



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

May 5, 2020

A meeting of the Committee of Ways & Means was held Remote via Zoom Webinar, on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 6:00p.m.

Councilor Boericke was in the Chair.

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

All votes taken by Roll Call Vote.

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

Also Present: Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff
Ed Spellman, Finance Director
Karen Shanley, Human Resource Director
James Casey, Town Clerk
Debra Starr, Assistant Town Clerk
Terri Stano, Library Director
Jada Maxwell, Assistant Library Director
Shawn McGoldrick, Town Auditor

Approval of Minutes

- None

Old Business

- None

New Business

- 20 038 Mayor: FY2021 Operating Budget or take up any action relative thereto

The following Departments were in attendance to present their proposed FY2021 Budget:

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| Town Clerk | 23-25 |
| Human Resources | 19-22 |
| Library | 81-87 |
| Town Council | 1-3 |

Nicole Taub, Interim Chief of Staff, provided members with the Forecast/Budget Overview for the Fiscal Year 2021 report that graphically reviews FY2021 budget recommendations (\$143,370,197) by department as well as an overview of FY2021 projected revenues. Nicole Taub stated the instructions to departments were to decrease by 1% their budget from last year and then went back to request departments to decrease an additional 3%.

Committee members asked each department many questions about increase/decrease line items. Some of the questions/answers are below.

Please find all FY2021 budget questions/answers posted on the town website at braintreema.gov

Department 161 Town Clerk

Jim Casey, Town Clerk, reported that the Town Clerk's FY2021 Budget request is \$461,023. The additional funding request accounts for collective bargaining agreement costs and COLA. Additional funding is also for additional elections this fiscal year and potentially early voting. There is an increase for Part-Time employees due to minimum wage increase of .75 cents per hour plus added hours for 11-days of early voting in November State General Election.

One question asked to the Town Clerk is why a 5.84% salary increase for the Town Clerk. The reply was due to the final step increase in January (FY2020 reflected half year step D and half year step E) as well as the FY2021 COL and 1-day of the 53-week. The question was asked if we have consistently spent 1195.00 for bylaw printing for 3 years why is there still 15K in budget? The response was the monies, \$13,000, set aside for planning/ zoning rewrite for codification and printing.

This budget request is with a 1% decrease from FY 2020. The Committee of Ways& Means asked Clerk Casey to go back and cut an additional 3% as all other departments were requested by the Mayor. Clerk Casey was willing to take a look at what he can cut by an additional 3%.

The Town Clerks revised reduced FY2021 Budget is now \$442,519.

Department 152 Personnel

Karen Shanley, Director of Human Resources, noted the FY2021 department budget request is \$22,492,842. Human Resources handle all of the collective bargaining agreements, benefits, and hiring. Sizable increases were requested for Vacation Buy Back and Retirement Sick Leave. This is due to paying out employees who have retired.

The question was asked why did the unemployment costs decrease – is this due to the Government picking up portions of unemployment due to Covid-19? The answer is the \$65,433 represents the

anticipated expenditures for all of FY21. This number is based on prior years' spending and incorporates the anticipated reimbursement of 50% for costs incurred through December 31, 2021 pursuant to the CARES Act.

The question was asked why did the vacation buyback change so significantly. What happened in 2020 to cause it to jump? Are we confident that the estimated budget will not be exceeded? The answer from Human Resources is the vacation buyback is governed by collective bargaining agreements. Most of our collective bargaining agreements allow employees to carry over unused vacation time from year to year, but the number of days eligible to carry over is capped. Any earned but unused time at the end of someone's employment must be paid out pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 149 s. 148 and the applicable collective bargaining agreement provision.

The question was asked for retirement sick leave but there was a jump in 2019 vs. 2020. Are we confident that the estimated budget will not be exceeded? The response was a large number of employees retired in FY19. Since only public safety has a mandatory retirement age it is difficult to anticipate retirements. Department Heads give HR their projections, but these are subject to change.

Department 610 Library

Terri Stano, Library Director, noted her FY2021 department budget request is \$1,538,653.

The question was asked can we project/quantify any savings by eliminating Summer Saturday hours. The reply from our Library Director Terri Stano stated the savings incurred by eliminating Summer Saturday hours will be most greatly realized in the associated salary costs, which are taken from the "Extended Hours" line of the "Current Topics & Titles" program. This line has been reduced to \$0 from \$23,000 to reflect the closure. There may also be some building/utility related cost savings as a result of the Saturday closures, but we do not have an estimated value of those savings. Any savings realized in FY21 will either be used to cover expenses identified in the FY20 supplemental request #4 or will be returned to free cash at the close of the fiscal year.

The question was asked the telephone has consistently come in at ~\$5,200 for the past two years (FY 18 and FY 19). Why do we anticipate an increase to \$8,500 in FY 21? The answer is BELD has installed a new Telephone system has stabilized the Library's line item for two years. If the trend continues to remain stable then with confidence the line item can be decreased. In past budgets when the Library fluctuated amounts in utilities and cost went up the library was left with a negative balance in the program. A supplement would have to be requested, which the Library works hard to avoid. This cost has increased in the past, which was the basis for the proposed increase for FY21.

The question was asked with repairs in FY 18 and FY 19 averaging ~\$6,500, should we include repairs in this budget? Are we really not anticipating any repair needs in FY 21? Is there a separate account that would be accessible should repairs be required? The revolving fund? The answer is in FY20, the Library's building and maintenance needs were combined with the Town's program so funds related to these items are incorporated into the DPW-Facilities programs.

The question was asked can you please talk though/explain why prescription eyeglasses are in multiple sections of the budget. I realize this is not a huge part of the budget, but curious as to why it's in many sections. The answer is these benefits are based on provisions in the collective bargaining agreements requiring payment for certain benefits.

Department 111 Town Council

Susan Cimino, Clerk of the Council noted the Town Council Budget for FY2021 is \$315,483 with a 1% decrease as requested by the Mayor. The Administrative line item increased due to the yearly COLA. Town Council was not requested by the Mayor’s office to reduce an additional 3%. The additional 3% was agreed upon by the Committee of Ways & Means members and the new FY2021 budget for Town Council has been reduced to \$302,736.

The Advertising line item varies from year to year depending on the amount of Public Hearings Town Council holds which requires Legal Notices in the newspaper. Advertising is required (under Town Charter Section 2-9 C) in a newspaper as a Legal Notice prior to PUBLIC HEARINGS of the full Council. It is unpredictable what will come from the Mayor each year and the Council to be asked to hold a Public Hearing on. This newspaper submission is still important to be transparent and to notify the public. This is just an unknown amount that varies greatly each year. When a Legal Notice is submitted in the newspaper there are requirements if it is a Bonding request then it is required the entire “motion” be submitted. This is also required from the Bonding Counsel. They require to see a copy of this Legal Notice. If other measures exceed 10 columns of print then just the “title” and a summary can be submitted which is considerably less expensive. Unexpended funds will go into Free Cash at the end of the year.

The questions was asked on how the Reserve Fund has been used in the past?

The answer was that Town Council has never had an expenditure from the Reserve Fund. This was a fund put in place back at the time of the change in government for Council use. The only time funds have been “removed” from this line item is when we have been asked to reduce the Town Council budget and this seemed like the likely place to reduce. The past Council/Council President’s agreed to this being the fund to reduce when requested.

Unexpended funds will go into Free Cash at the end of the year.

Motion made by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 038 to the Committee of Ways & Means meeting on May 6, 2020.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to Table Order 20 038 to May 6, 2020

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

- 20 039 Mayor: FY2021 Budget – Community Preservation Committee or take up any action relative thereto (**Presented by Christine Stickney on May 18**)

This item will be discussed at the Budget meeting on May 18, 2020.

Motion made by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 039 to the Committee of Ways & Means meeting on May 18, 2020.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to Table Order 20 038 to May 18, 2020

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

- 20 040 Mayor: FY2021 Budget - Revolving Accounts or take up any action relative thereto (**Revolving Accounts will be presented on the date Department Head presents Budget**)

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|------|---|----------|
| 5/5 | Library® | (R3, R4) |
| 5/6 | Golf® | (R8) |
| 5/7 | Department of Public Works® - Recycling | (R5, R6) |
| 5/18 | Dept. of Elder Affairs® | (R1) |
| 5/18 | Municipal Licenses & Inspections® | (R2) |
| 5/19 | Education® | (R7) |

Revolving Accounts R3 and R4 for the Library were voted on this evening (May 5, 2020) and referred to the full Council for favorable recommendation.

Motion read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 040 R3:

R3. That the Library Trustees be authorized to use a revolving fund in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws chapter 44, section 53e ½ that may be spent by the Library Trustees without further appropriation during the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2020, for the purchase of library books, audiovisual materials and other library materials. The Library Trustees revolving fund is to be credited with all fines and fees collected during fiscal year 2021 for lost or overdue library materials. The library trustees may spend up to \$45,000 in revolving fund monies during fiscal year 2021.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 040 R3

Second: by Councilor Connors

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

- 20 040 Mayor: FY2021 Budget - Revolving Accounts or take up any action relative thereto (continued)

Motion read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 040 R4:

R4. That the Library Trustees be authorized to use a revolving fund in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws chapter 44, section 53e ½ that may be spent by the Library Trustees without further appropriation during the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2020, for the costs associated with the support and promotion of special programs, including salaries related thereto. The Library Trustees revolving fund is to be credited with all revenue from the rental of meeting rooms collected during fiscal year 2021. The Library Trustees may spend up to \$5,000 in revolving fund monies during fiscal year 2021.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 20 040 R4

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

Motion made by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 20 040 to the Committee of Ways & Means meeting on May 6, 2020.

Motion: by Councilor Ryan to Table Order 20 040 to May 6, 2020

Second: by Councilor Flaherty

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

New Business

- None

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:47p.m. by Roll Call Vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan M. Cimino
Clerk of the Council

Documents provided for Meeting

- 20 038 Mayor: FY2021 Operating Budget or take up any action relative thereto
- 20 039 Mayor: FY2021 Budget – Community Preservation Committee or take up any action relative thereto
- 20 040 Mayor: FY2021 Budget - Revolving Accounts or take up any action relative thereto