Draft Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Present:

Selectboard (SB):	**Town Officers:**	**Public:**
Dorothy Maggio (DM) Chair	E Mark Bills (EMB) Highway Supervisor	FactTV*
Stanley Noga (SN) Vice-Chair	Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk	Alyssa Schmidt (AS)*
Bruce Mello (BM)		Dan Towler (DT)*
Michael DeSocio (MD)		Kim Bergner (KB)*
Doug Wellman (DW)		

***** Via Zoom

1. **Dorothy Maggio called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM and introduced the attendees.**
2. **Review/Approve Draft Minutes**
   A. Regular SB Meeting minutes from February 5, 2025
   DM motioned to approve the draft minutes from Wednesday, February 5, 2025 as amended; SN seconded. The motion approved unanimously.
3. **Changes to the Agenda**
   None.
4. **Members of the Public**
   A. Scheduled members of the public on their requested topics.
   None.
   B. Unscheduled members of the public on agenda items only
   None.
5. **Reports & Updates**
   A. Grants - S. Noga
      1) Windham Solid Waste Management District (WSWMD)/ Recycling update
      SN provided an update on the WSWMD efforts to ensure that towns are getting the best possible deal for services such as trash, recycling, and compost collection. WSWMD is planning a synchronized mailing of an RFP (Request for Proposal) to waste haulers within a 50-to-60-mile radius with the goal of having participation by as many as possible of the 10 towns within the district. SN provided the SB Members with a copy of the draft RFP. WSWMD has asked towns to inform them of their interest by February 28th, 2025; but given the upcoming Town Meeting and March 5th SB reorganization meeting, the earliest that the SB will be able to discuss the RFP may be at the March 19, 2025 meeting.
      WSWMD has also asked Brookline to identify a primary and alternate representative and inform WSWMD via a form.

2) FEMA - Update information about Culvert 11 (Stone Arch) on Hill Road after a visit from Brian Post.

There is a huge stone, near the concrete addition, that if washed out would cause that section of the stone arch/culvert 11 bridge to collapse. Brian Post (BP) discussed various options for fixing the structure and concluded that the costs are comparable between restoring the historical stone arch/culvert 11 vs replacing the entire structure with a modern structure/box culvert. However, to match the box culvert's potential flow volume, a restoration of the historical stone arch/culvert 11 would require installing a second culvert and that would increase the costs of restoring the stone arch/culvert 11. A second culvert would also need to be at least 20 feet away and would likely require acquisition of property.

BP believes that the renovation could be completed by this fall - the last date for completion of work would be September 30, 2025, but did not specify the type of renovation.

The SB would like input from the residents but does not yet have all the information needed to make a decision and will hold a special meeting once the information is available.

See below regarding the Northern Long Ear Bats and requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

3) Update on Ellen Ware Road Culvert plan.
The next step in the process is for FEMA to ask for an EIS. The Town will need an EIS regarding the Northern Long Ear Bats which are an endangered species and are present in the area.

Currently FEMA is putting together the information they have received and need the Town's information from the historic people. The current estimates for repair of Ellen Ware Road are $320,000.

4) Close out of FEMA Program
The FEMA close-out letter did not identify which FEMA project was being closed. SN continues to do research to determine whether the letter was for 2021 storms or 2023 storms.

B. Building Commissioner - B. Mello

1) Brookline Meeting House (BMH)
BM attended the BMH Committee Meeting on February 13, 2025 and described his plans along with a time sequence for repairs and renovations. The plans are dependent on how the Town wants to use the BMH and whether the Town wants to use the building throughout the year. Depending on what the Town wants, BM will pursue a grant from the Vermont Arts Council with a deadline of May 1, 2025.

2) BM noted that once the new SB is formed, he would like to pursue doing work on the Town Yard.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

1) Current projects
A gravel berm has been planned for both ends of Putney Mountain Road and installed on the southern end.

2) Planned projects
EMB reported that there is a shortage of road salt. He has ordered 3 loads and expects another order this week which will fill the salt shed. Additional sand has also been ordered. DM complimented how quickly the roads have been cleared.

EMB has been winging it back along the roads to make room for plowing additional snowfall off the roads. The winging it back task is not part of the plowing contract and cannot be done with a regular plow attachment.

3) Putney Mountain Road Safety Measures for Winter
EMB put down gravel on Putney Mountain Road.

4) Fire Extinguishers
EMB is working on purchasing them.

D. Finance/Budget – M. DeSocio
No updates.

E. Selectboard Chair - D. Maggio

1) Draft Agenda for Reorganisation Meeting for March 5, 2025
DM distributed the draft agenda for the reorganization meeting.

2) Vacancy list for elected and appointed positions will be with the Reorganisation agenda.
DM distributed a working copy of the list and there was a brief discussion.

3) Rabies Clinic for Cats and Dogs at Town Hall on Saturday, March 1, 2025 Cost $25 per animal. Licenses will be available from the Town Clerk.
The rabies clinic has been confirmed.

4) Reminder that SB members must watch the Ethics training video and take the quizzes presented in the video - save the email that confirms that you took the training.

5) Discussion for Town Meeting

a. Will we put forth a question regarding Stone Arch Bridge/Culvert 11 for a non-binding discussion?
DM noted that the SB earlier decided that they would not have all the information needed to come to a decision.

b. Does BM want to put forth a question regarding the use of the BMH?
BM wants to ask the Town regarding the use of the BMH – specifically whether they want to use the Annex year-round and how.

c. BM will ask to have the Seveds appropriation reduced to $500.

d. MD will ask about the use of the budget surplus.

e. The Visiting Nurse Alliance has informed the Town that they will no longer be sponsoring nursing services in Brookline so the $1,000 appropriations request should be removed from the budget.

6) Town Meeting - Room set up plans
The SB will meet around 4:15 PM to set up the meeting room.

F. Any other discussion as requested by a selectboard member not requiring a vote
None.

6. Unfinished Business

A. Action - Appoint a temporary 911 coordinator until the reorganization meeting.
Tabled because the property owner did not have a site map ready.

B. Review Flag Policy Type 1 and Review Flag Policy Type 2
The SB preferred the shorter Type 2 Flag Policy over the longer Type 1. DM made a motion to adopt the Type 2 Flag Policy. SN seconded. During the discussion minor revisions were requested and action on the Flag Policy was tabled until it's been revised. The revised Flag Policy will be on the March 5, 2025 SB meeting agenda.

C. Review Ethics Complaint Investigation and Enforcement Policy
DM made a motion to adopt the Investigation and Enforcement Policy as presented; SN seconded. The motion was approved by 4 of the 5 SB members - with BM temporarily absent during the vote.

D. Listers Report - Appraisal information Review & Discuss
The official notice of the reappraisals will be mailed out the second week in April. Informational hearings will be held April 29 and 30. Grievance hearings will be held two weeks after the informational hearings.

E. $500 Grant from Preservation Trust for Timber study – Refund
The Town received and deposited the $500 grant and will refund it to the Preservation Trust since the timber study was not outsourced.

F. Review the letter to our legislatures re: the effect that a federal grant freeze will have on our town.
DW asked if the letter should also recommend that the FEMA process should be stream-lined. The SB discussed the Town's experience with FEMA. DW will draft a letter that covers the Town's experiences as well as concerns regarding future funding.

G. Flood Plain Administrative talks with Athens Update
Athens and Brookline will reconnect once Athens has joined the National Flood Insurance Program.

H. BMH Go Fund Me Account - Ready in March.
Melissa Brown (MB), Town Treasurer, is setting up a Money Market Fund for the BMH fund raising; the account will be available by March 6, 2025 after the reorganization meeting.

7. New Business

A. Resignation of Dan Towler from WSWMD
DM made a motion to accept with regret the resignation of Dan Towler from the Windham Solid Waste Management District as the town representative; SN seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Paying Town Taxes with Credit Cards
DM asked MB about allowing residents to pay Town taxes with credit cards. MB explained that it's easy to set up; residents would need to cover a surcharge for using their credit cards. It's something for the SB to consider in the future.

8. Warrants

A. Payroll Warrant
DM made a motion to approve payroll warrant 25-32 dated February 12, 2025 for $2,060.97; BM seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable Warrant
DM made an initial motion to approve an accounts payable warrant totaling $6,101.59; seconded by BM. During the discussion DM explained that the $6,101.59 included $31.83 in taxes from a Northeastern Equipment invoice. Since the Town is exempt from taxes, the tax

payment was deducted from the total. DM made a motion to approve the accounts payable warrant 25-33 dated February 20, 2025 in the amended amount of $6,069.76. The motion approved unanimously.

9. **Communications**

Regular Mail

A. Received a signed contract from RESCUE Inc. for the provision of emergency medical services to the Town of Brookline.
B. Letter sent to Mr. Lenny Howard - Putney Road Supervisor re: closing Putney Mountain Road in the winter from Putney side. A response has not been received yet.
C. Official letter from FEMA re: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan being accepted

10. **Executive Session (**Cite as: 1 V.S.A. § 313) - if needed

A. DM made a motion to approve entering into the executive session finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body involved at a substantial disadvantage. MD seconded; motion approved unanimously by four of the five SB Members, with BM not present.
B. Discussion of terms of three-year lease of the school building to Suzy Coutermarsh doing business as (dba) Suzy's Little Peanuts.
Tabled since the SB has not received a lease to review.
C. DM made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss employment concerns brought to the chair's attention in continuation of the last meeting; BM seconded. The motion approved unanimously.
D. No Actions were taken by the SB during the executive session which was limited to the terms of employment concerns as mentioned above.

EMB and VB were excused from the meeting, the Zoom recording was turned off, and the SB entered the executive session at 8:40 PM. The SB exited the executive session at 9:27 PM. Upon resuming public session after Executive session, there were no votes or actions taken.

11. **Set Agenda**

A. Reorganizational Meeting on March 5, 2025
1) Sign-off on the letter regarding grants
2) Sign-off on the Flag Policy
3) Research the use of credit cards to pay Town taxes
4) Sign the lease with Suzy's Little Peanuts
5) Review recycling RFP from WSWMD
6) TBD

12. **Adjourn the Meeting**

DM moved to adjourn the meeting; the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk