

Amended Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, November 5, 2025, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard (SB):

Mike DeSocio (MD) Chair
Bruce Mello (BM)
Emily Beer (EB)
E. Mark Bills (EMB)

*Via Zoom

Town Officers:

Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk
Melissa Brown (MB) Treasurer*

Public:

FactTV*
David Parker (DP)
Lee Anne Parker (LAP)
Dan Towler (DT)
Kerry Bourne (KB)
Jon Ballou (JDB)*

1. Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

Doug Wellman was unable to attend. Melissa Brown joined the meeting at 7:43 PM for discussions concerning insurance and finance and left at 7:55 PM.

2. Changes to Agenda

MD motioned to remove the Salt Bids from the agenda (6.B. and 7.A.). BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously with the four SB Members in attendance voting in favor.

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting - October 15, 2025

MD made a motion to approve the regular agenda meeting minutes for the October 15, 2025 SB Meeting. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Special Meeting of SB - October 18, 2025

MD made a motion to approve the minutes for the October 18, 2025 Special SB Meeting. BM seconded. The motion passed with three of the SB Members in attendance at the October 18th meeting voting in favor (MD, BM, EB).

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Members of the Public

None.

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public

Members of the public attended to express their concern and ask questions about the painting of the Brookline Meeting House (BMH). Kerry Bourne, Lee Anne Parker, and Dan Towler listed their concerns and questions. Among their concerns were the timing of the painting at the onset of colder weather, missing storm windows, a broken window, painting the windows on one side only, windows painted shut, paint drips on the stone foundation and on brick, and removal of the annex entrance roof and stair railing. There were also questions about the planned use of spray foam insulation and concerns that vehicles may have been driven over the septic field.

LAP asked that the SB acknowledge and, as new jobs come up, refer to the Conditions Report and the BMH Committee Priority List (Building Needs Priority List), because there has already been a lot of discussion on these subjects.

BM briefly explained that the painter is not finished and that he has discussed these issues with the painter and the painter will address them before payment. Later in the SB meeting, he provided a more detailed response to the public's concerns.

Members of the public departed from the meeting at the end of this discussion.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2616 for \$2,953.29. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a motion to approve accounts payable warrant 2618 for \$13,232.36. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2617 for \$7,125.73. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Town Shed

BM motioned to table discussion of the town shed. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Salt Bids

Removed from agenda under 2. Changes to Agenda.

C. Purchase Policy

BM motioned to table discussion of the Purchase Policy. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. New Business

A. Salt Bids

Removed from agenda under 2. Changes to Agenda.

B. Timeline for 2026 Budget and Annual Meeting Warrant

The SB discussed the key steps in developing the budget for the year ending June 2027 (2026/2027), including appropriations, budgets for general and highway funds, review and approval by the auditors, and production of the Town Report for 2025. The SB discussed limiting the number of articles for Town vote to appropriations and new articles.

C. VLCT (Vermont League of Cities & Towns) Insurance Update by Nov 15

The Town needs to complete and submit a questionnaire to VLCT by November 15, 2025 to support insurance coverage of the Town's buildings, equipment, and staff.

The SB also discussed creating a checklist of the roughly four items needed for each vendor contract – such as vendor proof of insurance, non-employee work agreement, etc. EB will work on the contract for plowing and sanding.

When MB joined the meeting via Zoom, she clarified that unlike the Town's fiscal year, the insurance is based on a calendar year. MB will be in the Brookline Town Office on Friday, November 7th around 2 PM. MB, BM, and EMB to complete the information.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Emily Beer

Human Resources (HR) Policy

EB reported that according to VLCT and/or federal law, a town of Brookline's size with 6 employees needs to have human resource policies or an Employee Handbook including, but not limited to, the following policies: employment and anti-discrimination, leave for jury duty and military service, sexual harassment, lactation accommodation, and religious accommodation. Leave such as jury duty and military service leave are unpaid. Sick leave is paid according to the Town Policy. Should the Town have 16 or more employees, the Town would also need to have additional policies such as one addressing the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Additional research is needed to clarify how to count part-time employees and elected employees. The SB will also need to identify one or two people to receive complaints, and they will need to be trained. EB will do additional research for further discussion.

B. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

BM described the changes to the BMH Committee and noted that the current BMH Committee members are only interested in planning functions. He attended the BMH Committee's October 2nd meeting and reported that there was no agenda, no minutes, and no chair. BM addressed the questions and concerns raised by the public at the beginning of the meeting – including but not limited to the following.

1) Broken window in the sanctuary

It is not known when and how this window was broken.

2) Selection of 802 Painting

802 Painting was selected because their bid was lower. BM explained that he had wanted Momaney to do the painting but as stated, the SB went with the lower bid.

BM has spoken with 802 Painting about clean-up including cleaning up the paint that ended up on other surfaces such as the foundation stone and brick. 802 Painting will work on these activities next week.

3) Planned Use of Foam Insulation

Cellulose insulation will be used behind the walls and ceiling. Foam insulation will be limited to insulating the inside of the crawl space. BM has discussed these plans with Vermont Historic Preservation and the SB. The grant the Town received from the Vermont Arts Council for insulating the BMH had to be approved by Vermont Historic Preservation before the grant was awarded.

4) Painting of Steeple

There is nothing wrong with the painting of the steeple.

5) Windows Painted on One Side

The inside of the windows was treated according to standards for restoration of historic buildings and based on Momaney's experience of over 50 years.

6) Consultation with Vermont Historic Preservation

BM has on-going discussions with Vermont Historic Preservation.

7) Request for Proposal (RFP) for Painting

The Town issued an RFP for painting and awarded the work based on the bids received.

- 8) Porch Roof
The roof was removed because water was being misdirected down the walls of the building and causing some of the wood to rot. This is a temporary situation and there is a plan, but no cost estimates, to install a replacement roof. Until the porch roof is replaced, people can access the annex through the front doors.
 - 9) Storm Sash Not On 3 South-facing Windows and Deck Screen
BM will follow up on this.
 - 10) Septic System
BM will ask 802 Painting if the lift was driven over the septic field.
 - 11) Windows Painted Shut
BM will look at the windows and if they have been painted shut will ask 802 Painting to release them.
 - 12) Conditions Report & Priority Report
EB looked at the Town documents online and could not find these reports. MD pointed out that the BMH Committee's Priority List and the Building Commissioner's Priority List were never reconciled. BM presents projects from his priority list to the SB for their approval before proceeding.
- C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills
- 1) The \$7,000 Grants in Aid (GIA) for the 2024/2025 fiscal year has been completed and submitted to VTrans (Vermont Agency of Transportation) for reimbursement. The Town's match was 20%. The grant funded upgrading four additional segments of road.
 - 2) EMB capped and paved over the new culvert that was installed on Grassy Brook Road. He has been removing trees and cleaning up fallen limbs from the windy weather.
 - 3) EMB has called vendors for salt prices; initially the vendors didn't have them; recently they said they would email the new salt prices; but EMB has not yet received them.
 - 4) EMB reported that the tires on the Town truck are down to 20%. Costs for replacing the six tires range from \$1,324.80 to \$1,821.24 for 6 new tires. Retread tires would cost \$1,100 for 6, but the SB agreed that retread tires should not be purchased. The SB agreed that EMB should go forward with the purchase.
 - 5) EMB would like to purchase a specialty excavator bucket for cleaning outlets. He has a quote that totals \$2,600 (\$2,200 for bucket and \$400 for shipping); other estimates range from \$3,200 to \$3,600. The purchase would be covered by the small tools budget item. The SB agreed that EMB should go forward with the purchase.
 - 6) He is working with Colin Bratton on an application for a Better Back Roads (BBR) grant for next summer.
- D. Finance– Mike DeSocio
- 1) Delinquent Taxes
MB is following up on delinquent tax payments. The first quarter's total was \$18,000 in delinquent taxes; of this approximately half has been paid.
 - 2) Planning Committee Update- Nov 19 Working Session
Matt Bachler who is pulling together the Town's Plan would like to meet with the SB for their input at the next meeting. He has asked for 15 minutes, but the discussion could take up to 30 minutes.

3) Preparation of 2025/2026 Town Budget

MD will begin working on the next Town budget with MB and asked EMB to join them to discuss the highway budget.

4) FEMA Update

MD provided an update regarding the stone arch bridge/culvert on Hill Road. The Town needs to provide FEMA with a cost estimate for repairing the structure and has been informed that Hammond Engineering will not provide an estimate. Stan Noga has reached out to a licensed stone engineer who is willing to do the work but is booked until 2027. The Town has an extension until September 30, 2026 to complete the work and has been advised that FEMA is unlikely to grant an additional extension. So the Town will need to find another licensed stone engineer to provide the cost estimate. The SB discussed working together to identify other potential stone engineers including looking outside of Vermont.

MD noted that the Town may receive a bill from Brian Post for \$650 for work that he has performed.

E. Doug Wellman

No update.

9. Communications

A. Kerry Bourne sent an email to the SB expressing his concerns about the painting of the BMH.

B. Jessica Savage from the Vermont Council on Rural Development will attend the December 3, 2025 SB Meeting.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting November 19, 2025

MD will not attend the meeting and will ask DW to chair the meeting.

- 1) Review Draft Minutes of November 5, 2025 SB Meeting
- 2) Planning Committee Update- Nov 19 Working Session
- 3) Salt Bids
- 4) Human Resources Policy
- 5) Purchase Policy
- 6) VLCT Insurance Update
- 7) 802 Painting Update

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

A. The SB reviewed some of the discussion concerning the BMH painting and building.

B. Addendums to Contracts

During a recent audit of Town contracts, some addendums such as non-employee agreements were not found. The SB discussed which contracts needed to be updated.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk