



# 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

## Wednesday, May 19, 2021

A meeting of the Committee of Ways & Means was held Remote via Zoom Webinar, on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 7:30p.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  
James M. Casey, Town Clerk  
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

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 Connors to take off the TABLE Order 21 020

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

**Second:** by Councilor Flaherty

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

- **CALL BACKS:**  
Education
- Discussion - FY2022 Budget

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

Chairwoman Boericke stated the Town Council has the authority to question, understand and recommend. While the Council does have the power to make cuts to the budget we do not have the power to allocate or increase funding to any line. That rests solely with the Mayor. Chairwoman Boericke stated we thank the Mayor for reallocating the \$377,000 from the OPEB funding and shifting that to the school department.

## **SCHOOL DEPARTMENT – CALL BACK**

Councilor Sciascia asked about Art and the increases.

Lisa Freely stated these are contractual steps and lanes.

Councilor Sciascia asked about a line in the central office the contracted services is remaining the same about \$32,000 but the actuals in 2019 were \$5,000; 2020 were \$10,000 and only went up in 2021 why does the budget need to be \$32,531.

Dr. Hackett stated this is for legal fees. We carry this year over year. We try not to spend it. We are going into contract negotiations next year so we did not reduce it but down prior years from about \$50,000.

Councilor Sciascia asked about the line item student stipend.

Dr. Hackett stated this is extra curriculums - clubs etc.

Councilor Sciascia asked if the \$3.1 million is being used for salaries or a mix of different things.

Dr. Hackett stated the vast majority is being used for salaries but also a mix.

Councilor Sciascia asked about the Substitute Teacher line and is that enough funding?

Dr. Hackett stated No. We never know from year to year what we are going to spend on this depending on maternity leaves and long-term leaves, sick days, etc. That line is generally under budgeted.

Chairwoman Boericke stated 86% of the entire School budget is contractually obligated excluding benefits.

Dr. Hackett stated yes approximately \$61 million.

Chairwoman Boericke stated I want residents to realize with a School budget around \$71 million and \$61 million is contractually obligated there is not a whole lot of “fluff”.

Chairwoman Boericke stated it is personal for most of us. We have children in the schools in this town. There is just not a whole lot of wiggle room when you get right down to it.

Chairwoman Boericke stated the \$377,000 that came from the Mayor being allocated to the School department is that just for the 3 Math Specialists to be restored and their salaries and other things that have not been allocated yet.

Dr. Hackett stated yes that is correct.

Chairwoman Boericke asked about enrollment in the Integrated Preschool. In 2019-2020 there were 113 kids with 10 classrooms and in this budget 117 kids with 8 classrooms. What changed.

Jim Lee stated it is based on the needs of the student that show up to this preschool. This is based on services that are provided based on needs and this means a class size could be from about 14 to about 3 or 4 students per class.

Chairwoman Boericke asked if the 2 classrooms being eliminated resulted in the teachers being laid off.

Jim Lee stated one did result in a lay-off the other went to a different school to fill a position.

Chairwoman Boericke stated 18 positions that are being eliminated as a result of enrollment driven shifts and 9 positions as a result of budgetary constraints. The 9 positions are 6 Literary Specialists, 1 Custodian that is essentially not being back-filled and 2 District-wide Teachers. Is this accurate?

Dr. Hackett stated yes except the 2 are Central Office positions not Teachers.

Chairwoman Boericke asked the number of positions or classrooms not filling a position next year.

Jim Lee stated it is about 8. There is a Science position that will not be filled at the high school that the teacher retired this year.

Chairwoman Boericke asked are there no cuts in positions at the High School?

Jim Lee stated there is a Science position that will not be filled at the high school through attrition. That the teacher retired this year.

Chairwoman Boericke stated I know this is not in our purview but this is my personal frustration and it is unclear on what is going away. It would be helpful if we could have a table or something of the positions/classes that are not being filled for this fall.

Dr. Hackett stated most of these positions would be eliminated anyway based on enrollment, based on scheduling. In the past we have added positions like a Math teacher and a Guidance counselor. We thought we were just talking budget. There is no argument for keeping positions that are just not needed due to enrollment driven. We have added and subtracted in other years.

Councilor Flaherty stated the impact of the result of less positions is felt on those students who continue on in the school system now without those teachers or other service providers in place. I fear we will

have to go through this next year. Parents want to understand which position is eliminated due to a change in the need of the school and which position is being eliminated because we just can't afford to pay them. Parents want to know how will this affect my kid.

Dr. Hackett stated if we have an influx at any grade level including the Preschool we have to make that adjustment and we have done that in prior years. I am not concerned about the level of education in Braintree next year. I am very concerned about what FY23 will look like and if we don't take these reductions now the problem will be expediential in FY23. You are looking at a \$7 million-dollar gap in FY23. That is an 8% increase. You will never be able to get there. That type of revenue is not going to show up on your door step in FY23.

### **ADDITIONAL BUDGET Q/A:**

Chairwoman Boericke stated our Town Auditor, Shawn McGoldrick submitted a high-level memo on the FY22 Budget.

Councilor Connors thanked Mr. McGoldrick for these documents he submitted.

Ways & Means Members asked additional questions:

#### **How did we arrive at the designated amount for the 9C Cut Reserve?**

- In establishing the budget for the Finance Department, all contractual and salary related items were funded first. Then a review was completed of other items (travel, meetings/seminars, mileage, etc.) to determine the appropriate funding level. At the end, the balance of available funds for the program were allocated to the line.

#### **Were all of the grants received considered part of FY21 "cost savings"?**

- Some grant funding supported operating expenditures, reducing the amount of spending required; however, some awards have specific spending eligibility separate from the operating budget.

#### **Overall, MA health benefits increase by an average of ~8%, what were we able to do to have our benefits increase by only 2%?**

- Due to COVID, the Town's medical claims were lower than anticipated and the FY22 budgeted amount was reduced to reflect that trend and the availability of funds in the Trust Fund.

#### **Where do the fees from the Town Clerk's office go? Do they go into the general fund?**

- Yes, these fees are projected in the annual revenue and deposited into the general fund.

#### **Could we move the municipal elections to the even years to save money? Why did we decide to put the muni elections on the odd years or is this state determined?**

- Section 7-1 of the Charter requires that the regular town election shall be held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in each odd-numbered year.

**Were the BPD overtime cost reductions a result of grant funding or were they a result of fewer OT hours due to the scheduling changes that have been discussed?**

- The reductions in OT costs are the result of scheduling changes made to reduce the expenditures. An analysis of the prior year's spending was completed and sworn personnel were moved to various shifts to reduce overtime due to time off or injury. Additionally, two detectives assigned to federal task forces were brought back to the department to reduce OT and add a detective to the drug control unit. Some of the OT incurred will be reimbursed through grant programs, including for example Click It or Ticket, where the work being performed is specific to the grant objective. Finally, any OT incurred as a result of COVID will be reimbursed through FEMA (currently valued at \$51,149.54) and reduced from the operating total.

**Were the four new recruits for the BFD incremental staff or replacement staff?**

- These are replacement hires that have been delayed for budgetary reasons as well as Academy closures due to COVID.

**How much money has the town given the golf course over the last 10 years and what are the terms the town has set forth for the golf course to repay the gen. fund?**

- The Town has tracked the total transfers to the golf course since FY18. The total amount transferred to support golf operations is \$424,217.00 and includes support to operating, food concession and capital. The FY20 deficit has been amortized over three years and totals \$345,958.15. The Golf Course will make these payments out of the enterprise fund. FY22 will be the first year that operations proceed without the food and beverage program and it will be important for operations to stabilize before establishing a payment schedule. Also, unlike any other community golf course, the golf course has returned \$1,195,224 back to the Town to cover indirect costs since FY04. There are several other contributions made, including donations to the Braintree HS golf teams and the Special Needs Program and Braintree Athletic Association.

**For the revenues that are behind at this point (payment in lieu of tax, cemetery etc.. ) can you provide info - are they one payments that happen at the end of the year - were they already due and if so do we think we can recoup them.**

- PILOT payments are typically made quarterly throughout the year, with the exception of the largest program (BELD), which makes equal payments of \$862,500 in December and June. As of March 31, there was a \$350,000 payment outstanding from Massport and a \$77,250 payment outstanding from the Sheriff's Department. Notices have been sent to both entities for payment.
- Cemetery Receipts come in throughout the year and are slightly behind schedule with 62.76% collected as of March 31, 2021.
- Investment Income is down due to reduced interest rates below the original projections.
- Medicaid Payments are received quarterly and there are two payments outstanding.
- Miscellaneous Recurring is currently at approximately \$923,000 as of May 1 due to two receipts that came in April at approximately \$525,000, bringing total receipts to roughly 90% collected.

**Will the 1.5M for the sale of Allen Street be paid in full by the year end and if so - where will the 200K not accounted for in the actual be used for**

- The following information was previously provided to the Committee regarding the payment schedule:

**The Town has executed a Purchase and Sale with Arch Communities and Winn Development for the purchase of the Allen Street Property. The following is the payment schedule, all of which will be deposited into the land sale fund and subsequently transferred to the general fund:**

- Proposal Security--\$75,000 (received)
- Deposit--\$75,000 (received)
- Receipt of Permits--\$150,000
- Pre-Application Approval (but no later than December 15, 2021--\$100,000
- Funding Award (but no later than August 31, 2022)--\$150,000
- Balance Due no later than October 15, 2022--\$950,000

**All payments are non-refundable. In November 2020, prior to setting the tax rate, a supplemental appropriation was approved to transfer \$1.3M to replace this revenue in the FY21 budget. As a result, no further appropriation will be required and the funds have not been included in the FY22 budget. Will we get a revised budget prior to voting on Wednesday night incorporating all changes made including the OPEB reduction, updated school funding from that and the small misc changes made last week?**

- Yes

Ways & Means Members asked additional questions:

Councilor Connors asked about Commercial growth and Braintree's outlook for the next couple of years. Nicole Taub stated there are a couple things in the works that I cannot talk about yet but these are positives from the permit fees, taxes and job creations it will generate. There is also conversations around Motel 6 and the old Hamonetics. There has been multiple million of dollars put into this building for renovations by the property owners. The hope is for a life-science to go into that property.

The old Lord & Taylor is working to modify and enhance the building for some kind of medical use. Permit fee revenue will come from that with more revenue to come to the town. The Mar companies are looking to expand their Braintree location and move from the city of Boston. We will continue to work to attract the Life Sciences.

Councilor Connors stated the Free Cash is currently \$3,093,791. It is important to mention Mr. McGoldrick's memo stated our goal should be 10% free cash or about \$14 million.

Ms. Taub stated as thing re-open it will help especially with the Meals Tax. The Hyatt has now reopened. Councilor Connors stated we need to talk about a long-term plan to get out of the hole we are in this Town will go negative next year. It will take years to build the free cash and stabilization accounts back up. If anything goes wrong we do not have the money.

Mr. McGoldrick stated it is fact that there will be \$6 million on top of the Schools current budget that you will be looking for next year in FY23. Collective Bargaining Agreements are going to be very difficult in the next year.

Nicole Taub stated the Mayor made some changes early on based on his assessment of the numbers. We have a lot of the same concerns. We talk about the numbers every day. In anticipation of things getting more difficult we reduced hours of about 60 employees. We did not fill positions when they became vacant unless there we truly a need. We look for ways to make reductions.

Councilor Flaherty stated we need to get serious driving some revenue forward. Life Sciences are a good idea. Residents need to understand this town needs to bring revenue in or we cannot provide the services they are accustomed to.

Councilor Connors stated I no way blame the current administration. This is a problem that has been going on for a while. This has been a long-term problem that will take a long time to correct.

Chairwoman Boericke stated what we have to work with that is not contractually obligated. We have \$145 million to work with. \$22 million is employee and veteran benefits. \$24.3 million in employee salaries (excluding Schools). \$10 million in debt services that we are legally obligated to pay. We have about \$875,000 insurance that we have to pay. \$4.1 million that we owe the State in assessments. We have about \$82,000 for Elections. All that together is \$123 million dollars.

Ed Spellman stated we are about \$100 million in payroll – Town wide. You also need to add \$2.6 million for the Blue Hills Regional School.

Chairwoman Boericke stated that leaves us \$22 million to do everything in the town. \$10 million is to the Schools. All the other services like building inspections, health inspections, trash collection, etc. All the other services that is \$12 million dollars for a town of 37,000 people. There is just not a lot for us to work with. We are trying to be good steward with our tax dollars. There just is nothing left to restore the funds. We need to have conversations on how to build back and set us up for the success we all want to see. Every stone has been over-turned to make the best possible decisions on behalf of our constituents.

Nicole Taub provided an overview of revisions to the original budget as a result of these budget discussions.

Councilor Ryan read the following Motions:

**MOTIONS:** read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 21 022 (items 1 through 6):

1. That the Town of Braintree raise and appropriate the sum of \$145,617,216 to provide for all of the expenses for the maintenance and operation of the Town's several departments and programs for the fiscal year 2022 and that the several sums herein set forth are hereby approved for the several purposes and are subject to the source of funding for said expenditures as outlined on the attached Exhibit A, specifically, that the sum of \$93,499 be transferred from Golf Course receipts, the sum of \$250,000 be transferred from the Overlay Surplus account, the sum of \$9,700 be transferred from the Waterways Improvement fund, the sum of \$22,000 be transferred from the Sale of Cemetery Lots, the sum of \$857,525 be transferred from Water and Sewer receipts, the sum of \$36,251 be transferred from Stormwater receipts, the sum of \$1,864,500 to be transferred from the American Rescue Plan Act account, and the balance to be raised in the tax levy (including 2,659,954 from the debt exclusion).

**MOTION:** read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve Order 21 020 (1)

**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve Order 21 020 (1)

**Second:** by Councilor Connors

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

2. That the Town of Braintree appropriate the sum of \$1,708,653 to provide for all of the expenses for the maintenance and operation of the Town's Golf Course and related programs for the fiscal year 2022 and that the several sums herein set forth are hereby approved for the several purposes as outlined on the attached Exhibit A, specifically, and that the sum of \$1,708,653 be raised in the Golf Course receipts.

**MOTION:** read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve Order 21 020 (2)

**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve Order 21 020 (2)

**Second:** by Councilor Connors

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

3. That the Town of Braintree appropriate the sum of \$21,615,898 to provide for all of the expenses for the maintenance and operation of the Town's Water and Sewer Division and related programs for the fiscal year 2022 and that the several sums herein set forth are hereby approved for the several purposes as outlined on the attached Exhibit A, specifically, that the sum of \$103,694 be transferred from the Water Sewer Rehabilitation Fund and the balance of \$21,512,204 be raised in the Water and Sewer receipts.



**MOTION:** read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve  
Order 21 020 (3)  
**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve  
Order 21 020 (3)  
**Second:** by Councilor Connors  
**Roll Call Vote:** For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

4. That the Town of Braintree appropriate the sum of \$1,074,266 to provide for all of the expenses for the maintenance and operation of the Town’s Stormwater Division and related programs for the fiscal year 2022 and that the several sums herein set forth are hereby approved for the several purposes as outlined on the attached Exhibit A, specifically, and that the sum of \$1,074,266 be raised in the Stormwater receipts.

**MOTION:** read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve  
Order 21 020 (4)  
**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve  
Order 21 020 (4)  
**Second:** by Councilor Connors  
**Roll Call Vote:** For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

5. That the Town of Braintree appropriate the sum of \$505,099 to provide for all of the expenses for the maintenance and operation of the Town’s Cable Television Public, Education and Government Access and related programs for the fiscal year 2022 and that the several sums herein set forth are hereby approved for the several purposes as outlined on the attached Exhibit A, specifically, and that the sum of \$505,099 be raised in the Cable Franchise Fees receipts.

**MOTION:** read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve  
Order 21 020 (5)  
**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve  
Order 21 020 (5)  
**Second:** by Councilor Connors  
**Roll Call Vote:** For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

6. Pursuant to General Law Chapter 44, Section 31D, the town is authorized to incur a liability in excess of the amount appropriated for snow and ice for fiscal year 2022.

**MOTION:** read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve  
Order 21 020 (6)  
**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve  
Order 21 020 (6)  
**Second:** by Councilor Connors  
**Roll Call Vote:** For (5–Boericke, Connors, Flaherty, Ryan, Sciascia), Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- **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.

I would like to know about any loans from the general fund that the Golf has received and if there is a plan to getting those repaid.

Nicole Taub stated we need to allow the Golf Course to rebuild some of those revenues before we discuss a payment schedule. We took seriously the request of the Committee and we keep track of the monies that went to the Golf Course.

Ed Spellman, Director of Finance stated the intent is to stabilize the Golf operations and let them have a year or two and do the repayment over a 10-15 year period.

Councilor Flaherty asked for the dollar amount of what the Golf has borrowed from the general fund.

(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:** read by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council Order 21 022

#### 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 for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve Order 21 022

**Motion:** by Councilor Ryan for favorable recommendation to the full Council to Approve 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 7:52p.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
- 21 022 Mayor: FY2022 Budget - Continuation of Revolving Funds or take up any action relative thereto
- Town Auditor Memo FY22 Budget