Final Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, October 1, 2025, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard (SB):	**Town Officers:**	**Public:**
Mike DeSocio (MD) Chair	Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk	FactTV*
Doug Wellman (DW) Vice-Chair	Melissa Brown (MB)*	Win Clark (WC)
Bruce Mello (BM)		Meg Staloff (MS)
E. Mark Bills (EMB)		Stan Noga (SN)*
*Via Zoom		Jon Ballou (JDB)*

1. **Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.**
   Emily Beer was not in attendance. Melissa Brown joined the call for the financial update.
2. **Changes to Agenda**
   MD motioned to make the following changes to the agenda: 1) under 7.A. the meeting will be on the 18th not the 17th, 2) under 6. discuss D. RFP (request for proposal) for Plowing and Sanding first, 3) move 8.D. June 30 finance update for presentation before 7.B Gravel Shed and Shed Dormer. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Review Draft Minutes**
   A. Regular Agenda Meeting September 17, 2025
      MD made a motion to accept the minutes as drafted for the September 17, 2025 SB Meeting. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Members of the Public**
   A. Scheduled Members of the Public
      1) Meg Staloff (MS) -Southern Vermont Economy Project Manager/CEDS Implementation Specialist
         SeVEDS (Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies) is the nonprofit strategy development arm for BDCC (Brattleboro Development Credit Corp). MS explained that SeVEDS asks every town in their service area for funding in the amount of $3.00 per person based on the census. This request is voted on by the residents at the March Town Meeting. In response to MS's question about top priorities for the Town, the SB identified top priorities as recovery from flooding and mitigation towards future flooding events as well as on-going maintenance of the Town's culverts and bridges. In terms of business development, the residents and the Town have pursued businesses and projects that take advantage of the Town's rural and historic structures. Another priority is obtaining grants to support Town projects. SeVEDS can also assist Towns to connect with technical resources for specific projects.
   B. Unscheduled Members of the Public
      None.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2612 for $1,691.16. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2613 in the amount of $21,828.37. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Consultant- Property Appraisal for Upcoming Hearing

The consultant has offered to do a drive-by appraisal for $1,500. The SB decided not to go forward with the drive-by appraisal because such an appraisal process would not be comparable to the process used by the reappraisal company and because it wasn't clear what other services were included in the $1,500 fee. BM made a motion to not hire the consultant to do a drive-by appraisal. DW seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. If the attorney advises the Town that the consultant is needed, the SB will reconsider.

B. FEMA Update- Continue Discussion of Project Leadership

MD described a three-part approach to transitioning Stan Noga's responsibilities for the two FEMA projects. MD made a motion to reassign the work Stan Noga has been doing on the FEMA projects: 1) MD will take the lead on communications with FEMA, on the regulatory aspects, and interface with the portal; 2) EB to take the lead for getting contracts in place with the vendors; and 3) EMB to take the lead in dealing with all the vendors in terms of getting the work done – including working with the engineers to translate cost estimates and plans into actual projects, getting RFPs and bids in place. DW seconded the motion. During the discussion, BM recommended involving Melissa Brown because of her Newfane FEMA experience. The motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the contract with Hammond Engineering, the SB will extend the original contract.

C. Planning Update- Review Approach/Schedule

MD presented a two-page contract for $4,000 for the consultant to work on the Town Plan. MD motioned for the SB to sign the contract for $4,000. During the discussion, MD noted that the scope of work includes a requirement to have a meeting in October or November with the SB and other Town representatives to complete and review the plan. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The SB signed the contract; it will go the WRC (Windham Regional Commission) for final execution.

D. RFP for Plowing and Sanding

<u>Plowing 2025-2026</u>

The Town received bids for winter plowing and sanding from A.S. Clark & Sons and Winot Work for $52,000 and $50,000, respectively. Win Clark explained that they had five trucks, would plow with two, salt with two, and had back-ups. The SB decided to go with the A.S. Clark bid based on their previous performance, details included in their bid, and the number of trucks available. DW motioned to accept the bid from A.S. Clark & Sons for the 2025-26 winter plowing. EMD seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

<u>Winter Sand Delivery to Be Mixed with Town-Supplied Salt</u>

The Town received bids for winter sand delivery and samples of sand from A.S Clark & Sons and Bazin Brothers Trucking for $33.00 per yard and $39.20 per yard, respectively for the winter of 2025-2026. Bazin Brothers also provided a bid for winter sand delivery of $41.20 per yard for the winter of 2026-2027. Win Clark estimated that on average 300 yards of sand have been needed.

BM motioned to accept the bid from A.S. Clark & Sons for $33.00/yard for the 2025-26 season. DW seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EMB motioned that the SB not accept the second year bid for the 2026-2027 winter. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Insulation Contract

BM motioned to table discussion of the insulation contract. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. New Business

A. Planning for October 18 Special Select Board Meeting

The meeting will be held on Saturday, October 18th with a planned start at 9:00 AM. David Parker is available to be the moderator. The SB would like to hear what the community would like to do with the Town's buildings. Based on this community input, the SB will present suggestions for the Town buildings for vote at the March 2026 Town Meeting. The SB talked about posting the meeting and publicizing the meeting on the listserve and Front Porch Forum.

MD made a motion to have an open discussion format on October 18th and start the meeting at 9:00 AM. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Gravel Shed and Shed Dormer $20K

BM summarized EMB's shed proposal. EMB described the needs and features for a new gravel shed and shed dormer to provide additional storage for equipment and to protect the three-quarter inch stone from freezing together into a solid mass in the winter. The shed would be built with a higher ceiling to prevent structural damage from delivery vehicles unloading cargo. EMB was asked to confirm the cost estimates for the materials and estimate labor costs. Plans for the project may be impacted by the Town's Purchase Policy and/or the updated VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) model purchase policy.

BM motioned to table further discussion to the next SB meeting. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Education Tax

MD clarified that if Inner Fire is designated as a nonprofit, tax exempt organization, the property's value becomes zero on the Grand List and for calculating the education tax for the Town.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Emily Beer

No update.

B. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello
BM provided a quick update regarding cleaning, powder post beetles, and the budget for the Brookline Meeting House (BMH). He plans to attend the Thursday BMH meeting and noted that no agenda has been posted.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills
No additional update.

D. Finance/Budget – Mike DeSocio
MD summarized the actual costs versus budgeted costs for the year ending June 2025. The highway fund had a surplus of $291,000 reflecting the receipt of FEMA payments as well as lower than budgeted expenses. The plan is to allocate some of this surplus to the highway fund as follows: $35,000 for the 2026 budget, $35,000 for the 2027 budget, $50,000 for the paving fund. The general fund had a surplus of $28,000 with another $4,000 allocated to the audit reserve. MD and MB also reviewed specific fund balances as of the year ending June 2025.

E. Doug Wellman
No update.

9. Communications

A. The Town received a copy of the letter from the State Historic Register meeting concerning the registration of the stone arch/culvert as an historic structure; this will be discussed at a meeting on the 23rd.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting October 15, 2025
   1) Minutes from October 1, 2025 Meeting
   2) Planning of October 18 Special SB Meeting
   3) Better Back Roads grant through WRC due October 31, 2025
   4) Insulation Contract
   5) Shed
   6) Purchase Policy – VLCT model
   7) Winter Salt bids
   8) Town Truck Tires

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

None.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk