

Final Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, February 7, 2024

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)
Vanessa Ballou (VB) (Recording Clerk)

Public:

FactTV online
Auditors
Frank Rucker (FR)
Heidi Nystrom (HN)
Kendra Brooks (KB)

1. Dorothy Maggio called the meeting to order at 6:41 PM.

E. Mark Bills (EMB) was not able to attend the meeting.

2. Any Changes to the Agenda

None.

3. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled members of the public

Auditors for Q & A on Budget scheduled at 7 pm: see 6.A. below.

B. Unscheduled members of the public

None.

4. Review and Adopt Minutes

A. Regular Meeting Minutes – January 17, 2024

The SB reviewed the draft minutes; no changes were requested. DM motioned to approve the minutes as presented; BM seconded; the motion approved unanimously.

B. Special Meeting Minutes – January 24, 2024

The SB reviewed the draft minutes; no changes were requested. DM motioned to approve the minutes as presented; SN seconded; the motion approved unanimously.

5. Warrant Orders

A. Payroll Warrant

DM made a motion to approve the payroll warrant 2430 dated January 31, 2024 in the amount of \$1,815.28; SN seconded; the motion was approved unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable Warrant

DM made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2431 dated February 7, 2024 in the amount of \$16,326.20; BM seconded. DM noted that \$10,500 is the second payment for the snow plowing contract. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Unfinished Business

A. Auditors – 15 minutes for Q&A

Following introductions, DM asked the auditors for recommendations on how to improve the system and process for developing the Town budget. Frank Rucker (FR) distributed a copy of the Auditor's Report which will be included in the Brookline 2023 Annual Town Report as well as a list of recommendations and a format for future financial reporting. FR expressed his thanks for the very collaborative process and the commitment and cooperation of the Town's staff while completing the audit. He summarized each of the recommendations.

- 1) Present top-level summary of financial activity: total revenue, total expenditures, and whether there is a surplus or deficit.
- 2) Align revenue with expenditures within each budget fund.
- 3) The most important number for the SB is the fund balance (assets plus revenue minus liabilities/expenditures). FR recommended that this information be included with the SB budget and reviewed on a quarterly basis. GT suggested that the quarterly reviews occur 30 days after quarterly tax payments are collected.
- 4) Keep the general ledger a financial statement not a transaction history statement. The financial statement should be summarized on one page for each fund – including at a minimum the general fund and highway fund with the option of collapsing the remaining funds into one or more categories.
- 5) Record capital assets worth over \$5,000 in the general ledger as a fixed asset, beginning with asset construction costs or acquisition costs and record depreciation costs over time. This can be captured in a spreadsheet. This record-keeping serves two purposes: 1) it enables the Town to track and make financial plans to replace a capital asset when it is needed and 2) it provides a mechanism for alerting the Town's residents of coming expenditures.

Following this discussion, SZ asked about the availability of the independent auditors to check the Town's banking reconciliation periodically; the auditors discussed how this type of checking could be available.

The auditors left following this discussion.

B. Town Meeting / Town Report Update

The Town Report has been sent off for printing. The Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 4th and will be held in the daycare building. If needed, the Town Meeting can continue Tuesday, March 5th.

C. FEMA Update

Members of the SB met with Michael Bareson from FEMA on January 26th regarding the 2023 storms. FEMA has requested that information regarding the 2023 storm is separated into distinct projects and within each project specific locations. They are also asking for additional details such as GPS location for the quarry from which road materials were sourced.

D. Part time -On Call Helper for Highway Dept Assistant

The SB is pursuing multiple avenues to address this Town need, including advertising the position; contacting Athens, Townshend, and Newfane regarding shared services on an as needed basis; and reaching out to individuals who may be interested.

- E. Part time Administrative Assistant advertisement
The SB is also pursuing multiple avenues to address this Town need.
- F. RFP - advertisement for hydraulic hammer work to be done in town
DM distributed a draft RFP for the hydraulic hammer work, but finalization was tabled until EMB is available.
- G. Procedural Human Resource Policy development
The Town needs to have formal documentation of raises; SZ will draft a memo documenting the raises to be implemented for the fiscal year 2025 as well as a memo for retroactive pay for Helen Holt who was to have received an increase in her hourly rate previously.
- H. Contract signing - S. Bourne emergency work
This contract covers the emergency work done near Joe Slater's driveway because of the July 2023 flooding. The contract has been fully executed.
PM noted that the address numbering for the Slater property is not in sequence with other properties. During this discussion, PM confirmed his willingness to continue as the 911 coordinator.
- I. 2 Wired Guys Contract
The revised contract is in their hands; SN has not heard back.
- J. Carr Tree Contract.
SN has questions about some of the clauses in the contract provided by Carr Trees regarding timing of payment, penalties for late payment, and termination/cancellation fees. Other potential issues include requirements for property owner's permission to remove trees and responsibility for divots.

7. New Business

- A. Electronic mapping program from Cartographic Technologies Inc for listers. Estimated cost \$450.00
If purchased, Town listers and residents would be able to download or access the application from the Town website. The SB tabled a decision until additional details regarding costs are available.
- B. Availability of JPs to deliver ballots to household citizens for 2 elections
Justices of the Peace deliver ballots to residents who are unable to leave home to vote.

8. Reports and Updates

- A. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills
Tabled.
- B. Building Commissioner - B. Mello
BM reported that there will be an energy assessment of Suzy's Little Peanuts on Tuesday, February 13th and of the Town Office on Tuesday, March 5th at 1:00 PM. The professional assessor will generate a report of their findings and make recommendations. SZ explained that whatever the Town would like to have funded must be listed in this report.
- C. Highway Grants & Contracts – S. Noga
SN provided a brief update on projects for which he is waiting for information including the status of the highway grant, an update from Meghan Brunk (Agency of Transportation), and from Chris Hunt related to the sand and salt shed.

D. Selectboard Chair - D. Maggio

DM provided a status update on a number of issues and noted that the Town needs to determine how to get on the list to have the Town properties reappraised.

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

SN inquired about the status of the BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities) quarterly report; DM confirmed that it was submitted.

9. Communications

A. Emails

1) FEMA Region 1 West Watershed Work Map Meeting

There are two webinar meetings: February 14th and 15th; SZ volunteered to attend one of them.

2) Binary Blizzard Exercise Opportunities from VEM (Vermont Emergency Management)

This is a state-wide catastrophic full scale emergency response exercise. However, the SB does not have the people to participate.

3) State of Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT)

DM reported on the details from the AOT email regarding painting of center lines as well as the following:

- -Municipal Highway Grant Application to apply for both Town Highway Structures Grant program and the Town Highway Class 2 Roadway Grant program Due before April 15, 2024
- Town Bridge Inspections
- TA 60 Annual Town Financial Plan due within 60 days of Town Meeting

4) Lister email re: electronic mapping program

See 7.A. above.

B. Regular Mail

Donation received from Howard Cutler to the Brookline Meeting House (BMH) for \$7,500.00.

10. Set Agenda for the next meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2024

A. BMH Advisory Committee requests 20 minutes for discussion of priority lists, funding needs, and planning at the 2/21/24 meeting.

B. Energy Committee vote to approve budgeted spending

C. Sample memo for salary raises and retroactive pay

D. Cartographic Technologies

E. Town properties reappraisal

F. Shared services

11. Adjourn the Meeting

DM moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was **adjourned at 8:41 PM.**

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk