

## Final Minutes

### Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 7:00 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:

##### Public:

FactTV\*  
Dan Towler (DT)  
Stan Noga (SN)\*  
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)\*  
Bob Bazin (BB)\*  
Kyle Cardillo (KC)  
Julie Roach (JR)\*  
Kerry Bourne (KB)

#### 1. Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk, was not in attendance. Kerry Bourne joined the meeting during the public comments.

#### 2. Changes to Agenda

DW made a motion to move item 6E to 6A. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 3. Review Draft Minutes

##### A. Regular Agenda Meeting March 4, 2026

MD made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 4, 2026 SB Meeting with one change. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 4. Members of the Public

##### A. Scheduled Members of the Public

None.

##### B. Unscheduled Members of the Public

Members of the public commented that the agenda with the link to Zoom for this meeting had not been posted on the website until just before the meeting making it difficult for people to attend the meeting remotely.

Dan Towler expressed appreciation for BM's advocacy for the Town's buildings and his commitment and long-standing service to the Town's SB. He recommended a Town-wide meeting to determine the use of the buildings while commenting that the care of the buildings depends on how they are used. He noted that the two great historic buildings should be treated as separate categories and that any decisions and projects proposed need to be considered with the utmost care and consideration in light of their historic nature. And recommended having a group work in a collaborative process to include a person or people with impeccable credentials. DT provided the SB with a sample plan.

Stan Noga provided background regarding the Brookline Meetinghouse (BMH) and Round Schoolhouse Committees over time. Citing specific Town responsibilities such as insurance coverage and whether the buildings are being maintained according to grants

received, he noted that the Town has ultimate responsibility for these buildings. He also described some of the challenges for these committees and the Town and commented that a mechanism is needed that allows a mutual respect and appreciation for people's efforts and the Town's responsibilities while enabling collaborative decision-making and resolution of differences. SN suggested establishing a newly formed committee's goals and objectives to determine whether they will be compatible with the Town's ownership and responsibilities for the buildings.

Kerry Bourne noted that the Town Garage is part of the Town's buildings, needs some renovations such as the long-standing need for a concrete floor, and should be included in the Town's building plans. KB recommended installation of a temporary handicap ramp such as the one installed at the Stone Church in Brattleboro. He also raised construction and budget issues regarding plans to insulate the BMH annex - again.

**5. Warrants**

A. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2636 for \$1,731. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously. MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2635 in the amount of \$153.76. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a motion to approve payables warrant 2637 in the amount of \$313,995.48. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The warrant included a \$200,000 education payment and \$12,000 for the insulation deposit; none of the checks have gone out.

**6. Old Business**

The SB discussed the paving bids first so that the paving company representatives would be able to leave earlier; see E. below.

A. Approval of Town Plan

MD made a motion to approve the Town Plan. EB seconded. The motion approved unanimously.

B. FEMA Update, RFP, Special Meeting 3/30 2PM, Receipt of \$220K

Brookline has received \$220,000 from FEMA for the Ellen Ware Road culvert project. FEMA is holding back 10% of their share of the grant. The bids for the Ellen Ware Road project and Brookline Stone Arch Culvert on Hill Road are due March 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM.

MD made a motion to have a special meeting on March 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM for the sole agenda item of opening the bids. BM seconded. The motion approved unanimously. The SB won't make a decision concerning the bids until the Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> SB Meeting.

C. Review Draft Charter, Work Plan, Timeline, etc.- Buildings Planning

MD continued the discussion of planning for the Town buildings. He distributed a draft Charter to the SB that describes the formation of a committee along with its purpose and the process to be followed to develop recommendations to the SB. The Charter includes background regarding all the buildings and a proposed timeline and action steps.

The plan is to form a committee/work group of townspeople to identify and investigate options, discuss and analyze options, identify implications, and estimate costs with the goal

of bringing their findings and recommendations back to the SB for their review and comment. The ultimate goal is to present the options to the Town for a vote.

The SB proposes to have an open house of the Town buildings on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

The SB discussed listing the Schoolhouse for rent to provide information about whether renting the building is possible and whether to do this before the committee is formed or in parallel with its activities. The SB decided to wait until the committee was formed.

D. Discussion of BMH Decision Making - continued

MD continued the discussion of how to move forward with a more consensus-making process for decisions regarding the BMH, because of community concerns about how decisions are being made. He noted that there are two different philosophies emerging – one is to prioritize maintaining the building as a historic structure, the other is to prioritize making it useable throughout the year while preserving its historic structure. Given the concerns expressed by members of the community for the insulation project regarding specific details as well as the impact on the BMH budget, some members of the SB expressed reluctance to move forward with insulating the BMH or any other projects – except for emergencies - in the absence of broad community support.

EB made a motion to pause all work on the meeting house, including insulation with the Town not paying the insulation deposit, barring emergencies or routine maintenance that needs to be done. DW seconded. During the discussion, the SB acknowledged that the pause could result in missing the window to insulate the annex. BM will follow-up with VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) about whether the Town can take this step. The motion passed with three voting in favor (MD, DW, EB) and two voting against (BM, EMB).

MD made a motion for BM to pursue the \$2,500 for an architectural design of the ADA ramp. DW seconded. The motion passed with four voting in favor (MD, DW, EMB, EB) and one abstaining (BM).

E. Review Paving Bids

The Town received two paving bids: one from Blacktop, Inc. of West Lebanon, New Hampshire and the one from Bazin Brothers of Westminster, Vermont, with their representatives Kyle Cardillo and Bob Bazin, respectively attending the SB Meeting. The Town's Request for Proposal (RFP) specified milling off two inches of pavement and paving with 3 inches of pavement; both bids specified this scope of work.

The bid from Blacktop totals \$385,465.28 with \$90,287.40 for milling and \$295,177.88 for paving. The bid from Bazin Brothers totals \$285,510.00 with \$25,162.50 for milling and \$260,347.50 for paving. EMB explained that next steps include having the bids reviewed with Archie Clark and VTrans (Vermont Agency of Transportation) with the goal of awarding the contract at the next SB meeting of April 1<sup>st</sup>. Brookline has received a 50/50 paving grant for \$200,000.

EMB made a motion to have EMB and Archie Clark review the bids and provide a recommendation at the next SB meeting. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously. MD made a motion to table the decision regarding the paving bids to the next SB meeting. The motion passed unanimously

F. Purchase Policy

BM made a motion that the SB change the limit for incidental purchases from less than \$1,000 to up to \$4,999 with SB approval and change the limits for regular purchases to \$5,000 to \$10,000. Following a discussion of changes the SB approved at a previous meeting and clarification for when an RFP is required, BM withdrew his motion.

G. Town Shed – Estimated Costs

DW made a motion to appropriate \$30,000 to build the new shed and use the FEMA money to cover the costs. MD seconded. There was a discussion of putting a cement floor in the garage with an estimate of \$19,000 from a year ago, and a discussion of building an overhang shed with an estimate of \$4,000 for materials. While the SB agreed that a new shed was needed, the majority felt the funding received from FEMA for previous storm damage should be reserved for unexpected expenses and that the Town should be asked for approval. The motion failed with two voting in favor (BM, EMB), three voting against (MD, DW, EB).

**7. New Business**

A. Financial Results Thru February 28

MD reviewed the status of the budget as of February 28, 2026. The General Fund is currently okay; however, it is at risk of an overrun by the end of the fiscal year because of unpaid taxes. The Highway Fund is tight and MD and Melissa Brown, Treasurer, will meet with EMB for potential actions to keep expenses within the budget.

B. Audit Committee Hours

The auditors have just submitted a bill for \$1,200 for their services from 2022 through 2026. DW made a motion to pay the auditors for work between 2022 and 2026. EMB seconded. The SB talked about having a policy regarding time limits for submitting invoices. The motion passed unanimously.

**8. Reports and Updates**

A. Emily Beer

EB informed MD that she would send him a video regarding open meeting law that he is required to watch as chair of the SB. MD noted that the SB needs to execute contract extensions with Hammond Engineering. EB has resent the extensions.

B. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

No update.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

EMB has been working on the roads and on paperwork. He asked the SB to sign two documents: an updated form version of the Town Road and Bridge Standards and the Annual Financial Plan for Town Highways.

D. Doug Wellman

No update.

E. Mike DeSocio

No update.

**9. Communications**

Not discussed.

**10. Set Agenda**

- A. Special Meeting March 30, 2026, 2:00 PM
  - 1) Ellen Ware Road bids
  - 2) Stone Arch Bridge/Culvert 11 on Hill Road
- B. Regular Meeting April 1, 2026
  - 1) Minutes from March 18, 2026 SB Public Hearing Regarding 2026 Town Plan
  - 2) Minutes from March 18, 2026 Regular SB Meeting
  - 3) Green Mountain Representative
  - 4) Extension to Hammond Engineering Contract
  - 5) Paving Contracts
  - 6) Assessments for Paving
  - 7) Update on the Building Planning
  - 8) BMH Decision-Making Process
  - 9) Ethics Liaison Appointment

**11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action**

None.

**12. Adjourn the Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk