



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
Tuesday, March 9, 2021

A meeting of the Committee of Ways & Means was held Remote via Zoom Webinar, on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:00p.m.

Councilor Boericke was in the Chair.

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

All votes were taken by Roll Call Vote.

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

Also Present: Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff
Ed Spellman, Director Municipal Finance
Shawn McGoldrick, Town Auditor
Mark Dubois, Police Chief
James O'Brien, Fire Chief
Sharmila Biswas, Director of Elder Affairs
Therese Stano, Library Director
Frank Hackett, Superintendent of Schools
Marybeth McGrath, Director Municipal Licenses & Inspections

Approval of Minutes

- December 1, 2020

Motion made by Councilor Ryan to approve Minutes of December 1, 2020

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to approve Minutes of December 1, 2020

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

- December 15, 2020

Motion made by Councilor Ryan to approve Minutes of December 15, 2020

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to approve Minutes of December 15, 2020

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

Old Business

- None

New Business

- **21 005 Mayor: Request to Approve the Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Plan or take up any action relative thereto**

Nicole Taub stated what you have before you is very conservative and lean Capital Plan that focuses strictly on those priority projects that are truly necessary to continue to enhance our infrastructure, our roadways and continuing to support our schools with a focus on projects that can be purchased by a means other than use of free cash in order to preserve the balance of funds we have there. In January 2021 Department Heads were asked to submit a plan as well as a 5 year plan for their departments. We reviewed for projects that truly were necessary to be funded in this fiscal year given the current circumstances.

Councilor Connors asked if certain equipment is really at the end of use dates so these have to be replaced now. Also do you have everything to keep the firefighters safe.

Chief O'Brien stated we are good for at least another year.

Councilor Connors asked if you priced out 30 year packs.

Chief O'Brien stated no but he can. He also stated speaking with other departments no one uses the 30 year packs and there must be a reason.

Councilor Connors asked about the money for Elder Affairs Parking Lot.

Sharmila Biswas explained the total is \$200,000. This is the original \$119,000, the \$50,000 that is currently being requested and the \$35,000 that was Elder Affairs and available for use.

Councilor Flaherty asked about Engine E-1 for \$700,000 which was in the Capital Plan last year.

Chief O'Brien stated that is a pumper truck. We have 4 pumper trucks, a spare and a ladder truck. Each year I put in for a new Engine hoping to get one for the following year because it takes a solid year to manufacture these apparatus. When it is complete is when we pay for it.

Councilor Flaherty asked about \$100,000 to ADA last year and if this is just a recurring expense we should expect to see year over year.

Marybeth McGrath stated it is. We have a program in place to make upgrades in regards to accessibility for Municipal buildings and properties the Town owns. We work directly with the DPW and Facilities Division on projects they may need funding for.

Councilor Sciascia stated to Chief O'Brien all items in your list that did not get funded are safety items. I am assuming you are ok with delaying those. Some seem like such short money. Are any such priorities that you need now.

Chief O'Brien stated I can wait on some of these in different budget line items I can use for them. Others are fine to wait another year on.

Councilor Sciascia asked to explain the ESCO Project.

Ed Spellman stated the original ESCO Project proposed by the Schools was about \$6 million worth of repairs and renovations. The source of the funding was the utility savings for the improvements there. A second component was added to that for an additional \$4million of work was done. The total went up to \$10 million. The agreement with the School Department is they would take and allocate a portion of \$244,000 of their Capital allocation for the next 20 years and apply that towards the debt services for the additional \$4 million of capital.

Councilor Sciascia asked about his question on whether a Public Comment/Hearing would take place with residents so they could weigh in on the mix of use of funds and for what.

Nicole Taub stated during 2021 we all figured FY2022 would be more of a bleaker picture. It should come as no surprise that we had to come even more conservative in our priorities and how we allocated funding. The roadways is a commitment from the Mayor to continue along with the Chapter 90 funds received for that same work. Public dialogue is important but this year it is so tight financially and there is not a lot of wiggle room on how things get funded. This is not the year to do this. Public is invited next week to the Public Hearing and we will listen to any public feedback.

Councilor Sciascia asked about Facilities Dude.

Dr. Hackett stated our buildings have been shut down. We have made upgrades in our HVAC systems. We have been getting our schools ready for a ventilation and safety standpoint. We have loaded significant amounts of data but it will take time to do long term thinking and planning. Our energies are focused on what they should be. We need to try to get the kids back to in-person learning and focusing on that.

Councilor Sciascia asked about Munis and if we are going to see data out of that system sometime soon.

Ed Spellman stated as far as Munis we have been delayed. We have the Accounting up and running. Payroll has been delayed to July 1. It is a very different system. We just had the training for the Budget reports in Munis. We are working at the same time on the Collectors side and getting that up and running. The plan is to go live in August with that. We are working with the Utilities System and put the Trash Bill in with the Water & Sewer quarterly to allow us to save in mailing/postage costs. All these processes and trainings have been via Zoom and it has delayed our processes.

Councilor Ryan asked if the Police Department was going towards cell phones instead of Radio Communications.

Chief Dubois said no. We change out about 10 radios per year to keep them in good condition.

Councilor Ryan stated I like to see Records Management and directing resources electronically.

Councilor Ryan is glad to see the grant for a new Pumper Fire Truck and hope this will come through.

Councilor Ryan asked what the \$100,000 for ADA Compliance will be used for.

Marybeth McGrath stated some things I am thinking about is money to assist DPW/Facilities. I would like to look into Sunset Lake bath houses and other locations that could use and upgrade.

Councilor Ryan stated one of the best things about this town is the Library. Thank you to Teri Stano.

Councilor Connors asked about the Town Wide Radio System. I do not see any funds requested beyond this year.

Andrew Marron stated that project will be completed with that funding. This removes the old copper wiring and takes us off a Verizon bill and it is adapted for not just Fire Department but other Departments as well. We are looking for grants to upgrade this system as well.

Councilor Connors asked about the High School Renovations and why that was not included.

Dr. Hackett, School Superintendent stated we are just trying to figure out what needs to be done. The floor abatement, while not enough will be supplemented by our operational budget and will likely be dedicated to the High School cafeteria floor which is asbestos tile. Our goal is to abate it and completely replace that.

Nicole Taub added we do have the funds that were passed toward the application for the feasibility study and application to the MSBA for support in potential renovation or rebuild on the High School.

Chairwoman Boericke asked if Stabilization Funds are to be “used up”.

Ed Spellman stated Stabilization Funds are sometimes used for certain projects. This is combined with free cash into the usage for the General fund.

Ed Spellman stated this year with COVID and reduced reserves the plan you have before you is doing the bare bones work we need to do. We made a contiguous effort not to hit free cash with this Capital Plan. We looked at our retiring debt and new debt coming on the next two or three years will not be substantially increased. We will work to build up our reserves and going forward a more normal Capital Plan and be able to use free cash again.

Ed Spellman stated we are looking to do a digitized system town-wide so all departments are on the same system but have not looked into this any further yet.

Chairwoman Boericke stated I feel it would be helpful to have something to help the residents understand this process better for the long-term plan and what their tax money is spent on and all the great things that happen in the town. How can we think creatively to bring this information to the residents.

Shawn McGoldrick stated I wrote a Capital Plan memo. These are about half of what is usually requested. These are must have recommendations. I wonder if the roadway can hold off or not. I don't mean to pick on roads but it is the biggest nugget out there. Road way resurfacing went up \$100,000 this year – it did not get cut.

Nicole Taub stated we did already reduce the roadways for this year by the requested amount. It is about needs and not wants.

Councilor Ryan stated I appreciate our Town Auditor looking at different ways we can reduce but I have always been an advocate for the roads. The 100 Roads Program and Mayor Kokoros being dedicated to the roads.

Ed Spellman stated with the water lines work we are doing now will be the roads that are being paved in the future. At the same time the DPW's plan is to go to the Gas Company and say we are going to be paving these roads in 2 years so the plan is to get all the stuff under the roads done first.

MOTION: by Councilor Ryan to Table Order 21 005

Motion: by Councilor Ryan Table Order 21 005

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

- **21 006 Mayor: Request for Appropriation - Fiscal Year 2021 General Fund Capital Budget or take up any action relative thereto**

MOTION: by Councilor Ryan to Table Order 21 006

Motion: by Councilor Ryan Table Order 21 006

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

- **21 007 Mayor: Request for Appropriation – Fiscal Year 2021 Enterprise Funds Capital Budget or take up any action relative thereto**

MOTION: by Councilor Ryan to Table Order 21 007

Motion: by Councilor Ryan Table Order 21 007

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

- **21 008 Mayor: Request for Appropriation – Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Budget - Other Available Funds or take up any action relative thereto**

MOTION: by Councilor Ryan to Table Order 21 008

Motion: by Councilor Ryan Table Order 21 008

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:05p.m. by Roll Call Vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Cimino
Clerk of the Council

Documents provided for Meeting

- Minutes of December 1, 2020
- Minutes of December 15, 2020
- 21 005 Mayor: Request to Approve the Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Plan or take up any action relative thereto
- 21 006 Mayor: Request for Appropriation - Fiscal Year 2021 General Fund Capital Budget or take up any action relative thereto
- 21 007 Mayor: Request for Appropriation – Fiscal Year 2021 Enterprise Funds Capital Budget or take up any action relative thereto
- 21 008 Mayor: Request for Appropriation – Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Budget - Other Available Funds or take up any action relative thereto