

**Final Minutes**  
**Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 17, 2024**

**Present:**

**Selectboard (SB):**

Dorothy Maggio (DM) (Chair)  
Stanley Noga (SN) (Vice-Chair)  
Bruce Mello (BM)  
Paul Madalinski (PM)  
Somara Zwick (SZ)

**Town Officers:**

Melissa Brown (MB) (Treasurer)  
(Zoom)  
Vanessa Ballou (VB) (Recording  
Clerk)

**Public:**

FactTV online  
Michael DeSocio (MD)  
Lee Anne Parker (Zoom)  
Dan Towler (Zoom)

**1. Dorothy Maggio called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.**

E. Mark Bills was not able to attend the meeting.

**2. Any Changes to the Agenda**

None.

**3. Members of the Public**

**A. Scheduled members on requested topic (10 minutes)**

None.

**B. Unscheduled members on agenda items only (5 minutes)**

Lee Anne Parker and Dan Towler attended to hear the discussion concerning the ARPA fund priority list.

**4. Review and Adopt Minutes**

Regular Meeting Minutes – January 3, 2024

The SB reviewed the draft minutes and identified a change. DM motioned to approve the minutes as amended; PM seconded; the motion approved unanimously.

**5. Warrant Orders**

**A. Payroll Warrant**

DM made a motion to approve the payroll warrant 2428 dated January 17, 2024 in the amount of \$1,913.76; BM seconded; the motion was approved unanimously.

**B. Accounts Payable Warrant**

DM made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2429 dated January 17, 2024 in the amount of \$31,914.70; PM seconded. This includes payment in full for the repair work on the Brookline Meeting House (BMH) foundation. The motion was approved unanimously.

**6. Unfinished Business**

**A. Budget**

**1) Municipal**

The SB continued their work on the municipal budget. Items to be included as separate articles include:

\$1,590 for SeVEDS,

\$1,100 for Moore Free Library,

\$1,400 for Windham County Sheriff shared Animal Control Officer (ACO) program,  
\$4,000 for the Town audit fund,  
\$10,000 for NewBrook request to support a new fire truck, and  
\$19,000 for recycling.

2) Highway

The SB provided additional estimates for the highway budget and discussed how the FEMA money from the July 2021 storm would be handled once received. Since those storm related repairs were originally paid from the highway fund, the FEMA payments will be credited back to the highway fund. A special town meeting and vote will likely be needed to allocate the FEMA money to other Town funds such as the Budget Stabilization/Rainy Day Fund.

3) Appropriations

See list above under 6. A. 1).

4) ARPA discussion/priority list from SB members

The ARPA fund balance is \$43,000. The SB proposed the following projects using the remaining ARPA funds.

a. NewBrook Fire Department Request

Pay requested \$10,000 to cover a new fire truck.

b. Town Office

Install 2 heat pumps and an instant on generator in the Town Office; costs estimated at \$20,000. Heat pumps and an instant on generator would not be covered by MERP (Municipal Energy Resilience Program), but there may be rebates for the heat pumps.

c. BMH (Brookline Meeting House)

Use the remainder of the ARPA funds towards renovations so that the Town can use the BMH for community events throughout the year. The renovations and improvements include painting the exterior, creating ADA accessibility, remediating mold, bat and rodent control, installing heat and insulation, painting interior, repairing rot over annex entrance, protecting the faux painting, having cushions made for the pews, and bringing the building up to current codes.

This work will require funding in addition to what remains in the ARPA fund. Potential external sources of funding include the Vermont Arts Council. If the Town enters into the historic preservation façade easement program, the \$6,000 fee would be covered by the Preservation Trust of Vermont. Further discussions included asking the Town to approve and allocate some of the FEMA money towards these projects – once the FEMA funds are received.

At the conclusion of this discussion, the SB determined that the Town residents would be warned in a separate article regarding the NewBrook Fire Department request for \$10,000 from the ARPA fund. The SB will discuss how to allocate the remaining \$33,000 in the next SB meeting.

B. Town Report – work to be done

SN is collecting the reports to be included in the 2023 Town Report; he would like to receive them by Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>. The financials will cover the Town fiscal year – July 1, 2022

through June 30, 2023; other reports can provide information about future plans in addition to activities during the 2022/2023 year. The draft Town Report should be available for SB review by Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup> with comments due 3 days later.

The SB decided to have a Special SB Meeting on Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM to finalize details for the Town Report.

C. Vacancies for elected/appointed positions

PM provided an update on the status of whether people in current positions are interested in continuing.

D. FEMA Update

There will be a meeting with FEMA on Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup> in the Town Hall at 12:30 PM.

E. Update on part time Highway Dept Assistant

SZ will draft a job description/advertisement, and DM will reach out to other towns regarding shared road services.

F. Update on part time Administrative Assistant

SZ will draft a job description/advertisement.

**7. New Business**

A. Shall the webmaster delete DRAFT minutes when the approved FINAL minutes are ready for posting?

DM made a motion that the webmaster delete draft minutes when the approved final minutes are available for posting on the website; BM seconded; the motion was approved unanimously. This motion applies to minutes for all Town meetings.

B. \$2,450.45 payment requested by the Town of Putney for the maintenance (plowing, sanding, gravel and grading) of Holland Hill & Bennett Road for the 2023-24 property tax bill for parcel # 000006 002

The letter from the Town of Putney covers road segments located in Brookline and requests payment twice a year - after the second quarter and fourth quarter resident tax payments have been collected. The Town of Putney has asked the SB to sign and return the letter documenting the agreement. Based on this agreement, Brookline will not need to maintain those road segments. SN made a motion to authorize DM to sign the agreement that has been submitted by the Town of Putney for the road maintenance and the payment twice a year per the request by the Town of Putney; seconded by BM; approved unanimously. DM signed the agreement. A copy will be provided to the Treasurer.

C. AOT Mileage Certificate -Read into the minutes and sign

DM read the mileage to be reported in the AOT Mileage Certificate for the year ending February 10, 2024.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Mileage</u>
Class 1	0.000
Class 2	4.950
Class 3	11.91
<u>Highway</u>	<u>0.000</u>
Total	16.860 miles
Class 4	1.47 miles

DM will sign the certificate once SN has confirmed that there have been no changes in mileage since the previous year. The Town receives a state grant each year based on this mileage.

## **8. Reports and Updates**

### **A. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills**

- 1) EMB needs to have a hydraulic hammer to deal with 2 areas (on Hill Road and Athens Road) early this year and has estimated that the equipment would be needed for 2 separate days. And for another day next summer for an area on Putney Mountain Road. The cost is approximately \$2,500 per day. DM will draft an RFP for 2 days for a hydraulic hammer.

### **B. Building Commissioner - B. Mello**

- 1) The Fire Marshall inspected the daycare and identified items that need to be addressed including the lights in the gym and a few other minor items. They noted that there was no tag documenting Cota & Cota's most recent servicing of the furnace.
- 2) When the Fire Marshall inspected the BMH, they noted there was plenty of room to enter and exit. They expressed concern about extension cords to the gas heater and gas stove as well as extension cords running from the inside the building to the exterior lights. Inside the annex, the gas heater and stove need to be connected directly to an outlet box. For the exterior lights, an option is to replace the extension cord by installing a permanent electrical connection. In the meantime, the exterior lights have been turned off.
- 3) BM provided an update about the heat pump that had frosted up at the daycare. The accumulation of frost probably occurred because the holes for the defrosting run off were closed; the holes have been opened; the heat pump is working now.

### **C. Highway Grants & Contracts – S. Noga**

- 1) SN met Archie Clark and the hydraulic engineer (Jenkins) on Ellen Ware Road. When they discussed FEMA's request for cost estimates, SN learned of three civil engineers who are licensed to provide cost estimates that FEMA requires. One is Everett Hammond, located in Springfield, Vermont. He is available to develop the FEMA estimate and supporting information; his estimated cost is \$3,000 to \$5,000. Everett Hammond also provided the name (Kern) of another civil engineer who does this work. And finally, the hydraulic engineer Jenkins is also certified to provide these FEMA estimates.

SN will determine how to move forward after the meeting with FEMA next Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.

- 2) Contract with 2WiredGuys

SN has revised the contract and has sent it to 2WiredGuys for their review.

- 3) Carr Tree & Timber

SN will prepare this contract early next week.

### **D. Selectboard Chair - D. Maggio**

No additional topics.

### **E. Any other topic as requested by the selectboard not requiring a vote.**

BM asked what the next steps are with Maggie Foley following the Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. There was a brief discussion regarding derelict vehicles. Regarding next steps,

Maggie Foley will be looking for funding for the projects of most interest to the meeting participants – particularly the BMH.

**9. Communications**

A. Emails

None.

B. Regular Mail

- 1) Town of Putney - Re: Inter-Local Agreement for Putney Property Taxes / Holland Hill & Bennett Road Maintenance

Discussed above.

- 2) State of Vermont Department of Taxes

The letter provides the equalization study results as of January 5, 2024.

- Education grand list is \$72,583,899.
- The equalized education grand list is \$95,866,069.
- The common level of appraisal (CLA) is 75.71% (or 0.7571).
- The Town coefficient of dispersion (COD) is 21.03%.

Since the COD now exceeds 20%, the Town will need to undergo a town-wide property reappraisal. However, there is a long waiting list for Town reappraisals. This also impacts the Town's tax education rate.

- 3) Comcast letter from northeast operations center for emergency operations director

The letter provides emergency phone numbers for the Town.

- 4) Comcast letter regarding affordable connectivity program and internet essentials

The program provides financial relief for people, based on income level, so that they can get internet access free or for \$10. DM will distribute the information via the Town email list (listserv).

- 5) Anonymous Letter

The Town received a copy of an anonymous letter sent to Inner Fire regarding a recent incident that occurred near a resident's home on Hill Road.

**10. Set Agenda for the next meetings**

A. Set Agenda for Special SB Meeting

The meeting will be at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>.

B. Set Agenda for Regular Meeting on February 7, 2024

- 1) BMH list of priorities
- 2) HR Policy Development
- 3) Update from January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting with FEMA
- 4) Other items to be determined

**11. Adjourn the Meeting**

DM moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was **adjourned at 8:54 PM**.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk