

## BRAINTREE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

### MINUTES

February 2, 2007

Budget Hearing meeting of the Braintree Board of Selectmen, held on Friday, February 2, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. at Braintree Town Hall, in the Carl R. Johnson, Jr. Chambers, One JFK Memorial Drive, Braintree, Massachusetts

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Charles B. Ryan, Chairman; Joseph W. Hubbard, Vice Chairman; Charles Kokoros; Joseph Powers

**ABSENT:** Darrin M. McAuliffe, Clerk

**ALSO PRESENT:** Sue Kay, Interim Executive Secretary; Brian Connolly, Finance Director; Deborah Carlino, Recording Secretary; members of the press and public

Chairman Ryan opened the meeting at 9:20 a.m.; all members of the Board who were present answered to a roll call.

Mr. Connolly provided a handout for the Board dated February 1, 2007, re: FY Budget Hearing. Mr. Connolly advised that the FY08 objectives are to maintain town services and current staffing levels; continuation of borrowing authorizations of \$1.4 million per year for roads and schools; fund all collective bargaining agreements voted by Town Meeting; fund all fixed costs without cutting existing services.

#### *Revenue Highlights*

##### *Local Receipts*

The Board was advised that Mr. Connolly was currently working with the preliminary projections. Although current projections indicate a modest increase of \$250,000, he expects these figures to change over the next few months. One item that we need to pay attention to is Motor Vehicle Excise. We budgeted a significant increase for this FY and it remains to be seen whether we realize this gain.

##### *State Aid*

Initially we budgeted a modest increase of \$500,000. Given that comments from the Governor's office indicate that increase in local aid will go towards education, we are scaling back expectations of any increase to non-education aid. This area too, will be revisited as we get closer to final budget submission from the Governors office.

##### *Sale of Town Land*

After the next auction in March, we will be better suited to identify exactly how much money from this sale of land can be applied towards the budget. A preferred application for this money would be towards capital or transition costs.

##### *Cemetery Perpetual Care*

This fund should be used to offset the expenses incurred to manage the cemeteries. These funds should not go toward salary, but for non-personnel items.

##### *Workers Comp Reserve for Appropriation*

Mr. Connolly was recommending that we utilize at least \$125,000 from this account to offset the workers comp account.

*Medicare Part D*

As was indicated in last year's budget, these funds should be used to fund all personnel and non-personnel expenses for the Benefits Coordinator position. With the remainder set aside for the purpose.

*General Insurances*

We are re-bidding our property insurance. After consulting with several sources I am confident that we can realize a savings in this area. We will know in March/April exactly what the savings will be. I am also recommending that we increase our deductibles from \$500 to \$1000 so as to release a savings with the next round of bids.

*Trash Fee*

I am proposing that the Trash Fee include the entire cost of operating this program, to include health insurance and retirement.

*Water/Sewer Transfer*

I am recommending that a more aggressive analysis be undertaken to better determine actual costs associated with managing the finances of the water/sewer operation. This item should be discussed in the next few months.

*Expense Highlights*

*Education*

The submission prepared by Dr. Kurzberg and his leadership team includes additional teaching and operations staff along with associated expenses. Their submission represents a \$2.2 million + increase to their current budget.

*Blue Hill Regional School District*

We received notification that our projected increase will be \$256,000.

*Police*

The Police Dept. budget includes a request for the hiring of additional police officers and associated expenses. Total submission increase: \$1.2 million.

*Fire*

Contractual agreements require us to fund the additional Fire Fighters and the associated costs. Total submission increase: \$700,000.

*Retirement and Employee Benefits*

Contributory retirement cost is up \$200,000. The health insurance increase is currently \$730,000. We should have a better understanding of the cost of the item closer to March/April.

*Waste Collection*

We anticipate a \$95,000 increase, although this will be offset by a rate increase to be determined.

*Cemetery*

Their submission includes a total increase of \$66,000. I am suggesting that their non-personnel related expenses be funded from the Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund.

*Library*

Last FY the town approved the creation of an Asst. Library Director position. Although partially funded this FY, we are absorbing the full cost in FY08. Their budget increase is \$70,000.

*Debt Service*

Although I have not yet calculated the debt service increase, my initial estimate is close to \$100,000.

Further, it is noted that at this time, the balance of the stabilization account is \$1,188 million.

Ms. Kay advised the Board that they need to keep in mind the transition costs that could be anywhere from \$400,000 to \$600,000 in order to get ready for the new government. She would recommend taking these budgets under advisement at this time and vote the Board's recommendations at a BOS meeting that would be prior to the Depts. going before FinCom.

**-Dept. 220 Fire**

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Gerald Kenny; Deputy Chief Ken McHugh  
Chief Kenny advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$6,946,811.00. The increase is only in personnel, 4 fire fighters, as is required by the 17 minimum manning. They currently have 84 fire fighters and are proposing an increase to 88. They lost 7 fire fighters due to budget cuts in the past and have brought back three due to retirements; they are still four short.

There was a question re: the increase in fire fighter equipment.

Chief Kenny advised that that was for actual equipment, as the shelf life of their equipment is only about five years. He is recommending that some of the current equipment be replaced on a regular basis.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 220 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Kokoros  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 221 Maintain Fire Station**

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Gerald Kenny; Deputy Chief Ken McHugh  
Chief Kenny advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$106,600. There was a decrease in this budget due to FinCom's recommendations re: the utilities for FY08 being the same amount as FY06. Also, the building repairs are under capital.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 221 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Kokoros  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 210 Police**

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Paul Frazier; Deputy Chief Russell Jenkins; Deputy Chief Kevin McHugh; Paul McSorley; Lt. Kevin Ware; Lt. Wayne Foster; Sgt. Tim Cohoon; Patrolman Robert Joseph

Chief Frazier advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$7,584,512.00. The Board received a video presentation by the Police Dept. re: the many police service calls that have occurred over the past few months. There have been many drug arrests, house break-ins, assaults, etc. It was noted that over the past 24 months heroin seizures have increased 35%; marijuana has increased 76.5%; cocaine has increased 157%; and Oxycontin has increased over 321%. Arrests during the day have increased 16% in 2006. Prior to 9/11, there were 11 officers on during the day; now there are 5. The Police Dept. responded to 32,938 calls in 2006, the average is 27,000. The Board was advised that Braintree has two terrorist targets: the South Shore Plaza and Clean Harbors.

They are requesting to maintain the existing 2 School Resource Officers; and adding 14 new Officers: 2 additional Daytime Detectives; 1 Drug Supervisor; 2 General Investigator Detectives; 2 Day Shift Traffic Officers; 1 Court Prosecutor Supervisor; 6 new Patrol Officers.

The Board asked if the Police Dept. cannot have everything, can there be prioritization of things needed.

**Mr. Hubbard arrived at the meeting.**

Chief Frazier advised that they do the best that they can with the resources they have. However, they are very low on man power.

The Board thanked Chief Frazier and the Police Dept. for their thorough presentation. It was professional and informative.

Ms. Kay wanted it noted that the traffic division will be very important due to the upcoming development of the former Weymouth Air Base.

Mr. Hubbard stated that the Board needs to stand together and go before FinCom for the Fire and Police Depts.; similar to what was done in years before.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 210 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Kokoros  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 211 Maintain Police Station**

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Paul Frazier; Deputy Chief Russell Jenkins; Deputy Chief Kevin McHugh; Paul McSorley; Lt. Kevin Ware; Lt. Wayne Foster; Sgt. Tim Cohoon; Patrolman Robert Joseph

Chief Frazier advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$152,232.00. This was a level budget however; they did follow FinCom's recommendations re: the utilities for FY08 being the same amount as FY06. It was agreed that there needs to be a new Police Station. It was suggested that Town Meeting or the BOS start a committee to review a new building (the site, location, cost, etc.).

Ms. Kay stated that this building is not sufficient and needs to be replaced. It would be a good idea to have outsiders look at the building needs of the Police Dept. There are grant moneys available, however they are hard to get.

Mr. Kokoros stated that there have been studies done in the past and we could review that data and determine if that is the beset location for the Police Station or if it should be constructed elsewhere. There is some value to the land where the current building is located and could be auctioned off to help raise funds.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 211 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Kokoros  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 292 Animal Control**

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Paul Frazier; Deputy Chief Russell Jenkins; Deputy Chief Kevin McHugh; Paul McSorley; Lt. Kevin Ware; Lt. Wayne Foster; Sgt. Tim Cohoon; Patrolman Robert Joseph

Chief Frazier advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$58,503.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 292 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Kokoros  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 241 Inspections**

IN ATTENDANCE: Angela Geso

Ms. Geso advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$482,978.00. The Board was advised that they were looking into getting new computer program and better user-friendly forms.

MOTION: by Mr. Kokoros to take the Dept. 241 budget under advisement

SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 291 Civil Defense**

IN ATTENDANCE: Robert James, Director BEMA

Mr. James advised that their budget is covered by state and federal grants. BEMA provides funding for Nextel phones and equipment for BEMA and other Town Depts. (\$23,000); Personnel Services (\$14,820); BEMA Senior Deputy (\$1200); BEMA Annual Operating Budget (\$9980); BEMA Director (\$26,000). This \$75,000 Annual Grant is guaranteed by contract with the Nuclear Entergy Power Company Civil Defense Administrative Grant Agreement and will continue to the year 2017.

There was discussion re: the Reverse 911 phone system. It was noted that BELD is working on this program within Town.

It was suggested that Mr. James be invited to a BOS meeting to provide an update in order to advise the residents as to what kind of services that BEMA provides.

MOTION: by Mr. Kokoros to take the Dept. 291 budget under advisement

SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**Whereas the Board took a brief recess**

**-Dept. 122 Selectmen**

Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a budget in the amount of \$224,329.00. The Board was advised that the Dept. Head salary was being split between Ms. Kay as Interim Executive Secretary (until December 31, 2007) and the incoming Mayor's salary (January 1, 2008). Further, the other change would be that the existing Admin Coordinator position would go from an M-6A to an M-6D.

It was noted that the Receptionist position was not included within this budget and would have to be added.

Ms. Kay also noted that line item 5205 "Awards and Ceremonies" should be increased to \$1000 due to the ceremonies that will be done at the last Town Meeting in October. The ceremony will include a procession, awards, recognizing past Town Moderators, the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee etc.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 122 budget under advisement

SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 151 Law**

There was discussion re: the existing Town Counsel (the firm of Kopelman & Paige) will be changing to a Town Solicitor and the budget will fluctuate. Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a budget in the amount of \$303,717.00

There was concern re: the number of times that Town Counsel is contacted. Ms. Kay advised that a request has to come into her office for approval prior to contact and an opinion from Town Counsel.

There was discussion re: charge backs for other Depts. use of Town Counsel; i.e. the legal costs as related to the Planning Dept.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 151 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 159 General Government**

Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$131,200.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Kokoros to take the Dept. 159 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 192 Maintain Town Buildings**

Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$201,548.00.

There was discussion re: the FinCom's recommendations re: the utilities for FY08 being the same amount as FY06. However, in 2006 the budget was approximately \$21,000, as that was an exceptional year; however, 2007 was about \$41,000 as that was an exceptional year in the opposite direction.

Mr. Connolly advised that he, Ms. Kay and Ted Langill, Chairman of the FinCom met and came to an agreement to meet in the middle re: the figures and that is why that figure for 2008 is \$32,000.

It was suggested asking BELD to do an energy audit of the budget to see if there are any energy savings that could be done to help save money.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 192 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 195 Town Report**

Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$8,000.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Hubbard to take the Dept. 195 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Kokoros  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 543 Veterans**

IN ATTENDANCE: Gail Walsh

Ms. Walsh advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$149,688.00.

The Board was advised that the Dept. Head has been advertised and the new person will be at a lower rate of pay. It was noted that this Dept. has been grossly under funded. The number of veterans has grown and the outreach program has increased.

MOTION: by Mr. Hubbard to take the Dept. 543 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Powers  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**Mr. Kokoros left the meeting**

**-Dept. 692 Celebrations**

IN ATTENDANCE: Gail Walsh

Ms. Walsh advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$17,700.00.

It was noted that the July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities line item will be increased to \$10,000 and the Memorial Day/Veterans line item will be \$0.

MOTION: by Mr. Hubbard to take the Dept. 692 budget under advisement

SECOND: by Mr. Powers

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 910 Contributory Retirement**

IN ATTENDANCE: Jeanne Martineau

Ms. Martineau presented the budget to the Board. The Board was advised that the Town has received a 14.2% increase according to the "Preliminary Performance Flash Report for periods ending December 31, 2006".

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 910 budget under advisement

SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 911 Non-Contributory Retirement**

IN ATTENDANCE: Jeanne Martineau

Ms. Martineau presented the budget to the Board.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 911 budget under advisement

SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 411 Engineering**

IN ATTENDANCE: Robert Campbell, Town Engineer

Mr. Campbell advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$405,689.00. The Board was advised that there has been a request for a new pick up truck in the amount of \$30,000 that would be made through capital.

MOTION: by Mr. Hubbard to take the Dept. 411 budget under advisement

SECOND: by Mr. Powers

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**Whereas the Board took a recess for lunch**

**-Dept. 133 Finance**

IN ATTENDANCE: Brian Connolly, Finance Director

Mr. Connolly advised that he was presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$89,547.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Hubbard to take the Dept. 133 budget under advisement

SECOND: by Mr. Powers

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 155 MIS**

IN ATTENDANCE: Mike Steen

Mr. Steen advised that he was presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$105,530.00.

The Board was advised that there has been an article placed for Town Meeting requesting computer upgrades.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 155 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 135 Accounting**

IN ATTENDANCE: Kevin Flynn, Town Accountant

Mr. Flynn advised that he was presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$215,867.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 135 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 900 Property Liability Insurance**

IN ATTENDANCE: Brian Connolly, Finance Director

Mr. Connolly advised that he was presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$475,000.00. The Board was advised that this number may decrease due to final numbers from Cook & Co.

MOTION: by Mr. Hubbard to take the Dept. 900 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Powers  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 941 Court Judgments**

Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$500.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 941 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 176 Zoning Board of Appeals**

IN ATTENDANCE: Deborah Carlino, Board Secretary

Mr. Connolly advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$9800.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 176 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 424 Street Lighting**

Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$312,400.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 424 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 421 Highway**

Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$1,732,020.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Hubbard to take the Dept. 421 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Powers  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 541 Council on Aging**

IN ATTENDANCE: Sharmila Biswas, Director

Ms. Biswas advised that she was presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$229,176.00.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 541 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**-Dept. 699 Bra-Wey Reg. Recreation**

Ms. Kay advised that they were presenting a level funded budget in the amount of \$81,355.00. It was noted that the Towns of Weymouth and Braintree equally split the total of this budget.

MOTION: by Mr. Powers to take the Dept. 699 budget under advisement  
SECOND: by Mr. Hubbard  
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Ms. Kay advised that at the BOS meeting scheduled for February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the Board needs to vote on some of the budgets that are not "controversial" in order that those depts. can go before the FinCom. She will request that the FinCom hold off on the big, touchy budgets.

It was noted that the BOS should, as a united Board, go before the FinCom on behalf of the Police and Fire Depts.' budgets. Also, a reminder was that the transition funds to cover same should be about \$400,000 to \$600,000.

It was suggested holding a mock Town Meeting on a Saturday in order to show the Town Meeting Members what is coming up so if there are any concerns/questions that those can be addressed prior to Town Meeting in order that the Annual Town Meeting can move smoothly and quickly.

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deborah Carlino  
Recording Secretary