

Final Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Present:

Selectboard (SB):

Dorothy Maggio (DM) (Chair)
Stanley Noga (SN) (Vice-Chair)
Bruce Mello (BM)
Michael DeSocio (MD)
Doug Wellman (DW)

Town Officers:

E Mark Bills (EMB) (Highway
Supervisor)
Vanessa Ballou (VB) (Recording
Clerk)

Public:

FactTV online
At Town Office:
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)
Sam Bourne (SB)
Kerry Bourne (KB)
Via Zoom:
Lee Ann Parker (LAP)
Dan Towler (DT)
Chris Daly (CD)
Leah Daly (LD)
Oliver Ames (OA)

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

2. Review / Approve Minutes

A. Regular meeting minutes – April 3, 2024

The SB reviewed the draft minutes dated April 3, 2024. DM motioned to approve the minutes from Wednesday, April 3rd with the noted change regarding reimbursement to the Town by SeVEDS; BM seconded; motion approved unanimously.

3. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled members of the public

1) Alyssia Schmidt (AS) - Topic: Town Wide Yard Sale on May 25 idea

AS proposed a Town-wide yard sale for the residents and businesses to be held May 25th and 26th from 9 AM to 1 PM. AS offered to coordinate the yard sale activities and advertising on Front Porch Forum as well as via the Town listserv and Facebook page. The plan is to have tables set up on resident driveways. SN suggested use of the playing field on Grassy Brook Road as an alternate location for residents on side roads.

2) Lee Ann Parker (LAP)- Brookline Meeting House (BMH) Update/Discussion about assessment and moving forward with projects

Jon Saccoccio's study report has been received and copies provided to the SB. The \$1,000 cost of the report has not yet been invoiced. The BMH Committee is looking for grants to cover this cost as well as costs for additional work. The follow-on feasibility study will provide information about the priority and sequence of further work as well as estimated costs. SN and LAP will be meeting with Maggie Foley on Thursday, April 18th regarding MTAP grants before the MTAP program ends in April.

- 3) Residents wishing to discuss the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Grant for Structure Elevations & Mitigation Reconstruction.

Oliver Ames (OA) presented information regarding the repetitive flooding near the intersection of Grassy Brook and Parker Roads. He clarified that he and the Dalys are seeking funds to address undersized culverts and not structure elevations or mitigation reconstruction. The grant they are seeking provides an opportunity for the Town and the residents affected by the flooding to seek funding at the State and Federal level. OA recognized that obtaining funding and the required remediation was a demanding process, requiring significant project management efforts from all the entities (residents, Town, State) to manage the process from beginning to end. OA also noted the risks to the Town if the flooding is not addressed. There is a significant risk that parts of Grassy Brook Road and Parker Road would wash out making travel impossible. He also noted the liability to the Town based on Vermont Case Law regarding culverts and precedent in the aftermath of Hurricane Irene – reading for the minutes: “if damage occurs to a person, or his or her property, by reason of the insufficiency or want of repair of a bridge or culvert that the town is liable to keep in repair, the person sustaining damage may recover in a civil action.” OA concluded by stating that the situation needs to be addressed in the short term; it is not something that can wait.

DM described the actions the Town has taken. A hydraulic study has been completed and an engineering study has been approved for the site. Regarding Town funding, DM said that the Town would need to put a special article to appropriate funding in the budget for the next Town Meeting. OA acknowledged that it is unlikely that the Town would be able to fund a project of the size and cost needed and that is why he is looking for funding elsewhere. In addition, there are other areas in the Town that require similar attention. DM noted that she, MD, and SN are working on this. SN reported that he filed a pre-application with the State informing them of the interest in the grant. OA has also filed a pre-application with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM). VEM has informed OA that the residents are on their radar/in the queue, but the process and timing is not clear.

- 4) Sam Bourne (SB) re: Drainage ideas/plans for 6 Parker Road

SB stated that near the Daly’s house there is an obstruction where the old stone culvert and the 21-inch steel culvert meet that causes water to back-up into the stone culvert and flood the Daly’s basement during heavy rains. SB proposed solutions to address this flooding such as rerouting the drainage ditch away from the Daly’s basement and installing a culvert under Parker Road to empty into Grassy Brook. DM suggested that SN, EMB, Sam Bourne, Archie Clark, and Kerry Bourne work together to finalize the plans and return to an SB Meeting with additional details.

- B. Unscheduled members of the public on Agenda items only

None.

4. Changes to the Agenda

Table items 5. B. and 6.A.

5. Unfinished Business

- A. Green Up Day Volunteer needed Email sent out
Vanessa and Jon Ballou have volunteered to coordinate Green Up Day Activities.
- B. MTAP Update: Municipal Technical Assistance Program
Tabled until additional information is known from the April 18th meeting.

6. New Business

- A. Action: Review Local Emergency Management Plan and submit to WRC for review and approval
Tabled.
- B. Action: Permit the BMH Plant Sale Fundraising event Saturday May 25, 2024 9 to 11 AM, Chair Lee Anne Parker
DM made a motion to permit the BMH to have a plant sale fund raiser event on Saturday, May 25, 2024 from 9 AM to 11 AM; the chair will be Lee Anne Parker; and the funds will be used to improve the BMH. BM seconded and the motion approved unanimously.
- C. Action: Support the Town Wide Driveway Yard Sale Day Saturday May 25, 2024- Organizer Alyssa Schmidt
DM made a motion to support the Town wide yard sale on the weekend of May 25 and 26 as organizer Alyssa Schmidt has requested; BM seconded. While agreeing that it was a good idea to use the playing field on Grassy Brook Road for the yard sale, the SB also agreed that cars should not be allowed on the field. The motion approved unanimously.
- D. Action: Town to submit a pre-application to the Department of Public Safety Hazard Mitigation Grant for Structure Elevations & Mitigation Reconstruction as per letter of intent. SN clarified that one pre-application has been submitted to the DPS. DM made a motion that the SB continue to review and submit the proper paperwork for pre-applications for the safety hazard mitigation grant for the DPS; MD seconded. The SB discussed the potential timing of the grant awards versus the need to mitigate as soon as possible. SN noted that submitting the pre-applications was not time-consuming and provided an opportunity to fund flood mitigation efforts in the future, including those properties listed in the letter of intent. The motion approved unanimously.
- E. Action: Appoint Donald Woodford to the Planning Committee Remove Oliver Ames (OA) from the Planning Committee
DM made a motion to appoint Donald Woodford to the Planning Committee this year; SN seconded; the motion approved unanimously. DM reported that OA has resigned from the Planning Committee and made a motion to accept his resignation which was seconded by SN. Noting that OA was very helpful and one of the more active members, SN suggested that the resignation be accepted with regret. The motion to accept OA's resignation with regret was approved unanimously.
- F. FEMA Visit
DM announced that FEMA and their Hazard Mitigation Team will be at the Town at 12:00 PM on Friday, April 19, 2024 for a meeting; attendance is open.
- G. Village Trust Initiative – New Funding Program
DM received an email from Mathew Bachler at Windham Regional informing her of a new funding opportunity available to local communities to fund improvements in accessibility or

renovations to old Town Halls, historic buildings, housing, etc. She has forwarded the email to the SB and to members of the BMH Committee (LAP and DT) for consideration.

H. Knowledge Bites

Knowledge Bites is run through SeVEDS (Southeastern Vermont Economic Development) program and has numerous educational workshops. DM will be attending a workshop on shared services.

7. Reports and Updates

A. Selectboard Chair Report - D. Maggio

- 1) Policy review: Select which policies should be reviewed/updated at the next meeting
DM distributed a schedule for the SB to review and update, as needed, all Town Policies before the end of the year. DM identified the following 4 policies for review at the May 1st meeting: Purchase Policy, Conflict of Interest, the SB Rules of Procedure, and Town Office Use Policy.
- 2) Administrative Assistant assignments/Drop Box Documents
The Administrative Assistant can make changes to the Town Policies. SN has documents needing revision.
- 3) Agendas/Minutes/Quorum rules for Open Meeting Law
Workshops regarding the Open Meeting Law are available, and DM encouraged SB members to consider attending if they haven't already. Agendas need to be posted on the website and on the 3 Town Bulletin Boards.
- 4) Distribute SB workload more evenly with 5 members sharing the responsibilities-discussion
MD and DW are working with the auditors. MD has offered to help with hazard mitigation and some of the highway concerns. BM has on-going projects and plans for each of the Town's buildings. SN has been working with FEMA and covers all the contracts. DM asked DW if he would work with the BMH Committee on their finances including receipt of and reimbursement from grants and costs of planned assessments and work.

B. Grants/Contracts - S. Noga

- 1) Contract for Jon Saccoccio Feasibility Study
SN started his review but has not completed it. The document provided is a proposal with terms and conditions which SN will need to reconcile with the Town's standard terms and conditions.
- 2) Contract for Peter Yost - BMH Building Mold Study
SN has not yet completed.
- 3) Salt & Sand Shed Invoice in Accounts payable changed to \$10,617.44
The invoice has been received and will be paid.
- 4) DPS/Hazard Mitigation Representatives on behalf of the town residents - Discussion/Appointment
SN has been completing the hazard mitigation tasks. Moving forward, MD will help with this work along with SN and DM. MD offered to take the lead when the Town hears back from DPS regarding the pre-application submissions.
- 5) ACTION: Finalize the annual TA60 paperwork w/signatures.
ACTION: Acceptance of State Road Standards.

DM motioned that the SB finalize the TA60 paperwork by signing it; SN seconded; motion approved unanimously. DM motioned that the Town of Brookline accepts the State's Road standard; SN seconded; motion approved unanimously. The TA60 paperwork was circulated for SB signatures.

- 6) Action: Grants in Aid Update for 2025 Application
SN signed and submitted the GIA application.

C. Highway Supervisor Report - E. Mark Bills

- 1) Tree Work

The Town originally awarded the tree work to Carr Tree & Timber, but they are currently unable to complete the work. The Town has received another bid from Arbor Climb located in Chesterfield, NH. For this bid the Town will need to provide any needed traffic control. DW made a motion to change the tree contractor to Arbor Climb for hazardous tree removal up to \$3,800; BM seconded. During the discussion, DM confirmed that this tree work is in the current budget (July 2023 to June 2024). The motion approved unanimously. DM will follow up with Arbor Tree's office manager regarding their insurance information and timeline.

D. Building Commissioner - B. Mello

- 1) UV water sanitation system repairs

The daycare system uses a UV water sanitizer which is not working properly and some parts may be close to the end of their lifecycle. EMB and BM have been working with the manufacturer to trouble shoot the problem. BM hopes that issues with the unit will be resolved by the next SB meeting.

E. Selectboard Goals for 2024 – Tabled from last meeting

- BM's goals are described in the Building Commissioners Report in the Town Meeting Report.
- DM's goals are to have a solid system for archiving documents so that future SB members have access to documents regarding actions taken and decisions made to serve as a guidance for future actions and decisions. A second goal is to review and revise all the Town's policies.
- SN stated that while he hasn't had time to itemize his specific goals, his overall goal is to serve and represent the Town as best as possible, to ensure that resident concerns are addressed, and to treat everyone equally.
- MD's individual goal is to help move the financial reporting forward. Noting that the Town is facing increased flooding risks, MD's second goal concerns flood mitigation.
- DW's goals, similar to SN's, are to serve the people of the Town the best way he can and to get up to speed as quickly as possible. DW observed that the Town's responsibilities have increased significantly since he last served on the SB, and this has taken a toll on the Town's budget. The Town's tax base is not growing and the increasing costs, including the increases in the school budget, are crowding out what the Town's tax revenue can provide for flood mitigation, maintenance of the Town's facilities, or to address other Town and resident needs. DW said that it's not fair to ask the residents to pay more in taxes; his last stated goal is to be fiscally responsible to the Town.

Following the discussion of goals, the SB discussed the need to reassess the Town's properties and the challenge of having this completed given the backlog. DW explained that once the reassessment is completed, the Town's tax rate will be lowered so that the Town is not collecting more in revenue.

- F. Any other discussion as requested by a selectboard member which does not require a vote
 - 1) BM reported that some residents are concerned that there is not a current map of the cemetery.

8. Warrant Orders

A. Payroll Warrant

DM made a motion that the SB concur with her action of signing on April 4, 2024 payroll warrant 2440 dated April 10, 2024 in the amount of \$1,959.53; BM seconded; the motion was approved unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable Warrant

DM made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2441 dated April 18, 2024 in the amount of \$317,107.83; SN seconded. DM noted that this payment includes the third quarter school payment of \$279,965.15, the grant reimbursement of \$10,617.44, and the ARPA appropriations for the NewBrook Fire Truck donation as voted by the residents at the Town Meeting in the amount of \$10,000. The motion was approved unanimously.

9. Communications

DM summarized the communications listed below.

A. Regular Mail

The Town received a letter from Windham County Humane Society agreeing to serve as the Town's holding facility as voted during the SB Reorganization Meeting. DM provided SN with the Humane Society's contract for review. DM made a motion asking the SB to concur with her action of signing the contract after review; DW seconded; the motion was approved unanimously. The cost is \$385 for serving as the holding facility for the year.

B. Email

- 1) Knowledge Bites are provided free via Zoom.

10. Set Agenda for the next meeting on Wednesday, May 1, 2024

- A. Policy Review
- B. Green Up Day
- C. Brookline Meeting House Update
- D. Local Emergency Management Plan Due May 1
- E. Pre-Application for DPS Hazard Mitigation update
- F. Planning Committee

11. Adjourn the Meeting

DM moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was **adjourned at 9:16 PM**.