

Final Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, May 20, 2026, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard (SB):

Mike DeSocio (MD) Chair
Doug Wellman (DW) Vice-Chair
Bruce Mello (BM)
Emily Beer (EB)

Town Officers:

Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk
Melissa Brown (MB) Treasurer

Public:

FactTV/Michael G (MG)*
Dot Maggio (DM)
Dan Towler (DT)
Kerry Bourne (KB)
David Parker (DP)*
Lee Anne Parker (LAP)*
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)*
Helen Holt (HH)*
Jon Ballou (JDB)*
Stan Noga (SN)*
Mary Hickey (MH)*
Daniel Klitgaard (DK)*

*Via Zoom

1. Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM and introduced all attendees.

E. Mark Bills was not in attendance.

2. Changes to Agenda

None.

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting – May 6, 2026

MD made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2026 SB Meeting as drafted.

DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously by the 4 SB members present.

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Member of the Public-5 min

None.

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public- 2 Min

1) Insulation of the Brookline Meeting House (BMH)

In advance of the meeting, BM sent an email regarding the Vermont Arts Council grant for insulating the vestry to residents for whom he had email addresses. His email outlined his rationale, communications with interested parties, and efforts to insulate the vestry.

Members of the public attended the meeting to express their concern that insulation of the BMH was on the agenda when the SB had decided that, except for emergencies, no further work would be undertaken on the BMH until the Town has decided what to do with all the Town buildings.

Comments regarding insulating

- Regarding the 2023 survey results which BM quoted in his email, while virtually all residents who responded were in favor of having a public gathering space with a kitchen, dining area, and bathroom; these results were based on only a small sample

of the Town's residents and occurred before the daycare departed from the school building in 2025.

- With the departure of the daycare, the Town needs to determine what to do with the empty school building and how this impacts the need to make the BMH available year-round and heated during the colder months.
- The Vermont Arts Council grant for insulating requires a match of \$12,000. The BMH fund has a limited budget and other renovation needs.
- Regarding communications with the current BMH committee, they are focused on planning and supporting events and cannot assess renovation plans because no one on the current committee has the expertise.

Comments regarding not insulating

- While concern has been raised regarding insulating the building, the grant and the insulation plans were reviewed by the Preservation Trust and the Vermont Arts Council.
- Getting grants is difficult and the BMH relies on grants. Being awarded and accepting a grant, but then not going forward is not effective.
- When work is delayed, the cost becomes higher.

2) Meeting with the Representatives

Alyssa Schmidt reported that the legislators would like to meet with the Brookline residents after June 6th.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a motion to approve payroll warrant 2645 for \$2,019.98. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a motion to approve payables warrant 2646 in the amount of \$10,722.67. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Building Day, Work Group Members, Planning Update

The following residents have agreed to serve on the Building Work Group: Mary Hickey, Stan Noga, and Andrea Seaton. MD is still waiting to hear back from three other individuals. MD and EB will not be on the committee but will be actively supporting the Work Group. The first meeting is planned for May 26th.

B. FEMA Update-Lewco Contract

MD **motioned** to approve and sign the Lewco contract. DW seconded. During the discussion, EB explained that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) agreed with the insurance coverage that Lewco has offered. The total contract is for \$146,000 with a termination clause that allows the Town to terminate, with or without cause, upon 10 days written notice. Attachment A of the contract includes provisions required by FEMA. FEMA had previously reviewed the boiler plate contract and agreed with the language. The motion passed unanimously. The SB signed the contract which had already been signed by Lewco.

C. Paving Update

EMB was not present at the meeting, but he and Archie Clark recommend that Brookline move forward with the contract for the original scope of work and execute a change of scope/work order change when additional road segments are identified for paving. MD made a **motion** to table further motions on the paving update. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Short Term Financing for Multiple Projects

Melissa Brown joined the meeting via Zoom to participate in this discussion. She explained that short-term financing would be available to the Town from M&T Bank (current interest rates of 3 to 4 percent, with an initial processing period of approximately one month) and Brattleboro Savings and Loan (current interest rates of 6 to 7 percent with the possibility of working out a lower rate, with an initial processing period of one week). Both allow early payoff without penalty; M&T charges a borrowing fee while Brattleboro Savings and Loan does not. The Town might need to borrow money to manage cash flow during the paving project.

E. Fine for Dumping Trash at the Recycling Bin

Brookline has a policy for fining use of the Town recycling bin by non-residents, but this policy does not cover dumping trash. State Law covers dumping but requires clear documentation to identify the person - including a picture of the person, car, and license plate; and date and time of the dumping - with enforcement by the Sheriff's office. The group discussed the possibility of creating an ordinance which would enable the Town to issue municipal tickets. MD made a **motion** to table action. DW and EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

F. Stipend for Flood Plain Administrator

In line with other Town stipends, a stipend of \$600 was proposed for the Flood Plain Administrator. The SB will approve the stipend and training expenses at the next meeting.

G. Lister request to approve plan for training and appointing additional Lister

MD made a **motion** to approve the following plan for the recruiting and training of listers:

The Listers will identify potential applicants and bring them to the SB. The SB may approve those potential applicants. Approved potential applicants will spend time with the Listers for 3-4 weeks so the Listers can gauge whether the applicant should move forward. If both parties feel it is a good fit, the Listers will ask the SB to appoint the applicant as a Lister until the next Town Meeting.

The assumption is that the newly appointed Lister will run for election. EB seconded. During the discussion, the SB expressed appreciation that the Listers advocated for hiring additional Listers. The motion passed unanimously.

The SB did not make a motion regarding a proposed candidate.

H. Act 181 Update

DW reported that the Vermont House and Senate approved withdrawing parts of Act 181 – including the parts of most concern to some of the Town's residents. The House and Senate versions differ; the versions are in conference committee with the legislature session.

7. **New Business**

A. Temporary Hand Railing for BMH

MD **motioned** to approve the temporary hand rail for the BMH side entrance. BM seconded. BM explained that EMB would install the temporary hand rail using materials from the structure that was removed. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Approve Warning and Articles (Australian Ballot)

The SB discussed the requirements for implementing the Australian Ballot System, the wording of the Articles for a Town Meeting, and the possibility of amending the wording from the floor at the meeting.

Following the discussion, MD made a **motion** to approve the warning for a Special Brookline Town Meeting with all the edits included, including the estimated cost of \$45,000, and including adding another Article, mentioned previously, and subject to some further edits if EB finds some tweaks are needed to the language. BM seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Insulation of BMH

BM **motioned** to move forward with the contract that was started for insulating the BMH. He stated that he had new information to explain and wanted to move it forward immediately, due to a time issue. The motion was not seconded and thus was not acted upon. BM excused himself from the meeting and left at 8:00 PM.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Emily Beer

No update.

B. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

No update

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

No update.

D. Doug Wellman

No update.

E. Mike DeSocio

MD received an email from the FEMA representative who will have a call with MD after which the FEMA representative plans to send a letter approving the Hill Road Stone Arch Culvert scope of work.

9. Communications

None.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting June 3, 2026

- 1) Minutes from May 20, 2026 Regular SB Meeting
- 2) Meeting with Legislators
- 3) Paving Contract
- 4) BMH Committee request for approval for funding \$400 fee for music on June 6th
- 5) Building Use Workgroup Update
- 6) Approval of Stipend & Training Expenses for Flood Plain Administrator
- 7) Windham Services for depression, alcohol and drug abuse
- 8) Other

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

None.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk