



THE 02184



From the Desk of the Mayor BUDGET FY25 UPDATES

On Tuesday April 30th I presented to Town Council the Town of Braintree's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget which will be the budget for our next Fiscal Year beginning on July 1, 2024.

My first budget is one I knew would be challenging but I've enjoyed working through the complexities. This budget process has offered me an opportunity to dig into all the interworkings of our Town and to get to know our Department Heads and their teams. As many of you know, during the process of kicking off planning for FY25 we lost our long-time Town Finance Director Mr. Ed Spellman to retirement. While we were relatively quick to bring on our new Finance Director, Mr. Michael Esmond – who started in March - we did have some challenges in getting internally caught up to speed on existing Town processes and record keeping.

I also would like to recognize my department heads who have been invaluable at identifying some challenging decisions that would be made in the preparation of this budget and always keeping their sights on managing through.

I'm especially thankful to our Big 4 departments – School, Fire, Police and Public Works – collectively these departments make up the majority of our spending and have spent exhaustive amounts of time and budget iterations directed at understanding the true, all-in yearly cost of department operations so we could best plan for FY25 and beyond.



Going into FY25 we were faced with an embedded \$18M structural operating deficit.

This goes back to decisions made in prior years to fund growing operational expenses that would be reoccurring – with one-time funds. Looking just back at the FY24 budget presentation to the Town Council last May, you will see that the prior administration balanced the budget deficit by using \$4.3 million in Free Cash. Free Cash is the town's "rainy day" fund to be used for emergency expenditures. This account is not meant to plug gaps in an operating budget because it is a one-time fix for a permanent annual budget deficit. This deficit will repeat every year into the future unless a permanent, recurring revenue source is identified or expense cuts are implemented to balance the budget.

Reflections on our First Quarter

Our first three months in office have been fast-paced and humbling. The outpouring of resident and business leader support in our early days have pulled us through some challenging circumstances presented in hard-hitting budget discussions right off the bat—many of which have been covered in recent School Committee meetings, Town Council hearings, and newspaper clippings.

We also realized some immediate employee changes around Town Hall, some due to retirements, and we look forward to welcoming new folks in our Human Resources, Financial, Treasurer and Legal offices. The Mayor's Office also looks a bit different too with Kara Nyman joining us as Chief of Staff and...

Continued on Page 10

In the FY24 budget, neither permanent spending cuts nor sufficient reoccurring revenue sources were identified to balance the budget in FY24 and beyond. Furthermore, once I took office in January, I discovered that the FY24 Budget was understated by \$3M. In other words, the FY24 year-end deficit is projected to be \$7.3 million. This deficit is permanent unless expenses are cut or revenue is raised or a combination of both.

		Projected Structural Deficits, FY 2025 through FY2028				
		FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028
Revenue						
Town Levy / Property Taxes	\$	110,776,684	\$ 113,814,189	\$ 117,202,807	\$ 120,692,893	\$ 124,288,148
Local Aid	\$	22,990,253	\$ 23,344,524	\$ 23,730,000	\$ 24,118,000	\$ 24,506,000
Local Receipts	\$	20,882,990	\$ 21,715,054	\$ 22,176,000	\$ 22,644,000	\$ 23,027,000
Other Financing	\$	5,755,074	\$ 1,551,845	\$ 1,576,882	\$ 1,602,419	\$ 1,628,468
Total Revenues	\$	160,405,001	\$ 160,425,612	\$ 164,685,688	\$ 169,057,312	\$ 173,449,616
Spending						
Schools	\$	74,732,868	\$ 84,674,503	\$ 88,908,228	\$ 93,353,639	\$ 98,021,321
General Government	\$	52,108,474	\$ 58,110,720	\$ 59,563,488	\$ 61,052,575	\$ 62,578,890
Debt	\$	10,269,942	\$ 10,569,942	\$ 10,819,850	\$ 11,107,065	\$ 11,395,640
Benefits (Pension / Health Care)	\$	23,293,717	\$ 24,845,263	\$ 26,345,263	\$ 27,845,263	\$ 29,345,263
Total Spending	\$	160,405,001	\$ 178,200,428	\$ 185,636,828	\$ 193,358,543	\$ 201,341,113
Balance	\$	0	\$ (17,774,816)	\$ (20,951,140)	\$ (24,301,231)	\$ (27,891,498)
Cumulative Gap, FY25-FY28=>						\$ (90,918,685)

As you can see the operational deficit grows year over year and the cumulative gap projects to over \$90M by FY28.

To put this crisis in perspective, our Town’s revenue growth for FY25 is projected at \$4.4 million - essentially the same amount of Free Cash we used to cover the operational gap first identified in the FY24 budget.

? So what is our plan and how do we reconcile and close the \$18M gap initially identified at the onset of FY25 planning?

We looked at cutting expenses, which are widely related to personnel costs and that alone, does not address the underlying problem. The cuts required also bring departments significantly below FY24 levels.

To bring the spending under control and more in line with town revenue growth we have been able to make a level of cuts to reduce our FY25 planning budget BUT to bring spending into complete alignment with current tax base and projected growth we would see deep cuts to schools, public safety, and public works.

For schools potential cuts upwards of 90 teaching positions and programming loss across all education levels.

For our Town-side services (Police, Fire, DPW) this means eliminating public safety programming and potentially reducing personnel, reducing schools and town building maintenance staff, significantly reducing sidewalk and roadway repair projects and reducing summer programming hosted by our Parks and Recreation department.

The importance of our lookahead is most apparent when we start to look at these cuts, which could bring us into alignment on revenue in FY25.

Proposed FY 2025 Budget with Projected Structural Deficits, FY 2025 through FY2028						
	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	
Revenue						
Town Levy / Property Taxes	\$ 110,776,684	\$ 113,814,189	\$ 117,202,807	\$ 120,692,893	\$ 124,288,148	
Local Aid	\$ 22,990,253	\$ 23,344,524	\$ 23,730,000	\$ 24,118,000	\$ 24,506,000	
Local Receipts	\$ 20,882,990	\$ 23,540,279	\$ 24,644,122	\$ 25,599,259	\$ 26,255,206	
Other Financing	\$ 5,755,074	\$ 1,551,845	\$ 1,576,882	\$ 1,602,419	\$ 1,628,468	
Total Revenues	\$ 160,405,001	\$ 162,250,837	\$ 167,153,810	\$ 172,012,671	\$ 176,677,822	
Spending						
Schools	\$ 74,732,868	\$ 75,532,996	\$ 79,309,646	\$ 83,275,128	\$ 87,438,884	
General Government	\$ 52,108,474	\$ 52,488,046	\$ 53,800,247	\$ 55,145,253	\$ 56,523,885	
Debt	\$ 10,269,942	\$ 10,536,233	\$ 10,819,580	\$ 11,107,065	\$ 11,395,640	
Benefits (Pension / Health Care)	\$ 23,293,717	\$ 23,625,417	\$ 25,821,417	\$ 27,321,417	\$ 28,821,417	
Total Spending	\$ 160,405,001	\$ 162,182,692	\$ 169,751,160	\$ 176,848,864	\$ 184,179,826	
Balance	\$ 0	\$ 68,145	\$ (2,597,349)	\$ (4,836,193)	\$ (7,502,004)	
					Cumulative Gap, FY25-FY28=>	\$ (14,867,402)

What happens if we cut this year, to next year? As you can see here – assuming the revenue and spending metrics remain generally the same - FY26 brings more spending cuts. While we’ve shrunk our cumulative gap by FY28 to ~\$15M, significantly less than \$91M, we have not solved the problem. We will be back next year with similar conversations to this year. What can we live without?



But instead we are turning to – what can we do to offer a chance for voters to weigh in on the path ahead?

After four months of immersive conversation with all of our town departments and personnel – and understanding the service impact this level of cutting brings WITHOUT effectively solving our structural deficit – I believe voters need to be offered the decision to allow the town an option to increase our tax levy this year by \$8M to supply \$8M of additional reliable reoccurring revenue to close this structural deficit.

Proposed FY 2025 Budget with Override Solution, FY 2025 through FY2028						
	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	
Revenue						
Town Levy / Property Taxes	\$ 110,776,684	\$ 121,814,189	\$ 125,402,807	\$ 129,097,893	\$ 132,903,273	
Local Aid	\$ 22,990,253	\$ 23,344,524	\$ 23,730,000	\$ 24,118,000	\$ 24,506,000	
Local Receipts	\$ 20,882,990	\$ 23,540,279	\$ 24,644,122	\$ 25,599,259	\$ 26,255,206	
Other Financing	\$ 5,755,074	\$ 1,551,845	\$ 1,576,882	\$ 1,602,419	\$ 1,628,468	
Total Revenues	\$ 160,405,001	\$ 170,250,837	\$ 175,353,810	\$ 180,417,671	\$ 185,292,947	
Spending						
Schools	\$ 74,732,868	\$ 79,532,996	\$ 82,316,651	\$ 85,197,734	\$ 88,179,654	
General Government	\$ 52,108,474	\$ 54,988,046	\$ 56,087,807	\$ 57,209,563	\$ 58,353,754	
Debt	\$ 10,269,942	\$ 10,536,233	\$ 10,819,580	\$ 11,107,065	\$ 11,395,640	
Benefits (Pension / Health Care)	\$ 23,293,717	\$ 23,625,417	\$ 25,821,417	\$ 27,321,417	\$ 28,821,417	
Total Spending	\$ 160,405,001	\$ 168,682,692	\$ 175,045,725	\$ 180,835,779	\$ 186,750,465	
Balance	\$ 0	\$ 1,568,145	\$ 308,086	\$ (418,108)	\$ (1,457,519)	
					Cumulative Gap, FY25-FY28=>	\$ 603

Combining spending cuts and planned cost controls across Town government with an override allows Braintree to get out of the hole we are in and on a path to fiscal stability through at least FY28. An override is necessary to add **sustainable** and **reoccurring** year-over-year revenue that boosts our tax base and fills the remaining gap in operating expenses.

THE OVERRIDE INCLUDES FUNDING FOR:	
 Braintree Public Schools	\$4.0M
 Public Safety	\$1.5M
 Public Works	\$1.0M
 Override Stabilization Account	\$1.5M

I absolutely do not take lightly any ask for a resident to have to contribute more - I understand the many financial challenges facing our young families, seniors on fixed incomes, and young adults just getting started in Braintree. In the days ahead we will be providing tools to residents to estimate the impact of the override on them individually.



Based on an average home value in Braintree of \$668,178 the approximate impact of an \$8M override will be an increase of \$454 annually.

For seniors, the Town also offers discounted trash fees and property tax relief for income-qualified households as well as a 'work-off' program that offers seniors the ability to exchange Town employment for tax discount. We also will be exploring opportunities to expand our income qualified relief for seniors with our State representative in the weeks ahead.

As we move through the budget season with Ways and Means in the Month of May we will have designated meetings with each Town Department to delve into specifics related to funding with and without the override – these meetings are open to the public and I invite you to attend if interested.

In closing I would offer this – for my administration fiscal stability will be a functional obsession – with an override success or failure, we will intimately understand, discuss and challenge each other with what living within the Town resources means – and then as residents, leaders, anyone with a hope for Braintree – we have to get out there and advocate and bring in more resources for our Town.



Ways and Means Committee 2025 Budget Hearings

FY2025 BUDGET REVIEW SCHEDULE

DEPT. #	DEPARTMENT/PROGRAMS	DATE* (MAY)	TIME* (PM)	PRESENTERS
	FY2025 Revenue Forecast Overview	6	6:00	Michael Esmond/Kara Nyman
161	Town Clerk	6	6:15	James Casey
610	Library®	6	6:30	Terri Stano
152	Human Resources	6	6:45	Christopher Shipp
350	Blue Hill Regional High School	8	6:00	Jill Brilhante/Jill Rossetti
121	Mayor's Office	8	6:30	Mayor Joyce/Kara Nyman
111	Town Council	8	6:45	Susan Cimino
400	Public Works Department®	13	6:00	James Arsenault
436	Sewer	13	6:30	James Arsenault
438	Water	13	6:45	James Arsenault
640	Storm Water	13	7:00	James Arsenault
610	Golf®	14	6:00	Daryn Brown
151	Law	14	6:30	Carolyn Murray
133	Finance Programs	14	6:45	Michael Esmond
220	Fire	15	6:00	James O'Brien
210	Police	15	6:30	Timothy Cohoon
175	Planning and Community Development	20	6:00	Melissa SantucciRozzi
541	Department of Elder Affairs®	20	6:15	Sharmila Biswas
241	Municipal Licenses and Inspections®	20	6:30	Marybeth McGrath
300	Education®	21	6:00	Jim Lee
	Departmental Call Backs - TBD	22/23	TBD	
	TOWN COUNCIL/ANNUAL TOWN MEETING	May 29 (Wednesday)	7:00	

*Dates and Times are tentative and are subject to change.

All participants are requested to **appear at least 30 minutes prior** to their scheduled time.

® Includes Revolving Fund Accounts



SPRINGTIME AND SUMMER FUN WITH THE Braintree Recreation Department

May 10:

Red Sox v Nationals, Friday, May 10th. \$50 and includes round trip bus to Fenway from Braintree Town Hall. Tickets available for purchase at our office, 74 Pond St, or on our website braintreerec.com.

May 25:

Memorial Day Service. Sunday, May 25th at 11am at Blue Hills Cemetery (in the event of rain it will be held at Braintree Town Hall)

May 29:

Half-Day Fun-Day to Carousel Family Fun Center



For more information about Braintree Parks and Recreation please visit Braintreema.myrec.com or contact Chris Griffin at cgriffin@braintreema.gov

Summer Camp:

There is still space available in both the Sports and Kiddos clinics for the week of July 1st. This is a three day week as no programs will be held on Thursday, July 4th and Friday, July 5th. Cost is \$220. You can register online at braintreerec.com.



**BRAINTREE
SUMMER
TRACK CLUB**

K-3 GRADE: 6-7PM
4-8 GRADE: 7-8PM

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
June 27th through July 25th

BRAINTREE HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM TRACK
Registration Forms required: available at 74 Pond St,
or 46 Wilkins Rd
REGISTRATION OPEN MAY 1-MAY31



**Let's Celebrate Together
Asian American Pacific Islander
(AAPI) Heritage Month**

Date: May 18th, 2024
Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: Braintree Historical Society
786 Washington St, Braintree, MA 02184

- ❖ Guided Tours of The Sylvanus Thayer House 2:15 PM, 2:45 PM & 3:15 PM
- ❖ Sunrise Balloon art 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM
- ❖ History of Braintree Fan factory
- ❖ Tea Tasting
- ❖ Kids Games, Arts & Crafts



Presented by:
**Braintree Historical Society &
Chinese American Association of Braintree**



BRAINTREE BEAUTIFICATION DAY:

Mayor Erin V. Joyce was pleased to have the return of the annual "Braintree Beautification Day" that was on Saturday, April 27, 2024. Residents gathered at Braintree Town Hall to collect materials (rakes, bags, work gloves). Target areas for this year's clean-up were the Town Hall Memorial Mall, the grounds of the Braintree Historical Society, the beach and park at Sunset Lake, Penniman Park on Cleveland Ave., Smith Beach, and the Braintree High School access road.

This longtime event continues to be held with the ongoing support of several local organizations including the Braintree Rotary Club, the North Braintree Civic Association and the East Braintree Civic Association.

A huge thank you to all the residents who came out!



BLUE BAG CAMPAIGN



Join Mayor Joyce and the Braintree Beautification Committee by taking part in the "Blue Bag Campaign." Helping is easy: Pick up a Blue Bag in the Mayor's Office and collect trash anywhere in Town! Help us make Braintree Beautiful - work with friends or on your walk or at a neighborhood park. When the bag is full just leave it securely tied and near the curb. Alert the Mayor's Office where you left it and the DPW will swing by and pick it up - simple!



MEETINGS AROUND TOWN



**Historical Commission
Monthly Meeting**
May 6, 2024, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM
See monthly agenda for location.

Town Council Meeting
May 7, 2024, 7:30 PM - 10:00 PM
@Cahill Auditorium

**Community Preservation
Monthly Meeting**
May 13, 2024, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Currently meeting virtually via Zoom

Planning Board Monthly Meeting
May 14, 2024, 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM
@Johnson Chambers

**Zoning Board of Appeals
Regular Meeting**
May 20, 2024, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
@Johnson Chambers

Town Council Meeting
May 29, 2024, 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM
@Cahill Auditorium

VOTE

Override Election Day

**SATURDAY
JUNE 15, 2024**

June 5: _____
Last Day to Register to Vote by 5 PM

June 14: _____
*Last Day to Vote by Absentee Ballot
by 12 NOON*

June 15: _____
Election Day | 7 AM - 8 PM

Ballot Question:

Should the Town of Braintree be allowed to assess an additional \$8,000,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the following department expenses:

- General Municipal Government (\$2,500,000)
- School Department (\$4,000,000)
- Override Stabilization Fund for General Municipal and School Department Operations (\$1,500,000)

for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024



Voting Center

Braintree Highschool
East Middle School
South Middle School

District

1A-1B-2A-2B
3A-3B-4A-4B
5A-5B-6A-6B

CURBSIDE YARD WASTE PICKUPS – SPRING 2024

The Spring 2024 Curbside Yard Waste collection will be on your regular collection day during the weeks of **May 6, 13 & 20th.**



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Thank you, volunteers! This month, we express our heartfelt gratitude to all of the volunteers serving on our boards and committees in Braintree. Your time, effort, and dedication to our community are invaluable. This spring, the Mayor's office will be reviewing board compositions, so if you'd like to volunteer to serve on a board or committee, please reach out to the Mayor's office at 781-794-8100



MEET THE MAYOR'S OFFICE STAFF



Kara L. Nyman

CHIEF OF STAFF & DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Kara Nyman brings to the table powerful communications abilities and in-depth knowledge of municipal and state government operations.

Prior to joining the Town of Braintree, Kara served as the Assistant Town Administrator in Holbrook where she was responsible for overseeing day-to-day administrative operations, personnel management, and implementing policies set by the Select Board.

Kara also served as the Director of Communications for the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office from 2018 to 2022. In this dynamic role, she acted as the agency's chief spokesperson, media liaison and led both internal and external communications initiatives.

In 2011, Kara began her career in government at the Massachusetts State House where she gained invaluable experience with regard to the inner workings of government, the legislative process and the complexities of our state laws and regulations. She fostered valuable relationships with many key legislators, legislative staff, and state agency personnel.

She holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in public administration from Suffolk University.

Outside of professional roles, Kara has been actively involved in civic engagement, serving as the Vice-Chair of the Rockland Board of Selectmen and as a member of the Hanover Planning Board. These experiences have further enhanced Kara's leadership abilities and commitment to public service.



To reach out to the Chief of Staff directly, please contact knyman@braintreema.gov or 781-794-8143.



Kate Naughton

**DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNITY
AFFAIRS SINCE
OCTOBER 2022**

With a strong background in community engagement Kate Naughton has been making a significant impact in public service since 2013. Kate is currently serving as the Director of Community Affairs and has been in this role since October 2022.

As executive support for Mayor Joyce and Chief of Staff and Director of Operations Kara Nyman, Kate expertly manages calendars, schedules meetings, and prepares agendas with meticulous attention to detail. Her role as a liaison between the Mayor's Office, Town Departments, residents, and the public highlights her ability to coordinate and resolve constituent concerns effectively.

Additionally, Kate handles a diverse range of responsibilities, from processing attendance, invoices, and payroll to providing administrative support for the Tri Town Board of Water Commissioners. Her involvement as the Mayor's representative on the Local Emergency Planning Committee underscores her commitment to public safety and emergency preparedness.

Prior to her employment with the Town of Braintree, Kate worked in the radio industry for over 20 years. Kate also served on the Braintree School Committee for 6 years.

With a reputation for professionalism, dedication, and a strong work ethic, Kate continues to make valuable contributions to the community and local government, embodying a true passion for public service and community development.

To reach out directly to the Director of Community Affairs, please contact knaughton@braintreema.gov or 781-794-8026.



Reflections

...Director of Operations and we've been lucky to keep on Kate Naughton! There are still some familiar faces around the second floor of Town Hall, but some new faces too.

I hope, if you are interested, you find a chance to pop into Town Hall to visit us—if even just to take a peek at where we work day in and day out for you, our residents. Please do me a slight favor though if you visit: don't judge me too critically on the bleakness of my office walls. I've been a bit busy pulling together my first budget which I presented to the Town Council on April 30th.

With the mention of the budget, I know there are many concerns regarding the current state of our Town's finances and what that may mean for potential personnel and service reductions or disruptions. As I stated in comments to the Town Council on March 19th, we are in a hole and we need to stop digging. All departments are working in collaboration with the Mayor's Office and Finance Director to pull together real solutions for closing an operational gap of \$18M. As we work to understand exactly what that means for this year's funding and anticipated growth in future years, we appreciate the patience of residents.

The weight of my name etched on this office door is great, but I remain optimistic and steadfast to strategically solving our operational gap and placing us on a sustainable path into the future.

Erin V. Joyce
Mayor of Braintree

To reach out the to Mayor Joyce directly, please contact mayorsoffice@braintreema.gov or call 781-794-8100.



Braintree Town Hall

1 John F. Kennedy Memorial Drive
Braintree, MA 02184 | Phone: 781-794-8000

Town Hall is open Mon, Wed, Thur: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM,
Tue: 8:30 AM - 7:00 PM, and Fri: 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM