

**Final Minutes**  
**Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting**  
**Wednesday, August 6, 2025, 6:30 PM**

**Present:**

**Selectboard (SB):**

Mike DeSocio (MD) Chair  
Doug Wellman (DW) Vice-Chair  
Bruce Mello (BM)  
Emily Beer (EB)

**Town Officers:**

Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk\*

**Public:**

FactTV\*  
Stan Noga (SN)\*

\*Via Zoom

**1. Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.**

E. Mark Bills was not present at the meeting. EB joined during the discussion of agenda item 4.B.

**2. Changes to Agenda**

MD motioned to make two changes to the agenda: 1) remove Elizabeth Peebles from the agenda; she is not attending tonight's meeting but will attend the next SB meeting on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 2) add a discussion of computer monitors under 7. New Business. BM seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by 3 SB Members present at the beginning (MD, DW, BM).

**3. Review Draft Minutes**

**A. Regular Agenda Meeting July 16, 2025**

MD made a motion to approve the July 16, 2025 SB Meeting minutes as drafted. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously by 3 SB Members present at the beginning (MD, DW, BM).

**4. Members of the Public**

**A. Scheduled Members of the Public**

Elizabeth Peebles- State Architectural Historian Vermont Division for Historic Preservation will attend the next SB meeting.

**B. Unscheduled Members of the Public**

Stan Noga (SN) discussed attendance and registration details for the Vermont Local Emergency Management Training that will be held virtually on August 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. Both DW and SN plan to attend.

**5. Warrants**

**A. Payroll**

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2604 for \$6,462.23. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously (MD, DW, BM, EB).

**B. Accounts Payable**

MD made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2605 in the amount of \$17,487.24. DW seconded. During the discussion, the SB identified some questions regarding highway expenses for follow-up with EMB. The motion passed unanimously.

## 6. Old Business

### A. Discuss Options for Building Use

#### 1) School Building Update

BM is working with Amanda Faust regarding the requirement for water testing for the School Building. Periodic water testing is required for a building occupied by 25 or more people for six months, and Suzie's Little Peanuts now plan to stay in the building until the end of September.

#### 2) Vermont Arts Council Cultural Facilities Grant Award for Brookline Meeting House (BMH)

BM announced that the Town received the Vermont Arts Council Cultural Facilities Grant. He again thanked all the contributors to the grant application effort and plans to post it in the BMH during the Town party (August 23, 2025). The plan is to use the grant to insulate the BMH.

#### 3) Options for Building Use

The SB discussed potential options for use of the Town buildings. The main options included the following.

- Sell the existing Town Office property

One option is to sell the current Town Office property and move the Town Office to the School Building to create a town center. The additional space available in the School Building could be used for various activities and events. Another potential benefit could occur if some sort of business became located within the building that would serve the community. Proceeds from the sale of the existing Town Office property would support the move and other Town building expenses.

- Sell the School Building

Proceeds from the sale of the School Building would support other Town building expenses – such as renovations to the BMH.

- Keep the existing Town Office and the School Building

Another option is to keep both buildings and rent out one of them.

The SB recognizes that implementing these options requires financial and human resources. This includes providing cost estimates for both the initial implementation and ongoing management of the selected option so tax payers are informed of potential costs. Additional volunteers will also be needed to implement the selected option and to plan and manage new Town events and activities. Although renting one of the buildings is included among the options, the SB was generally not in favor of being a landlord or having responsibility for property management.

Input from the Town residents is essential to determine how to move forward. The SB will plan a Special SB meeting to ask for Town input regarding both the options suggested by the SB and any suggested by the community. The meeting will also serve to gauge community interest in having a town center to encourage and

facilitate resident interactions. It is important to note that this will not be a Special Town Meeting; the SB is asking for input and there will not be a vote at this time.

The SB is looking into using an organization that does community engagement. The Town of Windham went through a similar experience when their school was closed, and Cathy Edgerly was able to get a grant to pay for a focus group to generate ideas for their town buildings (school and church).

**B. Discuss lead contact and interview candidates**

For grant review by Cathy Edgerly (CE)

MD read CE's proposal, which includes her description of two parallel track assessments and the preparation of a report to be completed within a 30-day timeline for a fee of \$1,200. CE will assess Brookline's needs and assets; identify what projects are ready for grants and which need additional planning and research; and assess the Town's successes and failures with obtaining grants. In parallel, she will assess the status of grants in southern Vermont for small Towns; what grants are coming available over the next 12 months, what are the requirements, and who has been awarded these grants in the past. Dot Maggio will be the primary contact.

The SB discussed options for funding CE's \$1,200 fee.

BM updated the SB on recent developments regarding the buildings. Powder post beetle holes were found in the BMH and a reoccurrence in the Round Schoolhouse. BM has scheduled an appointment with Abatem Exterminating for Friday, August 8<sup>th</sup>. MD asked from which budget the exterminating costs would come from. MD cautioned that this early in the new fiscal year, given the amount of unpaid taxes, the Town needed to be careful about expenditures.

**C. Tabled Motion- Support for State Historical Designation- Stone Arch bridge**

MD made a motion to table item 6. C. DW seconded. During the discussion, MD noted that Elizabeth Peebles would attend the next SB meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**7. New Business**

**A. Errors and Omissions Form- Listers**

The listers informed the SB that there was a transposition of numbers in the value of a resident's powerline. The purpose of the form is to have the SB approve the correction. MD made a motion to approve the errors and omissions certificate correcting the value that is \$9,000 lower than it should be. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**B. Computer Monitors**

The listers have requested a second set of monitors at a cost of \$500.00 so they can work more efficiently. The budget includes funds for equipment. BM motioned to spend up to \$500 for two monitors for the listers. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously. BM will notify the listers via email.

**8. Reports and Updates**

**A. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello**

Provided earlier; see agenda item 6. Old Business.

B. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

EMB was not in attendance, but DW commented that EMB has done quite a bit of work on the roads now that they are dried out from the spring rainy season – including Putney Mountain Road and hammering ledge.

C. Finance/Budget – Mike DeSocio

1) June 30 Financial Results- Highway Fund

As of July 22, 2025, the highway fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 is well within the budget – with approximately \$299,000 remaining. MD explained that unspent surpluses are not rolled over to the next year's budget and when surpluses are spent in future years, it can look like a loss.

2) Late/Delinquent Tax Payments

The last list of delinquent tax payments showed approximately \$40,000 in late/delinquent payments.

D. Doug Wellman

1) Status Update- BCA Appeal

At the BCA meeting and site inspection, the tax was adjusted down slightly to reflect the correct number of wells and septic systems.

2) 911 Update

A 911 number has been assigned to the new driveway at 400 Grassy Brook Road. Brookline uses a method based on one-hundredth of a mile to assign new addresses. The state's address numbering system uses a different method and that method would apply to addresses on any new roads.

E. Other – Emily Beer

1) EB provided an update from the August 3<sup>rd</sup> Rescue Inc meeting. The organization is in a good financial position.

2) Nonemployee Work Agreement

People who are not employed by Brookline, but who do work for the Town must sign a nonemployee work agreement each year. Brookline is audited on an annual basis to confirm compliance with the requirement. SN explained that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) requires that as part of their agreements with contractors, towns collect proof of insurance and a signed copy of the nonemployee work agreement documenting that the contractor is not covered by the Town's unemployment insurance.

**9. Communications**

A. Alyssa Schmidt

MD summarized letters sent by Alyssa Schmidt regarding the historic designation of the stone arch bridge/culvert 11. DW noted that someone from the Vermont Historical Division would be attending the next SB Meeting and could clarify the requirements and process.

**10. Set Agenda**

A. Regular Meeting August 20, 2025

1) Meeting Minutes from August 6, 2025

2) Request for Proposal (RFP) for insulating the BMH

3) Follow-up on Town Building ideas

4) Set meeting date for Special Selectboard Meeting regarding Town Buildings

- 5) Elizabeth Peebles- State Architectural Historian Vermont Division for Historic Preservation
- 6) FEMA Update
- 7) Signing contract for Cathy Edgerly
- 8) Highway road signs
- 9) Support for State Historical Designation of the Stone Arch Bridge
- 10) Other

**11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action**

BM reminded the SB of the lister's request for a survey cabinet to enable better organization of the property surveys.

**12. Adjourn the Meeting**

MD moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk