

Final Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, 6:30 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:

Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk

Public:

Alyssa Schmidt
Andrea Seaton*
Buffy Smith*
Dan Towler
Emily Ames*
Everett Hammond*
Jared Flynn
John Harris
Laurie Nau-Martocci
LeeAnn Jillson*
Matt Martyn*
Morah Chowning
Michael G*
Dorothy Maggio*
Roger Albee
Sam Bourne
Stan Noga*
Tim Inman
Tim Jones*
Tom Clynes

1. **Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and introduced all attendees.**
2. **Changes to Agenda**
MD motioned to add a discussion of construction in the flood zone at the end of 4. A. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Review Draft Minutes**
 - A. Regular Agenda Meeting - April 1, 2026
MD made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2026 SB Meeting as drafted. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Members of the Public**
 - A. Scheduled Member of the Public-5 min
 - 1) Green Mount Power (GMP) Electric Line Agreement
Tim Jones (TJ) from GMP attended via Zoom to address questions and concerns from the public regarding the planned work on Grassy Brook Road to improve the electricity infrastructure. The members of the public expressed concern about how long it would take for the telecommunications companies (Comcast and Consolidated Communications) to move their lines to the new poles and when the old poles would be removed. The typical timeline for the telecommunication companies to move their lines is 3 to 5 years. While

residents were in favor of improving the electrical infrastructure to reduce the risk and incidence of power outages, they do not want to see double poles on their property without a commitment to have the telecommunications lines moved and the empty poles removed. TJ explained that GMP has a notification system for informing the telecommunication companies that the power lines have been moved. However, GMP has no authority over the other companies. TJ agreed to provide contact information so that residents and the SB could follow up individually with the companies.

EMB reported that he and TJ drove through the section of the Grassy Brook Road where the work is planned and GMP agreed to his requests regarding placement of specific poles.

2) Hill/Kirsch Road - Sam Bourne/Jared Flynn

Sam Bourne (SB) started his business in 2014 and has done a wide range of projects including complex and unique ones that required a lot of careful planning and execution – including an artist’s rendering of a standing stone project and a stone lookout tower on top of a mountain. Jared Flynn (JF) received his Master Level Certification from The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain which is known as the standard for dry stone wall construction. He has worked on many dry stone arches and worked as the lead mason on the renovation of the stone arch bridge at West Townshend under the guidance of Brian Post.

The group discussed the repair plans, the potential timeline, how the timeline will impact the school bus route once school starts in late August, the diversion of the stream’s water during the work, some of the language in the easement agreements, and confirmation that no trees will need to be cut.

3) Act 181 - Laurie Martocci

Laurie Nau-Martocci (LNM) provided an update concerning Act 181 and its impact on the Town. She distributed copies of the following to the SB: State of Vermont Land Use Review Board Act 181/ Facts and Questions and sample letters written by other SBs. She explained that the intent of Act 181 is to update Act 250 to address the lack of housing. Act 181 categorizes land into 3 Tiers; Brookline falls into Tiers 2 and 3. One aspect of Act 181 that impacts rural areas is the requirement that new private roads more than 800 feet from existing roads will require going through the Act 250 process. Another issue is the financial cost of obtaining Act 250 permits is a barrier to building – especially for residents with average incomes. LNM would like the SB to consider sending a letter to the State of Vermont or to the Town’s representatives in support of repealing Act 181 primarily as it relates to Tiers 2 and 3.

4) Construction in the Flood Plain

A resident contacted the Town Clerk regarding potential construction in the flood plain. Stan Noga (SN) described the two-stage review required of construction in a flood plain: an initial review by the Town followed by a review by the Division of Environmental Conservation. Normally a Flood Plain Administrator would conduct the Town’s review. The Town has been unable to find a Flood Plain Administrator to take on these tasks. The Flood Plain Administrator is required to take two courses and become certified. SN reminded the

SB that in the event of a flood, the Town's FEMA coverage would be limited to 75% rather than 92.5% of repairs. After describing the regulatory requirements, SN offered to unofficially approach the resident to explain the process. The SB accepted his offer.

Regarding other matters, SN reported that he received an email from Windham Regional Commission requesting an updated hazard mitigation list by Friday. The SB also needs to provide an updated Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) by June 1st. The LEMP needs to be signed by the SB Chair stating that the SB has voted to adopt the updated plan and signed by the Fire Chief.

The SB and SN returned to the issue of identifying a Flood Plain Administrator and SN indicated that he would be interested if no one else in the Town steps forward. The Town will cover the cost of becoming certified and provide a yearly stipend.

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public- 2 Min

Lee Ann Jillson (LAJ) stated her support for LNM's approach on Act 181 and urged the SB to write a letter to the State.

She went on to report that since the proposed school budget was defeated by the April 8th vote, a new budget will need to be proposed. A special meeting of the School Board will be held on April 29th at 6:00 PM at Leland & Gray and on Zoom.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2640 for \$2,320.39. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

EB made a motion to approve payables warrant 2641 in the amount of \$21,286.31. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Paving

EMB discussed estimating costs for paving additional road lengths with the paving contractor who has agreed to help the Town maximize the road length to be paved. The actual distance paved will depend on the costs of the paving materials which fluctuate daily. Any additional road paved will be paved to the same specifications as the original road length. The road will not need to be closed for the paving.

B. April 18 Building Day and Work Group Planning Update

The goal of the April 18th Building Day is to provide the Town residents with an opportunity to see the buildings and more importantly to recruit people who might be interested in working on the Building Use Work Group. The SB briefly discussed logistics for Saturday, April 18th Building Day.

C. Ethics Liaison

While the Vermont agency that is responsible for investigating ethics complaints has been defunded, the Town still needs to appoint someone.

EB nominated Marjorie Ray as Ethics Liaison. BM seconded. EB confirmed that Marjorie Ray will accept the appointment. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Town Meeting for Shed Project

BM made a motion to schedule a Town Meeting on Saturday, June 20, 2026 at 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM to discuss and approve moving forward on the Town Shed Project. EMB seconded. The motion was approved unanimously after the vote regarding the amended language.

During the discussion, the SB agreed about the benefit of building a new Town Shed, but questions about where the funding should come from remain. DW expressed concern that the FEMA reimbursements for repairs from previous storms should be saved for other emergencies. Another source of funding would be taxation.

MD proposed adding an informational meeting from the Building Use Work Group after the Town meeting is adjourned. The purpose of the informational meeting would be to provide some information and gather information from the participating residents.

MD made a motion to modify the original motion to specify two meetings: one is the Town Meeting related to the shed and two is an anticipated Work Group Informational gathering and sharing session. DW seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

DW determined that the planned meeting must be warned 30 days prior to the meeting.

E. VT Council of Rural Community Visit Project

EB reminded the SB that In December 2025, Jessica Savage presented programs offered by the Vermont Council of Rural Development. EB recommended that the Town get on the wait list for the Council's community visit process. For this program, the Council facilitates small focus groups to identify a town's needs, wants, and priorities and then gathers groups of people to work on the priorities. It's roughly a 4-month process – with a long wait list.

EB made a motion that she contact the Vermont Council of Rural Development to get on their wait list for their community visit process. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. New Business

A. Architectural Grant BMH

BM made a motion to accept the \$2,500 Preservation Trust Grant for architectural plans for a new exterior ADA ramp and canopy and new interior ADA bathroom that will meet all applicable ADA standards. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The plans will be paid for from the Brookline Meeting House budget, and when received the Preservation Trust reimbursement will go back into the BMH fund.

B. Change of Work Order- Hammond

A change of scope is needed to the contracts with Hammond Engineering to cover future work on the Ellen Ware Road and Stone Arch Culvert projects. The SB discussed the scope of work, contract amounts, and reimbursement by FEMA. For the Ellen Ware Road project Hammond's fee is \$7,394 and an additional \$1,000 for soil engineering testing, so \$8,394 in additional services to oversee and help the Town with the project. For the Stone Arch Culvert on Hill Road, the fee is \$9,331 plus an additional \$2,000 for a structural engineering site visit.

MD made a motion to approve both of the changes in scope subject to getting a couple of clarification regarding costs, especially the \$2,000 cost. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously. MD will confirm with FEMA that the contracts include all the language required by FEMA.

C. Green Mount Power Electric Line Agreement

DW made a motion to approve the Green Mountain Power agreement to extend or improve the power line from Hill Road to Whitney Hill Road. MD seconded.

The SB discussed the benefits of having GMP complete the improvements to the electrical infrastructure along Grassy Brook Road and acknowledged that GMP has no authority over the telecommunications companies to move their lines. The SB agreed to follow up with contacts at the companies, including sending a letter to the companies asking them to move their lines quickly. Individual residents can also follow up directly with the companies. The SB can also invite the companies to send representatives to an SB Meeting. The SB agreed not to delay the GMP work.

Following the discussion the SB voted. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Hill/Kirsch Road - Sam Bourne/Jared Flynn

MD made a motion to approve the bid of Sam Bourne for the Hill/Kirsch Road Project. EMB seconded. During the discussion BM moved to amend the motion so it was subject to receiving funding. MD clarified that the motion was to approve the bid not the contract. The next step is to prepare a scope of work that FEMA will need to review and approve. The discussion included informing the community and affected organizations about the closure of Hill Road. The original motion was approved unanimously.

E. Act 181- Laurie Martocci

MD made a motion to participate in the letter writing process encouraging retraction or adjustment to Act 181. DW seconded. During the discussion, the SB determined that additional information was needed and voted to table the motion. The motion to table was passed unanimously.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Emily Beer

EB will work on FEMA contracts.

B. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

None.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

Putney Mountain Road is open and in good shape. EMB has worked on upgrades to Ellen Ware Road, is working with Lisa Donnelly regarding Grants in Aid (GIA) for this year. Once again there are people dumping trash outside of the recycling bin. The SB discussed mechanisms to fine people who dump trash at the recycling bin.

D. Doug Wellman

None.

E. Mike DeSocio

Agreed that cash flow schedule is needed to manage and make decisions.

9. Communications

None.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting May 6, 2026

- 1) Minutes from April 15, 2026 Regular SB Meeting
- 2) Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) Signature

- 3) Flood Plain Administrator Appointment
- 4) FEMA Update
- 5) Act 181
- 6) Fines for Dumping Trash at the Recycling Bin.

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

None.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk