

# 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

## Thursday, May 13, 2021

A meeting of the Committee of Ways & Means was held Remote via Zoom Webinar, on Thursday, May 13, 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/Town Solicitor  
Ed Spellman, Director Municipal Finance  
Frank Hackett, Superintendent of Schools  
Jim Lee, Asst Superintendent of Schools  
Ed Cronin, Business Director  
Lisa Freely, School Finance Director  
School Committee members  
Shawn McGoldrick, Town Auditor  
Katherine Pomeroy, Town Auditor

FY2022 documentation and questions and answers can be found on the Town's website:

<https://braintreema.gov/449/Fiscal-Year-Budgets>

Town of Braintree YouTube channel will also have recordings of the budget meetings.

### Approval of Minutes

- None

### Old Business

- None

## **New Business**

- **21 020 Mayor: FY2022 Operating Budget or take up any action relative thereto**

**MOTION:** by Councilor Ryan to take off the TABLE Order 21 020

**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan take off the TABLE Order 21 020

**Second:** by Councilor Connors

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

### **APPENDIX K**

#### 300 Education

Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff/Town Solicitor noted all FY2022 documentation and questions and answers can be found on the Town's website: <https://braintree.ma.gov/449/Fiscal-Year-Budgets>

Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff stated the Mayor reviewed along with the Superintendent of Schools the budget proposal and the reductions on the staff side. One of the items flagged for reduction was the Math Specialists at the Elementary level. The proposal was ½ a specialist per Elementary school. The Mayor decided to take the \$377,500 that was originally to fund the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Liability and to transfer that into the School Budget to return the staff back to one Math Specialist per Elementary school.

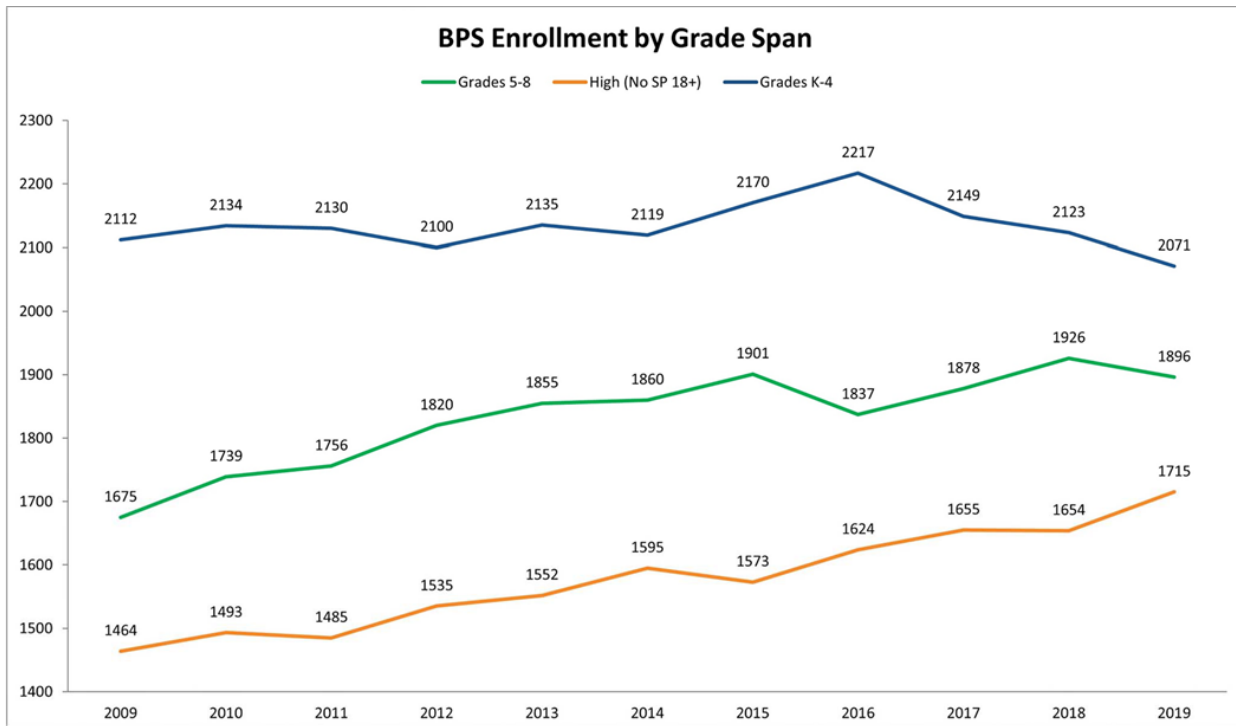
Chairwoman Boericke stated that is good news. We have also not received the Salary Detail and when will that portion of the budget come through?

Dr. Frank Hackett, Superintendent of Schools stated some reductions have shifted staff assignment and now with the additional financial commitment we are still working on the Salary Detail. There are a lot of moving parts.

Dr. Hackett stated Enrollment has had a significant impact on the budget even with revenue shortcuts at the local level. We see an uneven distribution of our students. Re-districting would help. We had this conversation but backed away from it. We try to re-assign staff instead of lay-offs. 86% of our budget is staffing.

George Kokoros, School Committee Finance Chairman stated our proposed budget in front of you tonight is for \$71,574,118 with a one-time federal funding amount of \$3,109,162 that we will not have available to us next year. We spent many months looking at different ways to get to these numbers. This is our best effort to provide the level of education that is proper to our students in Braintree.

Dr. Hackett discussed slides from a power point presentation including the following:



**DESE ENROLLMENT 2020-2021:**

Enrollment by Grade (2020-21)																
	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SP	Total
<a href="#">Archie T Morrison</a>	0	42	62	84	68	68	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	324
<a href="#">Braintree High</a>	79	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	366	413	438	430	0	1,726
<a href="#">Donald Ross</a>	0	41	52	53	55	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	254
<a href="#">East Middle School</a>	0	0	0	0	0	0	248	239	275	243	0	0	0	0	0	1,005
<a href="#">Highlands</a>	0	17	90	72	64	79	73	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	395
<a href="#">Hollis</a>	0	37	72	82	59	78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	328
<a href="#">Liberty</a>	0	0	62	68	64	72	99	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	365
<a href="#">Mary E Flaherty School</a>	0	32	57	62	56	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	270
<a href="#">Monatiquot Kindergarten Center</a>	0	144	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	144
<a href="#">South Middle School</a>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	199	204	242	0	0	0	0	0	645
<b>District</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,456</b>

**FY22 Projected Enrollment & Staffing:**

<b>ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>Ross</b>	<b>Flaherty</b>	<b>Hollis</b>	<b>Highlands</b>	<b>Morrison</b>	<b>Liberty</b>
2021 enrollment (Oct 1, 2020)*	213	238	291	312	282	365
2022 enrollment (proj)*	197	238	299	384	310	375
2022 Avg Class Size	17.9	19.8	19.9	20.2	22.1	18.8

<b>FY22 STAFFING PLAN</b>	<b>Ross*</b>	<b>Flaherty*</b>	<b>Hollis*</b>	<b>Highlands*</b>	<b>Morrison*</b>	<b>Liberty*</b>
General Classroom Teachers	11	12	15	19	14	20
Math Specialists	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Reading Specialists	1	1	1	1	1	1
Guidance/School Psych	1	1	1.5	1	1.5	1
Administrators	1	1	1	1	1	1
Art Teachers				(3.4 all elementary)		
Music Teachers				(4.8 all elementary)		
PE Teachers				(7 all elementary)		

## FY22 Budget: Funding

<b>PROPOSED BUDGET*</b>	<b>Chapter 70*</b>	<b>Local Funds**</b>	<b>Federal Funds (One Time)</b>
<b>\$74,683,280</b>	<b>\$18,459,141</b>	<b>\$53,114,977</b>	<b>\$3,109,162</b>

\* CHAPTER 70: We have not been notified of any changes to the FY22 C70 allocation for Braintree since the Governor's budget was submitted. Both the House and more recently the Senate Ways & Means committee maintained the Governor's allocation of \$18,459,141, which represents an increase of \$161,490 over the current FY21 amount (.9%).

\*\* Does not account for recent allocation from Mayor Kokoros

**NOT FINAL**

ESSR FUNDS:

ESSR	Total	Spent/Encumb.	Remaining	Notes
I	\$431,571	\$431,571		
II	\$1,548,633	\$1,548,633		
<b>TOTAL ESSR I, II</b>	<b>\$1,980,204</b>	<b>\$1,980,204</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
III	\$3,455,550	\$3,109,162	\$346,388	Encumbered as FY22 Revenue Offset (20% Acad Rec)
<b>TOTAL ESSR I-III</b>	<b>\$5,435,754</b>	<b>\$5,089,366</b>	<b>\$346,388</b>	
<i>ESSR III has not been disbursed by the state as of May 17, 2021</i>				

**Integrated Pre School:**

FY 22 Projections:

- 3 Four Year-Old Moderate Classrooms with AM and PM sections 12-14 Students including Community Peers
- 1 Three Year-Old Moderate Classroom AM and PM sections 8 Students including Community Peers
- 1 Moderate Integrated Development Classroom 10 students including Community Peers- Full Day
- 3 ABA Severe Classrooms 3-4 students each, Full Day

\*Each Class involves Certified Teacher and 2 Paraprofessionals - 117 students projected for September

**Position Reductions:**

Enrollment driven = 18 FTE - 7 retirements/resignations Specialists

Literacy - from 2 per elementary school to one Mathematics - from 1 per elementary school to .5

District-wide (2.0 FTE)

Maint & custodial (1.0 FTE) - Open position

*Impact of CBA on reductions and assignments (bumping rights)*

**Federal Revenue Offset:      Positions Funded (not an exhaustive list)**

- Six (6) elementary positions (No Redistricting)
- Six (6) literacy specialists
- Three (3) mathematics specialists
- Four (4) elementary ITT positions
- Six (6) middle school world languages positions

**SALARY LINES:**

	FY21	FY22	YOY Change
Curriculum/Instruction & School Administration	\$ 53,550,164	\$ 52,506,106	\$ (1,044,058)
Athletics & Co- curricular	\$616,647	\$765,852	\$149,205
Custodians and Maintenance	\$2,980,480	\$2,971,652	\$(8,828)
Central Office and Districtwide	\$5,124,163	\$4,941,974	\$(182,189)

**Councilor Questions:**

Councilor Flaherty asked about supplies and being cut in many departments.

Dr. Hackett stated this is one of those items that in the new Chart of Accounts and Munis accounting system has been moved to a different line item.

Councilor Flaherty asked about the disparity and increase in line items in East and decreases in line items in South.

Mr. Jim Lee stated it is due to the size of the enrollment in East vs the smaller enrollment in South. East includes 5<sup>th</sup> grade at this time which South does not right now.

Councilor Flaherty asked about line items that have travel allowances including: Superintendent, Teachers, Custodians, and School Committee those seem like costs that should be considered for elimination.

Dr. Hackett stated the Superintendents line includes all those employees in the Superintendent's office. It is not just the Superintendent on that particular line.

Chairwoman Boericke asked for more detail on the travel budget.

Dr. Hackett stated respectfully it is the School Committee who allocates and approves the school budget. We can get you this information but it is the School Committee who has the final say. The School Committee has approved the budget in front of you.

Councilor Sciascia stated to Nicole Taub, Chief of Staff the reallocation of the OPEB funds is a great use. Councilor Sciascia stated next year the debt services numbers drop off over \$1million. We will probably have the billboard funding, we know we will have \$1.8 million in school funding coming. We will be in a better position to make contributions to OPEB next year.

Councilor Sciascia stated his concern with the School budget. He wondered if residents looking at this would think has this budget been looked at and scrubbed before we begin laying off teachers. We do not have actual expenditures with this School budget. He stated every other department we have what was budgeted last year and what was spent last year and what is budgeted this year. Those actual numbers are critical. Comparing last years budgeted numbers to this years budgeted numbers is borderline useless.

Dr. Hackett stated we will get those numbers for you. Just as examples this past year the numbers were inflated due to COVID. We had to hire additional janitors to disinfect. We had to hire additional substitute teachers when teachers were out sick or had to quarantine. We had transportation increases due to contract negotiations.

Councilor Connors asked about layoff and is the number 18.

Dr. Hackett stated yes and that includes program shifting as well.

Jim Lee stated it is approximately 15 individuals who will ultimately be laid-off in this process.

Councilor Connors asked if we could get a list of these large decreases that moved to another "bucket" or due to a change in the Chart of Accounts and where they went to.

Councilor Ryan stated this is a tough budget for the School Department. We all acknowledge that. The reality is you can't spend money you don't have. I hope when this Committee has questions/concerns that the School Committee can take a look at those concerns.

Chairwoman Boericke stated the ESSR funding is the Federal Cares Act funding. Did we receive in total \$5.4 million from this?

Mr. Lee stated they received \$431,571 from ESSR 1, \$1,548,633 from ESSR 2 and anticipate receiving \$3,455,550 from ESSR 3.

Chairwoman Boericke stated are we using \$3.1 million of those ESSR funds to off-set the budget shortfall? Mr. Lee stated yes.

Chairwoman Boericke stated if we use anymore of the ESSR funding to close the budget gap we will be in a “pickle” and have a financial challenge next year.

Dr. Hackett stated he was asked what would he do if funds became available and he stated there are positions that would not be coming back due to reductions in enrollment. In my view bringing the math specialists back to one per building is pretty close to whole. From a services prospective we are well staffed. We would love to add a third world language to our programing at the high school. Having only two in a high school is rare. When you look at the revenue piece and think of the rollover being about \$3 million increase next year and then add the \$3.1 one-time federal funding, it is a \$6 million gap to start. We hope for revenue recovery and the Town will do better and we will be in a more normal year. We hope the rollover will be manageable. We have been able to fund about a 4% budget increase each year in Braintree but you still have the \$3.1 million of additional funds to bring into the budget that you will have to fund with additional revenue or you will have to cut. We are very concerned about the amount of federal funding that we are using going into next year. I think it is a bit of a gamble. It could be very difficult to manage over FY23.

Chairwoman Boericke asked about enrollment decline. Is this shift in population between different schools?

Dr. Hackett stated yes it is that. It is truly enrollment shifts. The enrollment bubble has shifted from the middle schools to the High School now.

Shawn McGoldrick, Town Auditor stated Braintree overspends each year from what the state says they should spend on Schools. We are over “net school spending”. We are spending outpacing revenue which certainly play a role and it will be tough funding the Schools and other departments for the next couple years.

Dr. Hackett stated we do not receive a lot of Chapter 70 state funding. Spending compared to other towns within the state we are just about in the middle of the pack.

Dr. Hackett stated will our kids and the school department get the same quality that they are used to. The only thing would have been the math specialists but now with today’s announcement from the Mayor that is a good service to have back. Would we love to have more specialists? Of course, but we are providing the services the kids need. The School Committee is an elected body who voted and approved this budget.

Councilor Ryan stated we are all concerned about the Schools budget because the schools are wonderful in Braintree.

**MOTION:** by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 21 020

**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan TABLE Order 21 020

**Second:** by Councilor Connors

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



- **21 021 Mayor: FY2022 Budget – Community Preservation Committee or take up any action relative thereto**

Chairwoman Boericke stated no action is required on Order 21 021 this evening. This item was voted on May 12, 2021.

- **21 022 Mayor: FY2022 Budget - Continuation of Revolving Funds or take up any action relative thereto**

**MOTION:** by Councilor Ryan to take off the TABLE Order 21 022

**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan take off the TABLE Order 21 022

**Second:** by Councilor Connors

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

Chairwoman Boericke asked if there were any questions on Order 21 022 this evening. No additional questions at this time.

(Revolving Accounts discussion/questions on the date Department Head presents Budget)

5/4 Library®

5/6 Golf®

5/10 Department of Public Works® - Recycling

5/12 Dept. of Elder Affairs®

5/12 Municipal Licenses & Inspections®

5/13 Education®

MOTION FOR CONTINUATION OF REVOLVING FUNDS

- R1.** That, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 44, Section 53E1/2 of the General Laws, the Town of Braintree hereby sets the maximum amount that may be spent during fiscal year 2022 beginning on July 1, 2021 for the revolving funds established by ordinance for certain departments, boards, committees, agencies or officers, as follows:

Revolving Fund	Department, Board, Committee, Agency or Officer	FY2022 Spending Limit
Elder Affairs Services and Activities	Department of Elder Affairs	\$30,000
Immunization	Board of Health	\$50,000
Library Materials	Library Trustees	\$45,000
Library Room Rental	Library Trustees	\$5,000

Recycling Materials	Mayor, in conjunction with Recycling Coordinator	\$2,000
Household Hazardous Waste	Mayor, in conjunction with Recycling Coordinator	\$50,000
Full Day Kindergarten	School Committee	\$925,000
Pro Shop	Mayor, in conjunction with Director of Golf Operations	\$200,000
Food and Beverage	Mayor, in conjunction with Director of Golf Operations	\$450,000

**MOTION:** by Councilor Ryan to TABLE Order 21 022

**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan TABLE Order 21 022

**Second:** by Councilor Connors

**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 8:12p.m. by Roll Call Vote.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan M. Cimino  
Clerk of the Council

### Documents provided for Meeting

- 21 020 Mayor: FY2022 Operating Budget or take up any action relative thereto
- 21 021 Mayor: FY2022 Budget – Community Preservation Committee or take up any action relative thereto
- 21 022 Mayor: FY2022 Budget - Continuation of Revolving Funds or take up any action relative thereto