

Draft Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard (SB):

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)

Matt Bachler (MB)

Jon Harris (JH)*

Dan Towler (DT)*

Alyssa Schmidt (AS)*

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

Mike DeSocio did not attend the meeting.

2. Changes to Agenda

None.

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting November 5, 2025

DW made a motion to accept the minutes, with recommended changes from BM after VB verifies the accuracy from the recording for the November 5, 2025 SB Meeting. EB seconded. The motion passed with three voting in favor (BM, EB, EMB) and one abstaining (DW).

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Members of the Public

Matt Bachler - Windam Regional Commission (WRC) Brookline Town Plan and Stan Noga – Chair of Planning Commission

MB has been working with the Planning Commission since this past September to update the Brookline Town Plan. He described the status, contents, changes, process, and timeline for finalizing the next version. MB explained that two public hearings must be held before the plan can be finalized. The meetings must be warned, posted at 3 locations in Brookline, and advertised in advance. For the first public meeting, the Plan is sent to neighboring towns (Planning Commissions or Town Clerks) for their review. After the first public hearing (targeted February 10, 2026), the Planning Commission sends the plan with any revisions to the SB for their review and presentation at the second public hearing (targeted for March 18, 2026). The Town Clerk is responsible for providing the lengthy certification to be included in the final, approved Plan for submission and should be informed of this responsibility as well as her role in the public hearings. The goal is for the SB to adopt the Plan after the second public hearing and for the updated Town Plan to be submitted by the time the current Plan expires on March 21, 2026.

B. **Unscheduled Members of the Public**

SN provided a brief update regarding FEMA. For the stone arch/culvert 11, he has been looking for stone masons and stone engineers. He reiterated that while FEMA may provide guidance for what not to do, they do not provide specific authorization to move forward with next steps.

The members of the public left after the completion of this agenda item.

5. Warrants

A. **Payroll**

DW made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2619 for \$2,088.49. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. **Accounts Payable**

MD made a motion to approve payables warrant 2620 in the amount of \$8,145.27. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. **Town Shed**

EMB reported that he and BM need to refine the material list before asking for funding. They are looking into alternate materials to reduce the cost of the shed and plan to have an estimated budget before the Town Meeting. DW motioned to table until the second January 2026 SB meeting. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. **Salt Bids**

EMB reported that one of the salt vendors is no longer servicing the Town's area. He described prices from two vendors; one charges \$106 per ton and the other (Cargill) charges \$98.25 per ton. The Cargill price includes delivery and is based on an estimated delivery volume of 175 tons, which is the volume the town uses in an average winter. The salt stockpile is in Rockingham at the train tracks. EMB has been happy with the Cargill product and their delivery response. EMB motioned to accept the price from Cargill for the Town's winter salt vendor for 2025/2026 winter. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. **Purchase Policy**

BM motioned to table the Purchase Policy until the second SB Meeting in December 2025. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

D. **HR Policy**

EB provided an update on the Human Resources (HR) Policy. She is reviewing the Athens' policies and reviewing the policies required by VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns). For some policies it may be possible to state that the Town will follow Federal Law. A policy on sexual harassment is mandatory; VLCT does not have a model. EB hopes to have a draft for the next SB Meeting. She recommended that before voting on the document, the SB should send it to the Town employees for feedback .

E. **VLCT Insurance Filing by Nov 15 Update**

BM and EMB worked with Melissa Brown (MB) to complete the insurance document. MB indicated that it is all done. DW will email her to confirm that it has been filed.

F. 802 Painting Update

BM met with Shawn of 802 Painting and walked around the entire BMH (Brookline Meeting House). BM pointed out the items that need to be fixed. Once 802 Painting has corrected the problems, BM will reinspect the building; 802 Painting will not be paid until everything has been corrected and the building is spotless.

7. New Business

None.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Emily Beer

- HR Policy – already discussed.

B. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

1) BMH Annex Entrance Repairs

BM plans to buy wood for repairs to the BMH annex entrance. Shawn of 802 Painting will give them leftover primer and paint – approximately 2 gallons of paint.

2) Cota & Cota

Three years ago when Cota & Cota worked on the HVAC system, their hourly rate was \$110; it's now \$130 /hour. But current invoices seem in excess of the rate.

3) BMH Water Turned Off

The water to the vestry (annex) has been turned off. The plumber showed BM where the water lines are so it's possible for EMB or him to open the water lines next spring without calling the plumbers. This would save a \$225 bill for less than an hour of labor.

4) Farnum Contract for Insulation of the BMH

BM has mailed the contract to Farnum and is waiting to hear back from them.

5) 802 Painting Follow-up from November 5, 2025 SB Meeting

a. BMH Committee

As he had noted on November 5th, BM reported that when he attended the October 2, 2025 BMH Committee Meeting, there was no agenda, no minutes, and no chair. He expressed his concern that the Town was operating with an illegitimate Committee. He added that he is very happy with what the Committee is doing but wants it noted that this is a problem. Also, he received a letter pertaining to the lack of an agenda and minutes.

b. Consultation with Vermont Preservation Trust

The Vermont Arts Council awarded the Town a grant to cover the cost of insulating the BMH. The award required that the Vermont Historic Preservation sign off on the insulation plan; Caitlin Corkins signed off.

c. Porch Roof and Side Entrance to Annex

As mentioned during the November 5th meeting, until the porch roof is replaced, people can access the annex through the front doors. The side entrance can be used cautiously.

d. Storm Sash Not On 3 South-facing Windows and Deck Screen

The storm sashes are in the BMH, but there are only two not three.

e. Septic System

The septic system was not driven over by the lift used to paint per Shawn Gilbeau, 802 Painting.

f. Windows Painted Shut

This has not yet been addressed.

- 6) Suzy's Little Peanuts is still leaving; they have removed their fencing and will be out soon but have not provided a date for when they will be completely gone.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

EMB reported that there were some maintenance issues with the excavator involving a faulty sensor and a faulty steering switch. The 16-inch-wide bucket for the excavator has been ordered, and the vendor is waiting for the initial payment. Delivery is expected within 4 to 6 weeks of payment. New tires have been purchased for the Town truck. Other activities have included purchase of small tools for saw maintenance and removal of debris downed by the recent heavy winds. BM informed EMB of a beech tree that looks ready to fall near a driveway.

DW noted that there was an email from Green Mountain Power (GMP) and asked if there was a recent meeting. EMB clarified that the meeting has not been scheduled. What is known so far is that GMP will use poles on the paved roads and bury the power lines on sections of dirt roads. In Townshend, the underground lines came to the surface to a transformer box every 100 feet. Culverts will be cut when the power lines are buried. EMB repeated his concern that GMP install poles and transformer boxes far enough back from the road to be clear of snowplows. EMB would like Archie Clark to attend the next meeting with GMP to address Town concerns before they are given SB approval to proceed. GMP will be contacting landowners regarding property easements and location of new poles and any buried power lines.

D. Doug Wellman

None.

9. Communications

- A. VLCT Brochure lists planned meetings, all but one of which have already occurred.
- B. Letter from the Brattleboro Development Corporation regarding December 2nd seminar in Wilmington regarding grand list growth to attract business
- C. Note from Lee Anne Parker regarding the Town's reporting obligations for 5 years after accepting grant funding for foundation restoration and that the Town needs to consult with Historic Preservation before doing anything to the building.

10. Set Agenda

- A. Regular Meeting December 3, 2025
 - 1) Minutes November 19, 2025
 - 2) Jessica Savage from the Vermont Council on Rural Development
 - 3) HR Policy
 - 4) 2026/2027 Budget
 - 5) Executive Session
 - 6) Other

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action**A. Tax Exempt Purchases**

All purchases made for the Town should be tax exempt. There is a form to be used for tax-exempt purchases for the Town; it should be sent around so that everyone is aware.

Accounts with WW and Amazon are set up for tax-exempt purchases.

B. Contract with Sheriff

Currently the Town has no contract with the Sheriff for police services. While the State Police are required to respond to emergencies (911), it is difficult to get the police for other issues.

The SB briefly discussed efforts to provide county-wide policing as well as other services on a county wide basis.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk