

# Brookline Annual Town Meeting

## March 2, 2026

The Brookline Annual Town Meeting was called to order by Moderator David Parker on the evening of March 2, 2026 at 6:01pm. In attendance, 57 Brookline residents and 4 guests.

Mr. Parker reads the warning and directs attendees to the sign-up sheet. He explains that this is a legal meeting and that he will refer to Robert's Rules of Order to govern the meeting, noting that there are a few places where Vermont law differs.

Moderator Parker asks the non-residents of Brookline to stand to identify themselves. Also in the audience is Windham County State Senator Wendy Harrison. Mr. Parker will entertain a future motion to suspend the rules of the meeting in order for Wendy to provide a Montpelier update after the vote for Moderator occurs.

### **ARTICLE 1. To elect a town moderator for a term of 1 year.**

Guy Tanza nominates David Parker for moderator. Further nominations are requested. Hearing none, motion is voted. David Parker is unanimously elected moderator for the Town of Brookline.

Parker entertains the previously stated motion to suspend the rules for Wendy Harrison. Margaret Carusona moves the motion and it is seconded by Margie Wellman. A vote is called, passes, and Wendy Harrison takes the floor.

The meeting reopens. Mr. Parker asks that all motions, remarks, or comments be directed to the Moderator and explains other rules of discourse.

Mr. Parker raises the issue of how much time participants should be allowed to speak. Robert's Rules of Order allows 10 minutes; Mr. Parker describes the benefits of limiting speech to 5 minutes. Stuart Duke moves to limit speech to 5 minutes; Gary Lavorgna seconds the motion, and the motion passes.

### **ARTICLE 2. To elect all other Town Officers required by law:**

Mr. Parker informs the audience of an amendment to Article 2 to include the following three positions:

- The Cemetery Commissioner position, currently held by Howard Osgood, to be added for a 5-year term.
- The School Board Director, currently held by LeeAnn Jillson, to be added for a 3-year term.
- Delinquent Tax Collector, currently held by Melissa Brown, to be added for a 1-year term.

Mr. Parker notes that the Vital Records did not include the birth of Felix Klitgaard on December 21, 2025.

Doug Wellman makes a motion to amend Article 2 to include the three positions. Gary Lavorgna seconds the motion. There is no discussion, a vote is called and Article 2 is amended.

Moderator Parker informs the town that we have been voting erroneously for the past five or six years. He tells how we have mostly voted for unopposed candidates in the past and have not often called for paper ballots. This is where Vermont law differs from Robert's Rule of Order. Vermont Law lists 4 positions that call for a paper ballot - Selectboard, Lister, Auditor, and School Director.

If seven people request a paper ballot, we are obligated to vote that way. Or, to save time when electing an unopposed candidate, unless there is an objection, the assembly can authorize the town clerk to cast one vote for the unopposed candidate. If there is an objection, we immediately go to a paper ballot. The Board of Civil Authority then counts the votes.

Mr. Parker asks if it is clear what the options are regarding the use of paper ballots and asks for questions, which there are none.

**A. Town Clerk for a term of 1 year.**

Guy Tanza nominates Marjorie Ray. Mr. Parker notes that nominations do not need to be seconded. Sara Wiswall nominates Morah Chowning. No other nominations are received. There is discussion. Mike DeSocio endorses Marjorie Ray. Each candidate makes a brief statement.

Margaret Carusona calls for a vote. Guy Tanza seconds the motion. Mr. Parker asks if paper ballots are wanted. The answer is no. Voting is held for both candidates. Marjorie Ray receives a majority of votes and is elected Town Clerk for a 1-year term.

**B. Selectboard Member for a term of 3 years.**

The position is currently held by Bruce Mello. Guy Tanza nominates Bruce Mello. No other nominations are received. The position needs to be voted by ballot. Mr. Parker asks that unless he hears an objection, he will entertain a motion for the town clerk to cast one ballot. Gary Lavorgna moves the question. A vote is called for. The town clerk casts one ballot for Bruce Mello and he is elected as a Selectboard member for a term of 3 years.

**C. Selectboard Member for a term of 3 years (2 years remaining).**

E. Mark Bills was appointed to this 3 year position for a one year term last year. Gwen Tanza nominates E. Mark Bills. No other nominations are received. Mr. Parker entertains a motion for the town clerk to cast one ballot. Stuart Duke moves the question and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A vote is called. E. Mark Bills is elected as a Selectboard member for a term of 3 years with 2 years remaining.

**D. Selectboard Member for a term of 2 years.**

Bruce Mello and Doug Wellman both nominate Mike DeSocio. No other nominations are received. Mr. Parker entertains a motion for the town clerk to cast one ballot. Stan Noga moves the question and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A vote is called for. Mike DeSocio is elected as a Selectboard member for a term of 2 years.

**E. Lister for a term of 3 years.**

Julie Lavorgna nominates Alyssa Schmidt. No other nominations are received. Mr. Parker entertains a motion for the town clerk to cast one ballot. Margie Wellman moves the question and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A vote is called for. Alyssa Schmidt is elected as a lister for a term of 3 years.

**F. Lister for a term of 2 years.**

No nominations are received. The position is vacant but could be filled in the future.

**G. Lister for a term of 1 year.**

Margie Wellman is nominated and declines. No other nominations are received. The position is vacant.

**H. Auditor for a term of 3 years.**

Kendra Brooks currently holds the position. Guy Tanza nominates Kendra Brooks. No other nominations are received. Mr. Parker entertains a motion for the town clerk to cast one ballot. Stuart Duke moves the question and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A vote is called for. Kendra Brooks is elected as an Auditor for a term of 3 years.

**Cemetery Commissioner for a term of 5 years.**

Howard Osgood currently holds the position. Bruce Mello nominates Howard Osgood. No other nominations are received. Howard Osgood is elected Cemetery Commissioner for a 5-year term.

**School Board Director for a term of 3 years.**

LeeAnn Jillson currently holds the position. Bruce Mello nominates Lee Ann Jillson. No other nominations are received. Mr. Parker entertains a motion for the town clerk to cast one ballot. Stan Noga moves the question and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A vote is called for. LeeAnn Jilson is elected School Board Director for a 3-year term.

**Delinquent Tax Collector**

Melissa Brown was authorized to be appointed to this position last year at town meeting. Bruce Mello nominates Melissa Brown. No other nominations are received. Melissa Brown is elected Delinquent Tax Collector for a 1-year term.

**ARTICLE 3. Shall the voters accept the Auditors' Report?**

A motion is made to accept the Auditors' Report and seconded by Gary Lavorgna. No discussion. A vote is called and the Auditors' Report is accepted.

**ARTICLE 4. Shall the voters authorize the collection of taxes in 4 installments, with the due dates being: August 11, 2026; November 10, 2026; February 9, 2027; May 11, 2027?**

Bruce Mello moves the question and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. There is no discussion. A vote is called for and Article 4 is approved.

**ARTICLE 5. Shall the voters have its current taxes collected by its Town Treasurer?**

Stan Noga moves the question, and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. There is no discussion. A vote is called for and Article 5 is approved.

Mr. Parker suggests that the Selectboard be allowed to provide an overview and brief summary of Articles 6 through 12 as they are interrelated.

**ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters authorize General Fund expenditures of \$221,948 of which \$163,296 shall be raised by taxes and \$29,799 by non-tax revenues, and \$28,853 by 2025 General Fund surplus?**

Stuart Duke moves the question, and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna.

Mike DeSocio uses a handout, which is a copy of the graph and budget information included in the town booklet, to discuss General Fund and Highway Budget Comparisons. He provides a detailed explanation of the chart, budget numbers, grants, and monies that need to be spent for upcoming projects.

Mr. DeSocio also discusses the empty school building and meetings about the future use of town buildings, possibly obtaining professional help to provide recommendations, which will then be brought to the town for a vote.

The Reappraisal will be done every six years and we are building a fund to pay for that. Ultimately Mike wanted to provide a framework for what is baseline vs. what are the new asks.

Short discussion follows. A vote is called for and Article 6 is approved.

**ARTICLE 7. Shall the voters authorize Highway Fund expenditures of \$438,031, of which \$287,831 shall be raised by taxes and \$115,200 by non-tax revenues and \$35,000 by application of 2025 Highway Fund Surplus?**

Margie Wellman moves the question, and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna.

Mark Bills discusses paving and State of Vermont grants. Gary Lavorgna expresses gratitude for the highway work done by E. Mark Bills and Archie Clark and crew.

A vote is called for and Article 7 is approved.

**ARTICLE 8. Shall the voters authorize Highway Fund expenditures of \$25,000 to be raised by taxes as a portion of the Town's 20% funding requirement for a \$200,000 State Grant?**

Fred Strasser moves the question, and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A vote is called for and Article 8 is approved.

**ARTICLE 9. Shall the voters authorize School Building Fund expenditures of \$15,000 of which \$11,260 will be raised by taxes and \$3,740 by the 2025 School Building Fund Surplus?**

Guy Tanza moves the question, and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A discussion follows regarding timeline, evaluation funding and building costs. There has been one meeting so far about the school building and there will be more so that townfolk can weigh in on the decision for what to do with the school building and other town properties. This ultimately will be a town vote.

A vote is called for and Article 9 is approved.

**ARTICLE 10. Shall the voters authorize General Fund expenditures of \$15,000 to be raised by taxes for the development of a Town Plan for Buildings?**

Gary Lavorgna moves the question, and it is seconded by Jean Allbee. Discussion follows regarding expert advice for town buildings. Members were referred to the website for minutes and video links for meetings held about the school building, listed under Selectboard Minutes. Requests were made for future special meetings to be posted on the Listserv and Front Porch Forum, as well as to take time to review all options for the use of the school, including as a daycare again. There may be grants available for day care facilities and this could be looked into as well.

More examples were requested for what the \$15,000 would be used for and it was suggested fees are not paid to realtors who work for commission. Mike DeSocio stated that he would like to see a group brought together that could explore all of these ideas, do the analysis, look at the options, and if money needs to be spent on expertise, it is available and the group can request spending it. The group could bring recommendations to the Selectboard, who would then bring them to the town so that we can all vote on it.

Margaret Carusona calls the vote. Article 10 passes.

**ARTICLE 11. Shall the voters authorize the Town to appropriate to the Reappraisal Fund \$10,000 to be raised by taxes?**

Stuart Duke moves the question, and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. Doug Wellman explains what the Reappraisal Fund is for. A vote is called for and Article 10 is approved.

**Article 12 Shall the voters authorize Community Fund expenditures of \$1,000 to be raised by taxes?**

Amy Blasez moves the question, and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A vote is called for. Article 11 passes.

**Article 13 Shall the voters authorize General Fund expenditures of \$11,202 to be raised by taxes for the following organizations:**

The question is moved, and it is seconded by Gary Lavorgna.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>FY25 Approved</b>	<b>FY26 Approved</b>	<b>FY27 REQUESTED</b>
American Red Cross	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$250.00
Grace Cottage Foundation	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$750.00
Green Up Vermont	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$50.00
Groundworks Collaborative	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$300.00

Historical Society of Windham County	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$250.00
Interaction (was Youth Services)	\$ 255.00	\$ 255.00	\$255.00
Moore Free Library	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$1,100.00
MOOVER	\$ 125.00	\$ 175.00	\$175.00
The Gathering Place	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$500.00
Newbrook PTO	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$500.00
Newfane Anew		\$ 1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Senior Solutions	\$ 710.00	\$ 710.00	\$760.00
SEVCA	\$ 465.00	\$ 465.00	\$465.00
SeVEDS	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$1,596.00
VABVI - Vt Assoc Blind/Visually Impaired	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$100.00
VACD - Rural Fire Protection	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00	\$200.00
Valley Village formerly Valley Cares	\$ 821.00	\$ 821.00	\$821.00
Vermont Family Network	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$250.00
VCIL - VT Ctr Independent Living	\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00	\$80.00
West River Valley Thrives		\$ 500.00	\$500.00
Windham County Humane Soc	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$500.00
Women's Freedom Center		\$ 500.00	\$500.00
Winston Prouty	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$300.00
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$ 7,656.00</b>	<b>\$ 9,806.00</b>	<b>\$ 11,202.00</b>

Discussion follows regarding certain allocations. Dan Tolman asks about Newfane Anew. David Jones talks about what Newfane Anew does for the towns. Visitor Jack Spanierman speaks about services SeVEDS provides. Guy Tanza suggests lowering SeVEDS as we are a small town and the appropriations continue to rise. He motions to make an amendment to lower the \$1596 to \$500. Gary Lavorgna seconds the motion to reduce the total number from \$11,202 to be raised by taxes to \$10,106.

Sara Webb asks that we give the full amount and make an effort to use the services SeVEDS provides to benefit the local community. Amy Blazej seconds that idea.

A vote is called for the amendment. The vote seems evenly split, so it is taken again by a show of hands. 15 are for the amendment, 26 against. The amendment does not pass.

The original vote is called. Article 13 passes for \$11,202 in appropriations.

**ARTICLE 14. "Other Business" discussion which shall not be used for taking binding municipal action, and the Moderator shall so rule.**

Dan Towler draws attention to a clipboard back in the corner of the room which is for sign-up for folks who might be interested in the proposed Brookline Historical Society.

Julie Lavorgna talks about the listserv and how to sign up on the website.

Barbara Bourne reads a non-binding resolution. "The people of Brookline condemn the terror and murder being perpetrated by ICE operatives and call on the US Congress to defund and abolish the agency as it now exists."

Amy Blazej seconds the motion. There is no discussion. Fran Carr holds up three red "Melt the Ice" hats which are offered for free. Guy Tanza questions the vote. Mr. Parker explains that it is non-binding and therefore has no legal consequence. The vote is called and the non-binding resolution passes.

Margaret Carusona expresses thanks to Moderator Parker, the Selectboard, and other town members. She calls for adjournment.

Kerry Bourne speaks about a grant provided to the town for insulation on the Meetinghouse. He thinks it threatens the historic integrity of the building and explains his thoughts on the project and matching grant. He asks that the Selectboard rescind this grant and send it back so that it can be better used.

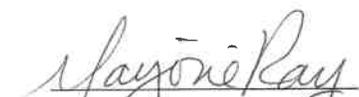
LeeAnn Parker says that the Brookline Meetinghouse has a fund that has accumulated which are not town tax dollars, it is fundraised money for the preservation of the building. There is a concern that things get done in the proper order based on research done by experts regarding how to keep out moisture. She discusses where the money is coming from for this project and that using the fundraised money will make it difficult to do future preservation. Discussion follows regarding the current insulation contract and whether it has been signed.

Bruce Mello says the grant is from the Vermont Arts Council and that it has been approved by Historic Preservation. There is further discussion about timelines and ways to manage the insulation project, as well as storm windows.

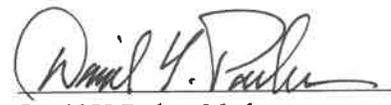
Pat Noga suggests allowing people to tour the former school building during open houses so they can see how it is laid out. Bruce Mello says he is available to provide tours. There is further discussion of storm windows for the Meetinghouse.

Moderator Parker asks if there is a second to Margaret Carusona's call for adjournment. It is seconded by Gary Lavorgna. A vote is taken and the motion is passed at 8:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Marjorie Ray, Town Clerk  
3/10/2026

  
Michael DeSocio, Selectboard Chair  
3/10/2026

  
David Y. Parker, Moderator  
3/10/2026