not reimbursement from the MSBA can replenish that fund/account.

Chairwoman Boericke asked if any residents would like to comment/speak:

Residents Speaking:

Sandra Kunz, Hollingsworth Avenue – Have the other Councilors been given this information? This is too much information for anyone to digest.

Ms Taub stated - All the documents will be available to everyone online and to the Councilors. The materials are not to support the ballot questions this is the motion to allow for the calling of the special election.

Jennifer Dolan, School Committee member - we are available at many PTO meetings and others can attend to get resident's questions answered. There will be a Facebook page available for dates.

Dan Clifford, St. Claire, former Council member – part of the strategy needs to be reach out to the seniors. What can be done for them? Can we give them an exemption? Will there be district meetings? The information needs to be out there.

- 20 005 Mayor: Authorization to fund South Middle School subject to and contingent on an affirmative vote of the Town in favor of a debt exclusion or take up any action relative thereto.

Motion:

That the Town appropriate the amount of Eighty-Six Million Five Hundred Eighty-Five Thousand Nine Hundred Nineteen Dollars (\$86,585,919) for the purpose of paying costs of designing, constructing, equipping and furnishing a new South Middle School, to be located behind the existing South Middle School at 232 Peach Street in Braintree, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the "Project"), which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children for at least 50 years, and for which the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under M.G.L. c. 44, or pursuant to any other enabling authority; provided that any appropriation hereunder shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, §21C (Proposition 2 ½). The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any project costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town; provided further that any grant that Town may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) fifty three and ninety six hundredths percent (53.96%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA; and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the Town and the MSBA. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 005 to the next Committee of Ways & Means meeting on February 4, 2020 at 5:00pm

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

Vote: For (5—Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- 20 006 Mayor: Authorization to fund the replacement of roofs at the following schools: Highlands, Flaherty, Hollis, Liberty, Monatiquot and Morrison subject to and contingent on an affirmative vote of the Town in favor of a debt exclusion or take up any action relative thereto.

Motion:

That the Town appropriate the amount of Five Million Dollars (\$5,000,000.00) for the purpose of paying costs of replacing the roofs at Highlands Elementary School (144 Wildwood Avenue, Braintree MA), Flaherty Elementary School (99 Lakeside Drive, Braintree, MA), Hollis Elementary School (482 Washington Street, Braintree, MA), Liberty Elementary School (49 Proctor Road, Braintree, MA), Monatiquot Kindergarten (25 Brow Avenue, Braintree, MA) and Morrison Elementary School (260 Liberty Street, Braintree, MA), including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the "Project"), which proposed repair projects would materially extend the useful life of the schools and preserve assets that otherwise are capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the Town has applied for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under M.G.L. Chapter 44, or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and if the MSBA's Board of Directors votes to invite the Town to collaborate with the MSBA on this proposed repair project, any project costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant that may be approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town; provided that any appropriation hereunder shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2 1/2); and that, if invited to collaborate with the MSBA on the proposed repair project, the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the Town and the MSBA. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 006 to the next Committee of Ways & Means meeting on February 4, 2020 at 5:00pm

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

Vote: For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- 20 007 Mayor: Authorization to fund a feasibility study with respect to the redevelopment of Braintree High School, to be located at 128 Town Street, Braintree, Massachusetts subject to and contingent on an affirmative vote of the Town in favor of a debt exclusion or take up any action relative thereto.

Motion:

That the Town appropriate the amount of One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,500,000.00) for the purpose of paying costs of a feasibility study with respect to the redevelopment of Braintree High School, to be located at 128 Town Street, Braintree, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, and for which the Town may be eligible for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under and pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 44, or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The Town acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the Town, and further provided that the appropriation hereunder shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2YS.), and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Feasibility Study Agreement that may be executed between the Town and the MSBA. Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 007 to the next Committee of Ways & Means meeting on February 4, 2020 at 5:00pm

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

Vote: For (5—Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- 20 008 Mayor: Authorization to fund the enhancement of security measures throughout the school system subject to and contingent on an affirmative vote of the Town in favor of a debt exclusion or take up any action relative thereto.

Motion:

That the Town appropriate One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) for the purpose of paying costs of enhancing security measures throughout the school system, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, and that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under M.G.L. Chapter 44, §7(1) or pursuant to any other enabling authority. No amounts shall be borrowed or expended hereunder unless and until the voters of the Town shall have voted to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, §21C (Proposition 2 1/2). Any premium received upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by this vote, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with M.G.L. c. 44, §20, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 008 to the next Committee of Ways & Means meeting on February 4, 2020 at 5:00pm

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

Vote: For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- 20 009 Mayor: Approval for the calling of debt exclusion ballot questions at a special election or take up any action relative thereto.

Motion:

RESOLUTION and ORDER pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.59 § 21C this ____day of _____, 20__

(1) that the Town of Braintree, pursuant to G.L. c. 59, § 21C(k), shall seek voter approval at the next special election on March 28, 2020, to assess taxes in excess of the amount allowed pursuant to G.L. c. 59 §21C for the payment of principal and interest on bonds, notes or certificates of indebtedness, issued by the Town of Braintree to pay costs of designing, constructing, equipping and furnishing a new South Middle School, to be located behind the existing South Middle School at 232 Peach Street in Braintree, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto; and

(2) that the Town of Braintree, pursuant to G.L. c. 59, § 21C(k), shall seek voter approval at the next special election on March 28, 2020, to assess taxes in excess of the amount allowed pursuant to G.L. c. 59 §21C for the payment of principal and interest on bonds, notes or certificates of indebtedness, issued by the Town of Braintree to pay costs of replacing the roofs at Highlands Elementary School (144 Wildwood Avenue, Braintree MA), Flaherty Elementary School (99 Lakeside Drive, Braintree, MA), Hollis Elementary School (482 Washington Street, Braintree, MA), Liberty Elementary School (49 Proctor Road, Braintree, MA), Monatiquot Kindergarten (25 Brow Avenue, Braintree, MA) and

Morrison Elementary School (260 Liberty Street, Braintree, MA), including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto; and

(3) that the Town of Braintree, pursuant to G.L. c. 59, § 21C(k), shall seek voter approval at the next special election on March 28, 2020, to assess taxes in excess of the amount allowed pursuant to G.L. c. 59 § 21C for the payment of principal and interest on bonds, notes or certificates of indebtedness, issued by the Town of Braintree to pay costs of a feasibility study with respect to the redevelopment of Braintree High School, to be located at 128 Town Street, Braintree, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto.

(4) that the Town of Braintree, pursuant to G.L. c. 59, § 21C(k), shall seek voter approval at the next special election on March 28, 2020, to assess taxes in excess of the amount allowed pursuant to G.L. c. 59 § 21C for the payment of principal and interest on bonds, notes or certificates of indebtedness, issued by the Town of Braintree to pay costs of enhancing security measures throughout the school system, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto.

(2) to that end the Town Clerk is hereby directed to place the following questions on the ballot:

(i) Shall the Town of Braintree be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to pay costs of designing, constructing, equipping and furnishing a new South Middle School, to be located behind the existing South Middle School at 232 Peach Street in Braintree, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto?

Yes No

(ii) Shall the Town of Braintree be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to pay costs of replacing the roofs at Highlands Elementary School (144 Wildwood Avenue, Braintree MA), Flaherty Elementary School (99 Lakeside Drive, Braintree, MA), Hollis Elementary School (482 Washington Street, Braintree, MA), Liberty Elementary School (49 Proctor Road, Braintree, MA), Monatiquot Kindergarten (25 Brow Avenue, Braintree, MA) and Morrison Elementary School (260 Liberty Street, Braintree, MA), including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto?

Yes No

(iii) Shall the Town of Braintree be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to pay costs of a feasibility study with respect to the redevelopment of Braintree High School, to be located at 128 Town Street, Braintree, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto.

Yes No

(iv) Shall the Town of Braintree be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition two and one-half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to pay costs of enhancing security measures throughout the school system, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto?

Yes No

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 009 to the next Committee of Ways & Means meeting on February 4, 2020 at 5:00pm

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

Vote: For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- 20 010 Mayor: Authorization to appropriate funds from the Braintree School Building Authority capital stabilization fund or take up any action relative thereto.

Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff stated this fund was created to fund, design and the development for school facilities and at the time specifically with East and South in mind to continue to grow and help cover costs. The balance that remains in that account will continue to accrue interest and would be available for use within the parameters set up for its use.

Motion:

That the sum of \$1,718,229.00 be appropriated from the Braintree School Building Authority capital stabilization fund for the purpose of paying for costs relating to the planning and design of the South Middle School Renovation Project.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 010 to the next Committee of Ways & Means meeting on February 4, 2020 at 5:00pm

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

Vote: For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- 20 011 Superintendent of Schools: Authorization to submit Statements of Interest Forms for consideration by the Massachusetts School Building Authority for replacement of school roofs or take up any action relative thereto.

Motion:

Having convened in an open meeting on February 4, 2020, prior to the closing date, the Town Council of Braintree, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent of the Braintree Public School Department to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority Statements of Interests dated February 4, 2020 for: Highlands Elementary School {144 Wildwood Avenue, Braintree MA}, Flaherty Elementary School (99 Lakeside Drive, Braintree, MA), Hollis Elementary School (482 Washington Street, Braintree, MA), Liberty Elementary School (49 Proctor Road, Braintree, MA), Morrison Elementary School {260 Liberty Street, Braintree, MA} and Monatiquot Kindergarten (25 Brow Avenue, Braintree, MA) which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future for the repair and/or replacement of roofs as described in Priority #5 of the Statement of Interest, and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Braintree Public School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 011 to the next Committee of Ways & Means meeting on February 4, 2020 at 5:00pm

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

Vote: For (5—Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:16p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Cimino
Clerk of the Council

Documents provided for Meeting

- Minutes of December 17, 2019
- 20 005 Mayor: Authorization to fund South Middle School subject to and contingent on an affirmative vote of the Town in favor of a debt exclusion or take up any action relative thereto.
- 20 006 Mayor: Authorization to fund the replacement of roofs at the following schools: Highlands, Flaherty, Hollis, Liberty, Monatiquot and Morrison subject to and contingent on an affirmative vote of the Town in favor of a debt exclusion or take up any action relative thereto.
- 20 007 Mayor: Authorization to fund a feasibility study with respect to the redevelopment of Braintree High School, to be located at 128 Town Street, Braintree, Massachusetts subject to and contingent on an affirmative vote of the Town in favor of a debt exclusion or take up any action relative thereto.
- 20 008 Mayor: Authorization to fund the enhancement of security measures throughout the school system subject to and contingent on an affirmative vote of the Town in favor of a debt exclusion or take up any action relative thereto.
- 20 009 Mayor: Approval for the calling of debt exclusion ballot questions at a special election or take up any action relative thereto.
- 20 010 Mayor: Authorization to appropriate funds from the Braintree School Building Authority capital stabilization fund or take up any action relative thereto.
- 20 011 Superintendent of Schools: Authorization to submit Statements of Interest Forms for consideration by the Massachusetts School Building Authority for replacement of school roofs or take up any action relative thereto.
- Additional documents can be found on the Town of Braintree website: braintreema.gov