

**Minutes of Joint Meeting of Brandon Selectboard and Budget Advisory Committee**  
15 October 2024, Brandon Town Hall

Attendance Selectboard present: Doug Bailey, Heather Nelson, Tim Guiles, Ralph Ethier, Brian Coolidge.  
Budget committee present: Janet Coolidge, Gabe McGuigan, Karen Rhodes, Barry Varian. Public present: Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore, Cecil Reniche-Smith, Billy Bullock.

Selectboard Chair Doug Bailey called the meeting to order at 7PM. On motion of Ralph Ethier and second by Tim Guiles, the posted agenda was adopted by the selectboard 4-0 (Nelson not yet present).

Selectboard Remarks Doug Bailey gave brief remarks about the process and stated the Highway Department (HWY) would be tonight's topic, to be used as an example/exercise with the board and budget advisory committee. The town manager had provided a first draft with some notes and options and some background discussion on health insurance, current staff wages and organization, and a twelve-year lookback at how paving has been funded. These were touched upon.

Line by Line HWY Budget Examination During the review of the HWY budget, Heather Nelson led the group in a line by line examination of the non-labor HWY spending. Values were assigned by consensus of the group (1=must have, 2=questions, 3=reduce or delay). The town manager offered a cautious note that if the budget is cut too closely it may increase the possibility of an overrun as there would be less flexibility to accommodate an unforeseen expense. We are drafting this budget 20 months prior to its end point. With HWY especially, weather (snowier winter, icier storms, etc.) can have a big impact and we must allow for the full required winter operations. The group discussed that the reaction of the budget advisory committee members in particular could usefully be read as a signal of voter reaction, and appropriately addressed with communication and/or making modifications to the spending proposal before it goes to the voters.

The town manager and HWY division chief will estimate quantities of asphalt for the FY26 identified projects (Wheeler Rd, south end of McConnell Rd, next portion of Town Farm Rd). A capital fund, or partial capital fund and how to add resources to that was considered.

Doug Bailey floated the concept of a pre-town-meeting / budget hearing for community input in advance of the selectboard's adoption of the budget proposal, and all agreed this was a worthwhile effort to make.

On motion of Brian Coolidge seconded by Tim Guiles and voted 5-0, the meeting adjourned at 8:57PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Seth M Hopkins, town manager