

**Final Minutes**  
**Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting**  
**Wednesday, December 20, 2023**

**Present:**

**Selectboard (SB):**

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

**Town Officers:**

Guy Tanza (GT) (Town Clerk) (Zoom)  
Melissa Brown (MB) (Treasurer)  
E Mark Bills (EMB) (Highway  
Supervisor)  
Vanessa Ballou (VB) (Recording  
Clerk)

**Public:**

FactTV online  
Michael DeSocio (MS)  
Marie Tattersall (MT)  
Dan Towler (DT) (Zoom)  
Maggie Foley (MTAP)

**1. Dorothy Maggio called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.**

**2. Any Changes to the Agenda**

Agenda items 8. B. and C. were tabled. Item 7.A. was covered after 6.A.

**3. Members of the Public**

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

Maggie Foley RE: Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) from Windham Regional Commission (WRC) summarized the two documents she provided in advance of the SB meeting: Needs Assessment: Assets and Challenges Narrative Summary and Project Brainstorm. The next steps are for the Town to prioritize the projects and identify additional details from the brainstorming session and for her to match them with potential funding sources. She identified factors that might influence the priority - such as projects that have been under consideration for many years or are ready for implementation. She explained that there are grants for planning that would be appropriate for the very early stage projects. The Town's committees should be involved in this process – including the Brookline Meeting House (BMH) and the Planning Committee. The group agreed to have another more detailed meeting – Special Technical Assistance Meeting on Friday, January 12, 2024 at 10:00 AM. MF's point of contacts on the SB are SN and SZ.

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

None.

**4. Review and Approve Minutes**

**A. Regular Meeting Minutes – December 6, 2023**

The SB reviewed the draft minutes. DM motioned to approve the minutes with changes as noted; BM seconded; the motion approved unanimously – without SZ who was not in the meeting room at the time of the vote.

**B. Special Meeting Minutes – December 13, 2023**

The SB reviewed the draft minutes. DM motioned to approve the draft minutes as amended; SN seconded; the motion approved unanimously.

## **5. Warrant Orders**

### **A. Payroll Warrant**

DM made a motion to approve the payroll warrant 2424 dated December 20, 2023 in the amount of \$13,452.01; SZ seconded; the motion was approved unanimously.

### **B. Accounts Payable Warrant**

DM made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2425 dated December 20, 2023 in the amount of \$18,723.23; BM seconded; the motion was approved unanimously.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Open /Bids for Arborist work RFP – Action**

The Town received only 1 bid in response to the arborist work RFP – from Carr Tree & Timber, an ISA certified arborist. The bid was for \$3,800 total and covers 10 critical trees – additional trees if time allows and the Town approves. Carr Tree & Timber did a site visit and inspected the 10 critical trees. These are trees that are complicated to remove and cannot be removed by the Town. The work is planned for January and February 2024. DM made a motion to accept the bid; PM seconded; the motion approved unanimously. SN will draft a contract and DM will notify Henry Carr.

### **B. Budget Planning for 2024-2025**

Continue with Salary review, Appropriations Review, General & Highway Funds.

Melissa Brown, Town Treasurer, joined the meeting in the Town office for the budget planning and left after the discussion was completed. As indicated in the agenda, the SB continued the budget planning for the next fiscal year. Discussions concerned the following topics:

#### **1) Daycare School Fund**

The SB agreed with budgeting \$8,800 for daycare expenses and discussed accounting practices for managing the rent and expenses from the daycare.

#### **2) Town Audit**

DM recommended that the Town include plans for having an independent Town audit at some time in the future. The SB agreed to include a Special Warning to put aside \$4,000 in the budget towards a future audit – estimated to cost approximately \$18,000.

#### **3) Windham Solid Waste Management Landfill Fee**

The new fee is \$3,870.

#### **4) Appropriations**

No new requests for appropriations have been received.

#### **5) Town Report**

GT expects to have his reports the first or second week of January along with the mailing list. Following this discussion, GT left the meeting.

#### **6) Highway Budget**

The Town has \$46,075 in state aid and another \$10,000 in grants.

#### **7) Salaries**

The SB discussed salaries; noted that the Vermont minimum wage will increase to \$13.67 in January 2024; and agreed that the Town should have a salary review guideline. They also discussed the new Vermont childcare tax of 0.44% on wages and decided that

the Town will pay both the employer portion of 0.33% and the employee portion of 0.11% - as provided by the law.

8) Loans

The 2024 loan payment for the excavator will be \$24,200.

9) Rainy Day Fund Policy

SZ reported that the VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) has a template for rainy day funds and recommended that developing a policy should be addressed at the next meeting for the SB.

10) Grant Management

The SB and Town Treasurer discussed budgeting for grant management fees. The Town of Newfane has been using the Rainy Day/Budget Stabilization Fund for these costs – which is consistent with the VLCT guidance.

11) Capital Improvements and Equipment Replacement & Maintenance

- a. DM asked if the Town would provide a budget for capital improvements to the shed at the town yard such adding an additional bay for covering up the gravel.
- b. The SB discussed budget needs for equipment replacement and repair. The road grader is a 1988 model and will eventually need replacement. The SB discussed the option of warning the community that a special fund will be budgeted to provide funds for replacing the road grader in the future.

C. Review requested changes to the contract for the BMH Foundation work.

Additional funds requested before completion of work by Mr. K. Bourne.

The SB discussed the change order for the additional costs for the BMH foundation work.

The updated total costs are \$34,632. As the SB voted to approve the change order previously (December 6, 2023 meeting), DM will sign the change order.

Regarding the additional funds requested by Kerry Bourne, the BMH does not currently have the funds to make an additional payment as the two grants funding the work will not release payment until all the work has been completed and inspected. Lacking the funding, the SB did not make a motion to pay an additional installment.

**7. New Business**

A. Appoint Marie Tattersall as the Brookline Representative to DVFiber

DM made a motion to approve the appointment of Marie Tattersall as the Brookline representative to DVFiber; seconded by BM; motion approved unanimously. DVFiber will starting installation of its optical fiber network in areas designated as Phase 2; Brookline will be in Phase 3. Marie Tattersall left the meeting following the vote.

B. Town Report - Schedule of due dates

Tabled.

C. Survey current positions that will be voted on at Town meeting or appointed by the Selectboard in March/April.

The SB needs to know whether people in elected positions are interested in running again and people in appointed positions that are coming to the end of their term are interested in continuing for an additional term. PM has offered to contact people and confirm their intentions. The SB needs this information by January 17, 2024.

- D. Website - [www.brooklinevt.com](http://www.brooklinevt.com) - Discuss the selection of Email  
The options for Town email addresses are to use a format based on Gmail or Outlook. The SB decided to table this decision until February 2024.

## **8. Reports and Updates**

SZ provided an update regarding reports to FEMA and then SZ and PM left the meeting.

- A. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

Since the last meeting, the town experienced another heavy rainstorm which resulted in minor damage. EMB worked on clearing culverts - there were approximately 4 that became plugged. The new culverts on Putney Mountain Road worked well. All the culverts that EMB monitored were at full capacity during the storm; low lying areas did flood; however, no roads needed to be closed. A tree came down on Hill Road disrupting power for a short period of time.

More signs have been stolen.

Because of the rain and warm temperatures, additional stone has been used on the roads – the Town will need additional supplies.

- B. Planning Committee – S. Zwick

Tabled since there have been no meetings since the last update.

- C. Energy Committee – S. Zwick

Tabled since there have been no meetings since the last update.

- D. Building Commissioner - B. Mello

The Holiday Sing-Along at the BMH went well. Julia Duke did a great job. BM has some minor recommendations for future Sing-Alongs that he will share with Lee Anne Parker. It was a really good endeavor, and he hopes the Town will have many more of such events at the BMH in the future.

- E. Highway Grants & Contracts – S. Noga

- 1) SN has drafted more detailed language to be incorporated in the 2WiredGuys contract.

- 2) He will update the Grants Log to indicate that GIA 00274 is now closed.

- 3) FMEA 4720 Storm (July 2023)

As a follow-up to the last SB meeting regarding road estimates, SN has learned that the FEMA regulations require specific certification and licensure that Archie Clark may not have and SN is researching other options. The SB also discussed needing an extension for filing for Storm 4720 damage. According to FEMA's timeline for the July 2023 storm, all work should have been completed by now – but the Town only recently received the hydraulic reports required to support the work.

- F. Selectboard Chair - D. Maggio

Already covered earlier during the meeting.

- G. Any other topic as requested by the selectboard not requiring a vote.

None.

## **9. Communications**

- A. Email

Town of Putney Planning Commission is scheduled on January 3, 2024.

- B. Regular Mail

Covered earlier.

**10. Set Agenda for the next meeting on January 3, 2024**

- A. Signing contract with 2WiredGuys
- B. MTAP priority list
- C. Salary guide development
- D. Review the extension needs for FEMA 4720
- E. Rainy day fund policy
- F. Due date for Town report (Selectboard report, auditor's report, etc)
- G. Animal control & regional policing program

**11. Adjourn the Meeting**

DM moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was **adjourned at 9:03 PM.**

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk