Draft Minutes

Town of Brookline Special Limited Agenda Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, February 26, 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	David Parker (DP)Moderator
Bruce Mello (BM)		Jon Ballou (JB)*
Michael DeSocio (MD)		Carly Nystrom (CN)*
		Emily Beer (EB)*

* Via Zoom

1. **Dorothy Maggio called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM and introduced the attendees.**
   Doug Wellman was not able to attend the meeting.
2. **Changes to the Agenda**
   None.
3. **Members of the Public**
   A. Scheduled members of the public on their requested topics.
   No scheduled members of the public. David Parker (DP) attended the meeting in his capacity as the Moderator for the Town Meeting to work through changes to the Town Report with the SB.
   B. Unscheduled members of the public on agenda items only.
   Unscheduled members of the public included Jon Ballou (JB), Emily Beer (EB), and Carly Nystrom (CN). EB introduced herself and explained that she was new to the Town and was attending this SB meeting to see how it works. DM explained that the Special SB Meeting was called because Suzy's Little Peanuts (SLP) Daycare has decided to move their business to Brattleboro. CN, whose son goes to SLP Daycare, asked if it was possible to further negotiate SLP's rent because having SLP move away is a loss to the community. The SB explained that they offered a three-year lease with no increase the first year and minimal increases the second and third years and some improvements to the building. The SB explained that the other factors that influenced SLP's decision to move to Brattleboro included low enrollment (particularly of older children) from the area and difficulty finding and keeping staff.
4. Selectboard Chair Report
   The purpose of the special meeting was to review changes to the 2025/2026 budget and Town Report due to SLP's decision to move to Brattleboro and to prepare for the Town Meeting on Monday, March 3, 2025. MD summarized the changes to the budget and the SB discussed the best approach for explaining the impact on the Articles. Amendments to the Town Report to be presented at the Town Meeting include the following:

A. Having SLP move out of the school building impacts the 2025-2026 town budget by the loss of $28,800.00 in non-tax revenue and by the costs of having to "mothball" or maintain the vacated school building. These costs are estimated to be $13,000 (maintenance, insurance, heat, electricity, winter plowing, summer mowing, etc) and will be added to the taxes to be raised.

B. The following articles are impacted by the budget change and are also related to each other:
   Article 4 – General Fund Expenditures, and
   Article 11 – Establishing a Building Expense Fund.

C. Amending Article 4 – General Fund Expenditures
   The following changes to Article 4 will be amended from the floor and presented for a vote.

Article 4 Item	Town Report	Amended
operating expenses	$225,524	$238,524
raised by taxes	$175,727	$208,727
non-tax revenue	$49,797	$29,797

D. Amending Article 11 – Establishing a Building Expense Fund
   Since the decision by SLP Daycare to move impacts the General Fund Expenditures, the SB and Town Moderator agreed to make a motion during the Town Meeting to move the discussion of Article 11 before Article 4 and then make a motion to table Article 11 from the floor due to the loss of funding for a Building Expense Fund.

E. Article 9 – Applying Surplus to Reduce Tax Burden
   Article 9 concerns applying a surplus of $46,500 in funds, however, the actual surplus amount is $43,512 ($2,988 less). This represents an accounting correction identified after the Town Report was printed and will need to be corrected on the floor at the Town Meeting. The $2,988 difference will be added to the taxes to be raised and reflected in the amended Article 4.

   Finally, the surplus comes from the 2024 budget and MD advised the SB of how that might be handled in the final financial statement of the 2025/2026 budget in the future.

F. Article 13 – Appropriations for Organizations
   Article 13 will be reduced by $1,000.00 because the Visiting Nurse Program/Dartmouth will no longer serve Brookline with home visits for nursing or hospice care. There are also plans to amend the donation to Seveds from $1,590 to $500.

G. Article 14 - Other Business - Non-Binding Discussion
   DP recommended inviting the public for their input and to provide them with an opportunity to ask the SB questions. The SB could also introduce other topics for consideration by the public such as potential changes to the use of the Town Office and the former Brookline school after it is vacated. SN asked if this was also an opportunity to ask how many wanted to keep the historic stone arch/culvert 11 as a historical structure and how many are interested in replacing it with a more contemporary design.

H. Any other discussion as requested by a selectboard member not requiring a vote.
   1) SN provided an update on FEMA regarding the recommendations they have made about the historic stone arch/culvert 11.
   2) The SB discussed the email sent by SLP regarding their move to Brattleboro. DM will send a response on the Town stationary.

5. **Warrants**

   A. Payroll Warrant

   DM made a motion that the SB concur with her action of signing payroll warrant 25-34 in the amount of $3,890.43; SN seconded. The motion approved unanimously.

6. **Adjourn the Meeting**

   DM moved to adjourn the meeting; the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk