

Draft Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard (SB):

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

Town Officers:

Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk

Public:

FactTV*
Jeff Dunbar (JD)
Kerry Bourne (KB)
Dan Towler (DT)
Jon Ballou (JB)*
Timothy Carr (TC)*
Stan Noga (SN)*
Lee Anne Parker (LAP)*
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)*

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

Emily Beer could not attend the meeting.

2. Changes to Agenda

None.

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting February 4, 2026

MD made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 4, 2026 SB Meeting with the two changes identified. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Members of the Public: Jeff Dunbar, Farnum Insulators

MD introduced Jeff Dunbar who was attending the meeting to provide an overview of the plans for insulating the annex of the Brookline Meetinghouse (BMH) and to address questions. MD reminded the attendees that the SB approved the project, Farnum has signed the contract, and the SB has received the contract for signature. Under the terms of the grant from the Vermont Arts Council, the work must be completed by September 1, 2026.

JD described how the crawl space will be insulated using a 20-millimeter vapor barrier and foam and how the walls and ceiling will be insulated using cellulose. He provided additional details and addressed questions regarding the following.

- Insulation of the Crawl Space

Farnum will lay down a 20 mm vapor barrier that consists of 4 layers of a laminated, strong and durable material to block moisture from coming up through the ground into the wooden annex. The barrier will be turned up at the base of the foundation wall, and Farnum plans to use closed-cell spray foam to seal the vapor barrier and to insulate the foundation wall.

- **Insulation of the Annex Walls and Ceiling**
Farnum will remove clapboards from the exterior, drill a hole 2 and 9/16 of an inch in diameter through the sheathing, then insert a hose to blow in the cellulose insulation. The holes will be repaired with plugs that are specifically made to reseal the holes. If an obstruction is encountered within the walls, an additional hole beyond the obstruction can be drilled. Farnum will reattach the clapboards using stainless steel fasteners. In addition to clapboards that may break when they are removed, other repairs are planned by the Town to address rotten clapboards. New clapboards will be provided that are primed and painted.

The ceiling will be insulated via the attic hatch.

- **Risks and Disadvantages of Insulating the Annex**
Kerry Bourne asked about the potential risk of having the insulation trap moisture. JD explained that there is a greater risk of condensing moisture in an empty wall cavity than one that is filled with cellulose. Regarding heating the space in the winter, JD's recommendation was to keep the space between 45 and 50 F.
KB also asked about the possibility of the insulation being disturbed by future work on the building. JD explained that the cellulose can always be vacuumed out but recommended doing work that would result in the loss of insulation before insulating. Following this discussion, Dan Towler asked questions about the approval of the insulation project. MD explained that the entire proposal was approved. To reconsider that decision, a member of the SB would have to make a motion to reconsider; the motion would need to be seconded; and then the SB would need to vote.

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public

Stan Noga (SN) provided an update regarding the Town's authority to borrow money without having to hold a Town Meeting – for example to cover any gaps in FEMA funding.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2631 for \$6,248.07. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a motion to approve payables warrant 2632 in the amount of \$8,425.00. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Town Warning Update

The Brookline 2025 Annual Report has been mailed. One piece of information that was inadvertently omitted from the book will be addressed during the meeting. MD will send out a message asking people to come to the meeting, to vote, and to inform them of open positions. DW has heard back from Senator Harrison who will come to the meeting.

B. RFPs FEMA Projects

During today's call with FEMA that included Melissa Brown, MD, EMB, and Hammond Engineering, the group reviewed two Request for Proposals (RFPs) and determined that both RFPs are ready to be sent out. EMB plans to run the RFPs simultaneously with a target timeline as follows:

Date	Activity
February 24	Advertise the RFPs in The Brattleboro Reformer, post on the State website for procurement, post on the Town website, and distribute to specific contractors.
March 10	Prebid meetings: 10:00 AM: Ellen Ware Road 1:30 PM: Stone Arch Bridge on Hill Road
March 30	Bids due no later than 2:00 PM to be evaluated by Hammond Engineering.
April 1	SB makes decisions regarding bids.

The sequence of events was reviewed with Stan Noga to ensure that the process and sequence match the previous FEMA expectations. FEMA is providing a fixed amount for the repair and mitigation of the Ellen Ware project, and the Town will receive a payment in advance. The stone arch bridge project will follow the previous process where FEMA provides reimbursement upon completion of the project and submission of all expenses. The RFPs should be widely distributed to ensure that the Town can get a fair, cost-competitive price.

MD made a motion to approve the RFPs as drafted, with any tweaks needed between now and the time the RFPs are sent out and the timeline for the posting and submitting and reviewing. BM seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. RFP Paving

EMB has a template from the State of Vermont that can be used for the paving RFP. The plan is to target a little more than 1 mile of road to be paved. The RFP will be advertised and distributed to paving businesses. The tentative timeline for the paving RFP is to have a pre-bid meeting on March 11th with the bids due before the March 18th SB meeting for a decision. The tentative start date is July 1st with a September 30, 2026 completion date.

EMB made a motion to accept the RFP and proposed timeline for the paving. BM seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Town Shed

EMB created a list of materials and has asked two suppliers for estimated costs. There was a discussion of potential sources of funding to cover the Town Shed, but no action was taken. EMB motioned to table the costs for the Town Shed until the next meeting. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Request from Cemetery Commission to use Town Attorney

The SB is waiting for additional information. DW motioned to table action on the Cemetery's request to use the Town Attorney. MD seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

F. Sign IT Contract

The IT contract was not available for signature.

G. Finalization of Town Plan Timeline

The Town Plan has been drafted, and the Planning Commission had a public hearing to which nobody showed up, but the requirement for a public hearing has been met. Next the SB needs to have a public hearing to be scheduled before the second March SB Meeting – giving the SB the opportunity to approve the Town Plan in the subsequent SB Meeting.

MD motioned to approve a Notice of a Public Hearing for the Town Plan on March 18th before the SB Meeting. DW seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The notice will need to be posted on the Town bulletin boards and run in The Brattleboro Reformer.

7. New Business

None.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Emily Beer

None.

B. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

- 1) Barbara Bourne is determining whether the Kindle School is interested in using the old school building space.
- 2) BM would like to move forward with a second meeting regarding the Town’s buildings in March. Other members of the SB advised that before having another public meeting, the Town needs to develop options, benefits, risks, and costs; and will be asking the residents to approve \$15,000 for such research.
- 3) Insulation Contract with Farnum
DW stated that he would not motion to reconsider the insulation project; MD and EMB agreed. MD indicated that he would like to see whether there was email follow-up from the public before signing the contract.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

EMB has been monitoring the roads and working on grants and RFPs.

D. Doug Wellman

None.

E. Mike DeSocio

None.

9. Communications

MD summarized the following communications received by the Town:

- Notice that Brookline has not completed the 2025 annual survey of local government finances.
- Reminder from DV Fiber that a representative should be appointed.
- Notification that the Brookline 2024 reappraisal results are reduced by 7 percent.
- Email clarifying that a property owner should register to vote in Brookline.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting March 4, 2026

- 1) Reorganization & Appointment of Town Officers/Positions
- 2) Minutes February 18, 2026
- 3) Town Shed – Estimated Costs
- 4) Other

B. Future Meetings

- 1) Listers regarding contract with NEMRC
- 2) Review of the Planning Commission Town Plan (March 18, 2026)

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

BM expressed appreciation to the SB for how they've worked together. He plans to run again, and if someone runs against him, he will ask for a paper ballot.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk