

Town of Brentwood
Budget Committee Meeting at Brentwood Town Office
Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2022

Present: Jack Mitchell, Michelle Siudut, Anthony Phillips, Lois DeYoung, Alina Arida

Excused absences: Letty Bedard, Andy Artimovich

Guests: Steve Dawson, Liz Mcconnell

Jack called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Motion by Lois, seconded by Michelle to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2022 meeting; passed 4-0-1.

After discussion at the previous meeting, motion by Lois, seconded by Michelle to recommend Anthony and Letty to the Health Benefits subcommittee; and Lois to the Police Building Committee; passed unanimously 5-0-0.

Department Visit

Police Chief John Ventura was present to discuss his goals for the Police Department. He hopes to keep us up to date throughout the year, not just at budget season. Chief has worked in small departments through his career; he knows what works.

The town currently has 5 patrolmen positions, and positions for 1 Lieutenant and 1 Chief. The current staff are committed and he is happy with them, but he would like to add another patrolman position. The town has been growing and the department has not kept up with that growth. FBI recommendations would actually call for 12 officers for a town of our size.

Training a new officer costs \$40K, which is not prudent to do with new personnel every 2 years. Employee retention is key; Chief will put employees first, while balancing the needs of dept vs that of the town.

There is a negative perception of our PD. Morale is a big part of what he is working towards. Chief will work to change that, including 4 ten-hour shifts. He is also establishing responsibilities such as quartermaster and someone in charge of vehicles.

Chief said 3 certified (already gone through the Academy, which saves us \$) applicants have applied for his one current opening for patrolman. He's also searching for an LT. He is confident he can bring on a new position in our current budget. The new position will typically be \$80-90K, but with his proposed cuts would be closer to \$60K. The over-time line and the uniforms line can both be reduced for a \$20-30K savings. COPS Grants are not available for 2022, but he will apply for 2023. He will also be applying for overtime grants available from the state for specific searches such as seat belts.

Vehicles are an issue. We currently have 9 cruisers for 7 officers. All of our vehicles are different makes; we need a fleet of same make vehicles and we need a depreciation schedule. Other equipment also needs a depreciation schedule, such as radios.

Training is our biggest need. We need a Field Training Officer. There is a lot of free training available, Chief will access that. Monthly staff meetings will include training; sometimes by Chief, sometimes by other groups. Current requirement for training is 8 hours per year, but that will increase to 24 hours by 2025.

New hires currently must make a 3-year commitment, to enable us to recoup the cost to train. He will want a new building but is not planning to ask for it next year, probably 2024. He will start educating and working toward that immediately. He wants to plan further out. FD was recently built so a complex is unlikely, but a new police building is necessary; he reviewed some of the major problems with the current station.

Question was asked how close are we to 2 more full time. Chief is not certain on that. Chief offered committee members a ride-along, and said he is available for any questions.

Other Business

Jack asked if we should visit other departments, as we did last year. Michelle suggested Jack reach out to department heads to see if they have any anticipated asks, or if they would like to meet with us. Alina suggested we meet with Karen to learn more about her role/needs.

Next meeting June 6, time TBD, possibly with Karen C.

Motion to adjourn by Michelle; seconded by Lois. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Siudut