

Final Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, September 17, 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*
Stan Noga (SN)
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)

1. Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

BM joined at the beginning of agenda item 4.

2. Changes to Agenda

None.

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting September 3, 2025

MD made a motion to accept the minutes as drafted for the September 3, 2025 SB Meeting. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously by the four SB Members present (MD, DW, EMB, EB).

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Members of the Public

1) Stan Noga – FEMA Update

For Ellen Ware Road, Hammond Engineering is prepared to develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) and manage the advertising and receipt of the bids for SB review. SN is meeting with the engineers on Friday, September 19th at 1:00 PM. Hammond Engineering is interested in continuing to work on the project.

For the stone arch/culvert on Hill Road, Scott Jensen (ANR) no longer recommends requiring the installation of an additional culvert. Two FEMA representatives informed SN that the Town only needed to make repairs to return the stone arch/culvert to its condition prior to the 2023 flood. A cost estimate and a plan are needed from the engineer for these repairs. Holding up the slide for the repair only option presented at the Special May 31, 2025 SB Meeting, MD reminded the group that the SB voted to pursue the repair only option – which includes repairing all wing walls. Once FEMA receives the cost estimates, they will identify any costs that will not be covered.

2) Alyssa Schmidt – Vermont Historic Preservation Grant

AS asked if the SB would be getting a grant from Vermont Historic Preservation Grant Program. Applications are due October 6, 2025 and are awarded in December 2025 for

work in the coming year. Towns can only receive these grants every other year. The grant is up to a maximum of \$20,000 split between the grant and the Town (50/50 match). The Town may not be eligible this year, given that Brookline received a grant from the Vermont Arts Council for work to be completed by September 2026.

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public

None.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2610 for \$1,894.17. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2611 in the amount of \$14,500.19. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Contract for Animal Control Services

DW made a motion to approve the contract for Animal Control Services with Windham County Sheriff's Department. BM seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The contract was signed.

B. FEMA Update- Stone Arch Bridge/Culvert

The SB needs to update the contract with Hammond Engineering. This may be accomplished with a simple addendum to extend the project.

C. HP (Historic Preservation) Grant Application

DW motioned that the Town does not pursue the Historic Preservation Grant application. MD seconded. The motion passed with 4 in favor (MD, DW, BM, EB) and 1 abstention (EMB).

D. Planning Update- Funding

MD made a motion to fund services from Windham Regional Commission (WRC) for up to \$5,000 to help update the Town's regional plan. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Because of time constraints, the Plan will represent the minimum required and is essential for a number of other Town activities. Funding will come from the general fund.

E. Update on Inner Fire Tax Impact

The Town Listers are waiting for additional information from Inner Fire before they can decide whether the organization meets the criteria for being a nonprofit.

F. Update on Water Testing at School Building

See 8. B. below.

G. RFP for Insulation

The Town received one bid from Farnum for \$24,194 in response to the RFP. The scope of work includes having cellulose insulation blown into the annex walls and ceiling and closed-cell spray foam applied to the annex crawl space wall. Work cannot be scheduled until January 2026.

BM motioned to accept the bid received. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. New Business

A. National Opioid Settlement Signing

The SB needs additional information to move forward. DW motioned to table a decision until the SB has more information. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. VTrans SFY 2026 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

EMB explained that this related to the better back roads grant. He has a meeting next Tuesday to complete the paperwork for the grant.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Emily Beer

EB asked if the TAP grant could be used for building a salt shed. EMB responded by briefly describing the SB's prior experience with a shed grant and believes that the Town can build a salt shed very economically.

B. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

1) Suzie's Little Peanuts

BM met with them last week to discuss how the gas bill will be handled. They will vacate the building by the end of October 2025. There is some question about whether they want to move the fencing with them.

2) MERP (Municipal Energy Resilience Program) Funds

The Town has until the end of 2026 to use the remaining MERP funds of \$3,200. BM proposes using the funds for storm windows that could be installed on the inside of the BMH annex.

3) Status of Building Budgets

BM will work with Melissa Brown to prepare an update of actual and planned expenditures and available budget.

4) 802 Painting will begin work in October on painting the annex.

5) Powder Post Beetles

BM is considering getting an additional estimate for the treatment of the powder post beetles; the Town may need to issue an RFP for the BMH. The Round School House fund has sufficient budget to cover its treatment – estimated at \$600. The work needs to be done in cold weather, and BM would like to have it completed this fall. It does not matter when it is completed with regard to when the Annex is insulated.

6) 2026 Grants

In 2026, BM recommended that the Town apply for a grant to fix the main carrying beam under the sanctuary floor.

7) Overhang at BMH Annex

BM described EMB's idea of correcting the overhang over the annex south side entrance way to prevent rainwater from being funneled onto the window trim. In addition the door needs to be widened from 32 inches to 36 inches.

8) Water Testing at the School Building,

If needed, BM will ask for an extension regarding the water testing of the school building which will be empty as of the end of October 2025 and no longer subject to the occupancy-related water testing requirement.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

The GIA (Grants in Aid) is completed and EMB has been working on various road maintenance tasks. With help from the Highway Assistant (Dave Roach), EMB was able to remove dead, hazardous trees over roads and complete the last grant section. With DR managing traffic, EMB was also able to remove trees and improve visibility on a blind corner on Putney Mountain Road.

EMB still needs to send out the RFP for plowing, salting, and sanding. The goal is to open the bids at the next SB meeting – October 3rd.

D. Finance/Budget – Mike DeSocio

No update.

E. Doug Wellman

No update.

9. Communications

- A. A representative from SEVCA (Southeastern Vermont Community Action) has asked to attend the next SB Meeting.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting October 1, 2025

- 1) Minutes from September 17, 2025 Meeting
- 2) SEVCA Representative
- 3) Planning for Special SB Meeting on Saturday, October 18, 2025 Regarding Use of Town Buildings
- 4) Bids for Plowing, Sanding & Salting
- 5) Contract for insulating

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

MD explained that SN has taken over the responsibilities of the Chair of the Town's Planning Commission and would like to hand off his FEMA work. The SB needs to come up with a plan to transition this work. The SB discussed options without coming up with a transition plan and volunteers to take on the work. It is possible that once the initial planning and administrative phase and tasks are completed and contracts are in place, the construction project management will be handled by the engineers. Another solution is that the Town hires someone to manage these FEMA projects. MD will follow-up with SN for further discussion.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk