

Final Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard (SB):

Mike DeSocio (MD) Chair
Doug Wellman (DW) Vice-Chair
Bruce Mello (BM)
Emily Beer (EB)
E. Mark Bills (EMB)
*Via Zoom

Town Officers:

Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk

Public:

FactTV*
Dan Towler (DT)
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)
Stan Noga (SN)
John Harris (JH)
Elizabeth Peebles (EP)*
Cathy Edgerly (CE)*
Kim Bergner (KB)*

1. Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

2. Changes to Agenda

MD motioned to make the following changes to the agenda: 1) under 6. A. the special meeting will be a Selectboard and not a Town Meeting, 2) under 7. A. the expenses for the Town picnic to be funded from the social fund, 3) under 7.C. change Chairmanship to Chair, 8. C. defer the discussion of the financials, and 4) under 7. add F. Discussion of Highway Assistant.

DW seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by 3 SB Members present in the meeting room (MD, DW, EB).

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting August 6, 2025

MD made a motion to approve the minutes for the August 6, 2025 SB Meeting as drafted.

DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously by 3 SB Members present (MD, DW, EB).

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Members of the Public

1) Elizabeth Peebles- State Architectural Historian

EP explained the process, benefits, and implications of having the stone arch/culvert 11 listed in the historic registry. The designation serves primarily to honor the historic significance of the structure and to increase awareness of its existence. The designation does not impose any state restrictions or regulations but does make the structure eligible for a rehabilitation grant. The next cycle of the rehabilitation grant program is opening soon; it is a competitive 50/50 matching grant program up to \$20,000. FEMA will also conduct an environmental and historic preservation review. If the structure is destroyed because of storm activity, the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation would like to be informed, but there is no requirement.

In response to Cathy Edgerly's question, the SB confirmed that the Round Schoolhouse is on the National Registry of Historic Places and thus automatically listed on the state registry.

2) Cathy Edgerly

CE briefly described how she plans to begin her evaluation – initial meeting with Dot Maggio, initial potential contacts, urgent Town need for updating the Municipal Plan, potential grants, determining reasons the Town was not awarded grants in the past, Town's capital programs and budget, and possibility of going in with another town on a grant such as Age Strong Vermont program.

EB informed the group that she had just sent the contract and required form to CE.

3) Stan Noga – FEMA Update

SN filed extensions for both the Ellen Ware Road and the stone arch/culvert on Hill Road with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) and FEMA. The extensions to September 30, 2026 were accepted. He also summarized target timelines going forward.

Description of Task	Target Timing
Hammond Engineering is working on updating scope of work for both projects and updating cost estimates and plan for the stone arch/culvert.	Mid-fall 2025
Request for Proposals (RFP) distributed	Mid to late-fall 2025
Receipt of bids	Late fall 2025
Work to begin	April 1, 2026
Completion of both projects	September 30, 2026

The environmental evaluation has been completed for Ellen Ware Road. Trees that need to be removed for the project must be removed after November 1st and before April 15th when bats will be absent from the trees.

SN has been advised that Brookline can bill VEM/FEMA as the work progresses rather than waiting until the end. Still the two projects running concurrently may require the Town to borrow funds. MD suggested that SN and Melissa Brown (Treasurer) work together to create a funding plan.

4) Stan Noga – WSWMD (Windham Solid Waste Management District) Final Plan Update

Vermont State Statute 10 VSA §6604 mandates that a Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) is required with updates every 5 years. WSWMD and ANR (Agency of Natural Resources) adopted the draft for the next version on July 31, 2025. Two hearings will be held to review the draft; one scheduled for August 31, 2025 at 1:00 PM and one still to be scheduled. Each town in the WSWMD will be asked to vote on the draft. The plan outlines responsibilities for the towns.

SN reported that Brookline may receive a reduction of roughly \$250 in their 2027 fiscal year assessment because of the district's income from a new composting facility.

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public

The unscheduled members of the public attended the meeting to hear some of the updates, declined to speak, and left before the discussion of 6. Old Business.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2606 for \$6,224.36. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously (MD, DW, BM, EMB, EB).

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2607 in the amount of \$34,560.99. EB seconded. The SB discussed the cost of the contract for the Animal Control Services. MD will follow-up. The motion passed unanimously (MD, DW, BM, EMB, EB).

6. Old Business

A. Follow Up Discussion on Building Use/Special Selectboard Meeting

BM reported that Suzy's Little Peanuts (SLP) has not yet provided a firm date for when they will vacate the school building. In the meantime, BM is monitoring the requirements for water testing, because the requirements will change after SLP vacates the building.

The SB discussed when to schedule the residents' input for use of the Town Buildings. DW motioned to have the special Selectboard Meeting on Saturday, October 18, 2025 at 9:00 AM. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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

EB motioned that the SB support the application for State Historical Designation for the stone arch/culvert on Hill Road. EMB seconded. During the discussion, the SB acknowledged that the designation creates no restrictions or limitations and some benefit – such as potential access to the rehabilitation grant. The motion passed unanimously.

7. New Business

A. Town Picnic \$1,000 spending approval from Meeting House Fund

MD made a motion to approve \$1,000 for the Town picnic requested by the Meeting House Committee with the caveat that the funds are available in the social activities fund. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Consultant and Attorney for BCA (Board of Civil Authority) Appeal

The outcome from the recent BCA meeting is that the property owner is appealing the decision. The SB with SN discussed the appeal process, potential pathways, and who will need to be in attendance. DW motioned that the Town proceed with hiring an attorney and a consultant to represent the Town. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EB was appointed to follow-up with the potential attorney.

C. Planning Committee Chair

Don Woodford has asked to resign as the Chair from the Planning Commission, and SN is willing to take on the Chair's responsibilities. MD made a motion to accept Don Woodford's resignation as Chair and appoint Stan Noga as the Chair through the end of the term in March 2026. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Discussion- FEMA Update

Already discussed; see 4. A.3).

E. Discussion- WSWMD Update

Details previously discussed; see 4. A.4). The timing for the Town to vote or to authorize the Town's WSWMD representative to vote regarding the updated SWIP is still to be determined. DW motioned to table approval of the plan/adoption of the regional plan for the next SB meeting. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Highway Assistant

EMB has a great candidate for the highway assistant. The SB agreed to schedule an Executive Session at the next SB meeting – September 3, 2025 to discuss details of the hire.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

- 1) Today Momaney Painters removed the windows from the Brookline Meeting House (BMH) Annex and put up plywood covers and have started working on repairing the windows in their workshop. There are 5 cracked windowpanes that need to be repaired for an additional \$250. BM provided the contract signed by Momaney and the SB counter signed the contract. MD made a motion to approve an additional \$250 for the repair of 5 panes of glass. DW seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
- 2) On August 9th, Abatem Exterminating inspected the Round Schoolhouse and both the brick and wooden BMH structures. There is a minor reinfestation of powder post beetles in the floor of the Round Schoolhouse. Abatem recommended treating the infestation with Timbor at an estimated cost of \$400 plus the costs of the optional steps, if done, of sanding and applying a topcoat. Some carpentry work is also needed around the outside. Regarding the carpentry work, DW asked if the repairs needed to be done by someone certified in historic reconstruction; BM will follow up regarding the requirements.

Evidence of powder post beetle infestation was also found in the BMH with an estimated cost of \$2,400 to treat the entire building. MD recommended considering a service contract for on-going prevention, inspection, and maintenance against pests such as powder post beetles and mice for all Town buildings.

The SB discussed whether there was budget in the BMH fund to cover the exterminating costs and noted that it might be possible to get a grant to cover these exterminating costs.

3) Insulating the BMH Annex

The plan is to apply foam insulation in the crawl space under the annex. BM discussed the possibility of having the Town apply the foam insulation under the annex to save approximately \$2,500. Spray foam will not be used to insulate the annex walls.

BM also described work needed to repair the annex entryway and the sequence of insulating, entryway repair, and exterior painting.

B. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

EMB is almost done with the Grants in Aid (GIA). He has been busy with late summer road maintenance – replacing rusted out culverts, lining ditches with stone, adding gravel to roads to create a center crown for rain drainage, and removing ledge and hazardous trees as needed. He has 8 to 9 additional culverts he would like to install and plans to begin road-side mowing. EMB has ordered \$21,000 worth of gravel against the \$50,000 gravel budget. He follows the state standard for maintaining the crown in the roads and explained that the roads loose 1 to 2 inches of gravel per year to erosion and dust. EMD cleaned up the mess left around the recycling container.

C. Finance/Budget – Mike DeSocio

- 1) Update on June 30 Financials

MD deferred the update to the next meeting.

2) Late/Delinquent Tax Payments

Deferred to next meeting. Earlier in the meeting, MD made the comment that given the amount of delinquent taxes, the 2027 budget should not assume that 100% of the Town taxes will be collected during the tax year.

D. Doug Wellman

Nothing to update.

E. Emily Beer

Nothing to update.

9. Communications

A. Correspondence regarding a Town response required by the end of August regarding water testing requirements for the school building.

B. Notice of a town building symposium on August 28th in Wardsboro.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting September 3, 2025

- 1) Executive Session for Highway Assistant
- 2) Meeting Minutes from August 20, 2025
- 3) RFP for insulating the BMH Annex
- 4) RFP for plowing, salting, and sanding
- 5) Update on June 30 financials
- 6) Update on delinquent taxes
- 7) Update on SWIP review and approval
- 8) Other

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

None.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

EB motioned to adjourn, MD seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk