

After a two year hiatus, and the expiration of the Vermont Declared Emergency due to the Covid 19 Virus and its variants, the Brookline Selectboard voted unanimously at their December 21, 2022 meeting to resume holding The Brookline Annual Town Meeting in person. Of the 459 legally registered voters of Brookline, 55 participated in this event.

Town Meeting Minutes March 6, 2023

On Monday, **March 6, 2023** at 6:00 PM Town Moderator David Y. Parker Jr. called The Brookline Annual Town Meeting to order. Mr. Parker welcomed everyone back after the long absence of in person meetings. First order of business was to explain to the public, the rules of procedure. Mr. Parker continued with asking everyone to please sign the attendance sheet and made note of the binders located in the back of the room containing the request and information sheets sent by those organizations seeking appropriations. Mr. Parker also pointed out that the Brookline Meetinghouse Committee had a survey for those wishing to fill it out and by doing so, it would be much appreciated. Mr. Parker mentioned this survey could also be accessed on line. One last note, Mr. Parker reminds folks that Julie Lavorgna continues to host the town list serve and gave Ms. Lavorgna the opportunity to explain this town service and instructions on how to get on that list.

Article 1

First order of business will be to **elect a Town Moderator. For a term of one year.** Guy Tanza nominates David Parker Jr. No other nominations received. David Y. Parker, Jr elected Town Moderator.

Article 2

Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to appoint a town treasurer as provided in 17 V.S.A. § 2651f(a) for a term of one year.

Dot Maggio, Selectboard Chair, explains that due to a lack of candidates from town residents, the board has the authority to appoint a treasurer. This would allow a person other than a town resident be appointed by the Selectboard to fill this position. Ms. Maggio continues to explain that the Selectboard has checked with Vermont League of Cities and Towns and was informed this was a legal course of action according to Vermont State Statutes. It is also noted that many Vermont Towns have had to take this action to fill vacancies in their local government. No further comment by anyone. A vote is called for and the article is passed.

Article 3

Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to appoint a Collector of Delinquent Taxes as provided in 17 V.S.A. §2651(d) for a term of one year.

Dot Maggio, Selectboard Chair explains that the same set of circumstances exist for Collector of Delinquent Taxes, with no candidates from town residents for this position and ask the voters to vote for this article. Marie Tattersall seconds the motion and a vote is called for. The article passes.

Article 4

To elect all other Town Officers required by law.

- **Town Clerk** for a term of one year. Bruce Mello and Archie Clark nominate Guy Tanza. No further nominations – Guy Tanza elected Town Clerk.
- **Town Treasurer** for a term of one year. Only if appointment vote in Article 2 above is not approved

Delinquent Tax Collector. Only if appointment vote in Article 3 above is not approved.

At this point Moderator Parker mentions that the Brookline Selectboard has been operating with a three member board as opposed to the five member board authorized and that this has put stress on the serving members. He is asking for some new members to join the Selectboard team. While it is somewhat demanding it is also rewarding to help govern your town.

- **Selectboard Member for a term of 3 years.** Bruce Mello Is nominated, no further nominations. A vote is called for, Bruce Mello elected to a 3 year seat on the Selectboard.
- **Selectboard Member for a term of 2 years.** Marie Tattersall nominates Dot Maggio, no further nominations. Dot Maggio elected to a 2 year seat on the Selectboard.
- **Selectboard Member 2 years (remainder of a 3 year term).** No nominations received, therefore this seat remains empty.

Again it is emphasized the importance of having a full 5 member board, by Selectboard Chairperson Dot Maggio. Ms. Maggio explains some of the duties and responsibilities along with some of the helpful qualifications required.

- **Selectboard Member for 1 year (remainder of a 3 year term).** No nominations received, therefore this seat remains empty.
- **Lister for 1 year (remainder of a 3 year term)** No nominations received.
- **Lister for 2 years (remainder of a 3 year term)** No nominations received.
- **Lister for a 3 year term** No nominations received.
- **Auditor for a term of 3 years.** Dot Maggio nominates Kendra Brooks. No further nominations. A vote is called for. Kendra Brooks elected Auditor for a 3 year term.
- **Cemetery Commissioner for a term of 5 years** Dot Maggio nominates Laurie Nau Martocci .No further nominations received, a vote is called for. Laurie Nau Martocci elected Cemetery Commissioner for a 5 year term.
- **Cemetery Commissioner for 2 years (remainder of a 5 year term).** Bruce Mello nominates Dot Maggio. No further nominations received. A vote is called for. Dot Maggio elected Cemetery Commissioner for 2 years.
- **Trustee of Public Funds for a 1 year term.** No nominations received.

Article 5

Shall the voters accept the Auditors Report? Marie Tattersall makes the motion and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. No discussion, a vote is called for and the article is passed.

Article 6

Shall the voters authorize general fund expenditures for operating expenses of \$179,262.00 of which \$133,438.00 shall be raised by taxes and \$45,824.00 by non-tax revenues? Moved by Stuart Duke and seconded by Mirian Allbee. Someone asked to explain School house revenues and expenses. Selectboard members Dot Maggio and Bruce Mello reflect on the problems and issues when the town first acquired the building. They reiterated that of the almost \$120,000 spent on repairs, heating and water supply issues, painting and necessary carpenter work along with permit requirements, that none of that has been town tax money but is money generated by the rent paid to the town for the use of the building. Doug Wellman asked what the expenses for town administrator were for. Ms. Maggio explains the need for the selectboard in securing grants, filing necessary documents, recording meetings and so on. The selectboard position has become extremely complex with many new rules and requirements and as such require more administrative help to fulfill those obligations properly and in a timely order. Selectman Stan Noga goes on to explain that the administrative person will also do the necessary research required for many of the town projects as well as general help for the Selectboard. Marie Tattersall calls the question. A vote is called for and the article is passed.

Article 7

Shall the voters authorize highway fund expenditures of \$409,520.00 of which \$355,722.00 shall be raised by taxes and \$53,798.00 by non-tax revenue? Moved by Sally Fegley and seconded by Joseph Slater. Discussion- Gary Lavorgna thanks E. Mark Bills for all his efforts throughout the year as our town highway supervisor. Stan Noga acknowledges all of E. Mark Bills expertise in all of the town's culverts and all things highway in our town. Doug Wellman asks for an explanation of increased highway expenses. Selectboard Chair Dot Maggio explains that the rainstorm of July 29, 2021 caused incredible amounts of damage to our towns highway structure. Roads were washed out, culverts destroyed, fallen trees on all of our town roads. The State of Vermont was declared a disaster area and became available for FEMA Funding/reimbursement. Unfortunately our town had to pay out almost \$190,000.00 in repairs to get our roads and culverts back in shape. The paperwork is overwhelming and time consuming to say the least. As of today's date (March 6, 2023) our town has not received any FEMA funds yet, **but is entitled** to a substantial amount of what has been paid out (90%). Our town has received an extension to complete this necessary work. Our town had to move monies around to satisfy payments of what has been done by local vendors. Next year's budget will reflect payments made by FEMA thereby lowering the budget request. Doug Wellman request an amendment to the proposed article stating that all FEMA funds received to the town be returned to the tax payers. Julie Lavorgna states that she trust our selectboard and feels that an amendment is not necessary. Moderator Parker asks those who are in favor of the amendment stand on one side of the room and those opposed to the amendment stand on the other side. A count is taken and the amendment is defeated. The original article is voted on and passed.

Article 8

Shall the voters authorize the collection of taxes in 4 installments, with the due dates being: August 15, 2023; November 14, 2023; February 13, 2024; May 14, 2024? Moved by Gary Lavorgna, seconded by Jean Allbee, no discussion- A vote is taken and the article is passed.

Article 9

Shall the voters appropriate \$7661.00 to be raised by taxes in support of the following organizations? Stuart Duke moved the motion and it was seconded by Marie Tattersall Discussion- Bruce Mello expressed his concern about the amount requested by the organization SeVEDS. A spokesperson was in the audience and requested to speak. She said that SeVEDS was an economic arm for Windham County and could be helpful to anyone who ask. Guy Tanza expressed his concerns for the requested \$1590 and offered an amendment to the proposed article by reducing the requested \$1590 to \$500 . A vote for the amendment was taken and passed. Article 9 was amended to reflect the reduced amount. The voters approved an amended appropriation request of \$6571.00

<u>Organization</u>	<u>FY23 Approved</u>	<u>FY24 Requested</u>	<u>Approved By Vote</u>
Visiting Nurse Alliance.....	\$1,000.....	\$1,000	\$1,000
VT Center Independent Living.....	80.....	80	80
Youth Services.....	255.....	255	255
Valley Cares, Inc.	821.....	821	821
American Red Cross.....	250.....	250	250
Historical Society of Windham County.....	250.....	250	250
Grace Cottage Foundation.....	300.....	500	500
Senior Solutions.....	700.....	700	700
SEVCA.....	465.....	465	465
Rural Fire Protection Program.....	100.....	100	100
Green Up Vermont.	50.....	50	50
Windham County Humane Society.....	500.....	500	500
VABVI.....	100.....	100	100
L & G Educational Foundation.....	250.....	250	250
SeVEDS.....	1,590.....	1,590	500
Vermont Family Network.....	250.....	250	250
Gathering Place.....	500.....	500	500
Moore Free Library.....	700.....		
Total All Appropriations Requested	\$8,161.00	\$7,661.00	\$6,571.00

Article 10

Shall the voters appropriate \$300 to be raised by taxes in support of The Winston Prouty Center? The motion is moved by _____? and seconded by Julie Lavorgna. No discussion. A vote is taken and the article is passed.

Article 11

Shall the voters appropriate \$500 to be raised by taxes in support of Newbrook PTO?

The motion is moved by Jean Allbee and seconded by Lee Anne Parker. Discussion-none

A vote is taken and the article is passed.

Article 12

Shall the voters appropriate \$1,000 to be raised by taxes in support of Newfane Anew? Guy Tanza moves the question and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. Discussion – Someone in the audience asks what Newfane Anew is all about. Dot Maggio reads from the informational letter submitted by the organization. Gary Lavorgna and Dan Towler also explain some of the benefits and why this appropriation was important to our community. A vote is called for and the article is passed.

Article 13

Shall the voters appropriate \$1,100 to be raised by taxes in support of Moore Free Library? Gary Lavorgna moves the question and it is seconded by Julie Lavorgna. Discussion- Bruce Mello asks for an explanation of the increased amount of the appropriation request from \$700 to \$1,100. Librarian Beckley Gaudette is given the opportunity (although not a registered voter of Brookline) to address those concerns. She points out that the library had many structural challenges this year and had a \$22,000 deficit. She also explains all the many wonderful benefits and programs of our local library. Marie Tattersall a Brookline resident and also a member of the Moore Free Library Board mentions how fortunate we are to have a local library and points out that Brookline has at least 120 Moore Free Library card holders. Marie goes on to explain that the Library survives totally on contributions. A vote is called for and the article is passed.

Article 14

Shall the voters vote to have its current taxes collected by the Town Treasurer? Guy Tanza moves the question and is seconded by _____. Discussion. Someone asks why the tax payments were quarterly. Guy Tanza, Town Clerk, explains the reason was to spread the payments out so as not to cause a burden on tax payers and that schedule seemed to work for all concerned. Marie Tattersall calls the question and a vote is called for. The article is passed.

Article 15

Shall the voters approve the appropriation of up to \$18,000 for recycling costs for fiscal year 2024?

Guy Tanza Moves the question and it is seconded by Julie Lavorgna Discussion- Dot Maggio – Selectboard Chair, points out the pros and cons of having the recycling dumpsters for Brookline residents. Dan Towler, Windham Solid Waste Management Town Representative, gives a brief explanation of what should be placed in the dumpsters for recycling. Gwen Tanza expresses her concerns that if the recycle bins are removed people will still dump their recycles there because the bins have been there for so many years. Betty Horton is also concerned that if the bins are removed more dumping would occur around town. A vote is called for and the article is passed.

Article 16

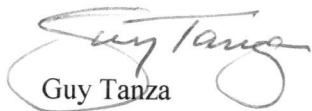
To elect one (1) West River Modified Union Education District school director, who is a resident of Brookline, for a 3- year term? Guy Tanza nominates Leeann Jillson – no further nominations. Leeann Jillson is elected WRMUED school director to a 3 year term.

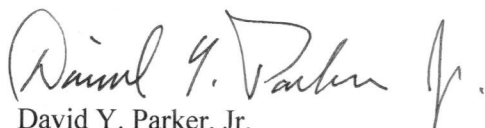
Article 17

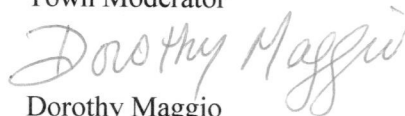
Discussion or “other business” which shall not be used for taking binding municipal action, and the Moderator shall so rule. Guy Tanza starts the conversation of the town needing a piece of equipment to respond to emergencies, town highway maintenance and general work of highway repairs. Dot Maggio (Selectperson) mentions that the town has been exploring ways of funding equipment for our town. The town may be able to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for offsetting some expanses for town equipment. Dot passes the conversation on to Stan Noga (Selectman) who explains the town may also be able to get a 2% loan from the State Treasurers Associations (5yr term) and that the town has been actively looking for a piece of equipment that servers our needs. E. Mark Bills, town Highway Supervisor explains his need for equipment. He relates to the fact that after a rainfall the culverts and road ditches fill up with debris and there is only so much one can do with a shovel. He believes a piece of equipment with the ability to attach accessories to, would be extremely helpful. Doug Wellman mentions that a few years ago a committee was formed of which he served on, and it was determined not to pursue the purchase of a piece of equipment due to a number of issues, one being, cost saving. He also felt that the voters should have a say in this type of purchase. Joseph Dutton, who also served on that committee concurs with Doug’s findings. After a number of folks expressed their opinions Moderator Parker suggested that a non-binding showing of hands be taken to see if the selectboard has the support of the town in regard to this issue. The results of that showing of hands suggest that there is interest/support in the town pursuing this purchase.

Gary Lavorgna makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. A vote is taken, and meeting is adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,


Guy Tanza
Town Clerk


David Y. Parker, Jr.
Town Moderator


Dorothy Maggio
Selectboard Chair