

Final Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, June 3, 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
Melissa Brown (MB) Treasurer*

Public:

FactTV/Alex Stradling (AS)*
Elisha Underwood (EU)
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)*
Dan Towler (DT)*
Jon Ballou (JDB)*
Michael Miller (MM)*

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

2. Changes to Agenda

MD made a **motion** to remove Candidate Discussion Night (item 7.F.) and to move the Executive Session to the very last item. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting – May 20, 2026

MD made a **motion** to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2026 SB Meeting as drafted. EMB seconded. The motion passed with four voting in favor (MD, DW, BM, EB) and EMB abstaining.

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Member of the Public-5 min

Elisha Underwood, Program Manager of Windham County Lead Hazard Control Program, described the work being done under the \$1.1 million grant received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for lead hazard reduction. The funding is being used to train and certify additional lead abatement contractors in Vermont, support property owners and occupants, and encourage lead testing in children 1 and 2 years of age. A free one-day RRP (Renovation, Repair, Painting & Maintenance) course is available for contractors, homeowners, landlords, parents, and childcare providers. Additional information is available on the Brookline webpage.

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public- 2 Min

None.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a **motion** to approve payroll warrant 2647 for \$9,741. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a **motion** to approve payables warrant 2648 in the amount of \$361,122.61. This includes a \$286,000 payment to the West River Valley Modified Union Education District. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Building Use Workgroup (BUW) Members, Appoint Members

At a previous meeting, the SB approved the following individuals for the BUW: Mary Hickey, Stan Noga, and Andrea Seaton. MD made a **motion** to appoint Fred Strasser and Jess Guerrero to the Building Use Committee. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously. MD made a **motion** to also appoint Lyle Brooks to the Building Use Committee. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MD presented a change he would like to make to item 5) under the Charter Statement. The change recognizes that the BUW may not come up a single recommendation of how to proceed with the management and use of the School Building and the Town Office Building. Instead there may be more than one option for the Town's residents to consider. In addition, neither the BUW nor the SB are going to be asked to endorse a single recommendation. Individuals may make recommendations, but the residents will be asked to decide. MD made a **motion** to be allowed to tweak that sentence. EMB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. FEMA Update- Hill Road

1) Ellen Ware Road

The easements have been completed, the contract has been signed, and 90% of the FEMA grant has been received. The start date is mid-July with the work expected to be completed within 10 to 14 days once the culvert has been received. As soon as an official start date is known, Brookline will close the Ellen Ware Road and inform the authorities of the road closure. The Town and FEMA will need to do an inspection and approve the work.

2) Hill Road Stone Arch Bridge Culvert

The Town has received a preliminary approval from the FEMA representative for the change in the scope of work from a replacement to a repair and the associated budget. The SB discussed the risks associated with going ahead based on a preliminary approval against the risks of delaying and losing the FEMA grant which expires in September 2026. MD made a **motion** to proceed with the Hill Road project. EB seconded. Following a discussion with Melissa Brown, Treasurer, regarding Newfane's practice of moving forward under these conditions, MD asked to amend his original motion. MD made a **motion** to amend his motion to add "to approve the project and move to contract signing once all the easements are in our possession." EB seconded. The motion to amend passed unanimously, after which the amended original motion passed unanimously.

C. Paving Update/Contract

The SB discussed the status of the draft contract which includes the Town's standard language. MD will review the draft, and the SB will address at the next SB meeting. DW made a **motion** to table the paving contract until the next meeting. EB seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. New Business

A. BMH Committee Spending \$400 for event on June 6

MD made a **motion** to approve the BMH Committee spending \$400 on a band on June 6th. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Meeting with Legislators

The SB agreed to schedule the meeting with the legislators on Wednesday, June 17th at 5:30 PM in the BMH. DW made a **motion** to move the start of the SB meeting to 7:00 PM. MD seconded. The motion passed unanimously. With the later start, there was a suggestion that the SB limit the June 17th agenda to essential business.

Use of the Town Office Building

The SB is advising that if members of the public would like to use the Town Office, they should read the Brookline Town Office Use Policy available on the Town's website. An important provision of the policy is that individuals or groups using the building agree to use only the public areas and to leave the facilities, furniture, and equipment as clean and orderly as they found them. The public should contact the Town Clerk to schedule meetings and should avoid scheduling use of the building during Town Office hours (Tuesdays and Thursdays and the first Saturday of each month). Groups or individuals who do not adhere to the Policy may risk losing future use. The SB also discussed whether a Town Officer should be present during the public's use of the building and decided that after the BUW completes their work and the Town votes, the SB will revise the Policy to cover all Town Buildings. In the meantime, individuals or groups who want to use other Town Buildings should contact the SB.

C. Approval of Spend & Training Expenses for Flood Plain Administrator

DW made a **motion** to pay the Flood Plain Administrator the standard stipend of \$600 and cover any training expenses that are necessary for him to perform his duties. BM seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Windham Services for depression, alcohol and drug abuse

An organization has asked to speak to the SB regarding depression, alcohol and drug abuse and will probably be scheduled to attend at the next meeting.

E. Financial results 11 months

Based on the financials for the past 11 months of the fiscal year, the General Fund and the Highway Fund are expected to end favorably.

F. Candidate Discussion Night

Duplicate of B. above.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

1) Insulation Project for BMH Annex

BM reviewed the chronology and events of the insulation project. He described approaches that would address concerns raised by the public as well as his recent conversations with Jackson Evans (Preservation Trust of Vermont), Caitlin Corkins (Vermont Division for Historic Preservation), and Michelle Baily (Vermont Arts Council) regarding the insulation project and issues that had been raised. He described how the cellulose insulation would only be placed above the ceiling. Regarding the use of foam in the crawl space, he described using Tyvek as a releasing agent to which the foam would be applied so that it could easily be removed if needed. When asked, the other members of the SB were not in favor of reversing the decision which was to hold off on doing any additional work on the BMH until the Town has decided what to do with the Town Office and the School House.

BM suggested that the SB Meeting Agendas should also be published on the Brookline ListServe and Front Porch Forum.

2) School Building Windows

BM recommended that the School Building windows, including storm windows, are cleaned. He has a cost estimate (\$2,060 for 3 days of work) from the person who does the cleaning of the Town Office and Round Schoolhouse and asked the SB for approval at the next meeting.

B. Emily Beer

The SB has been invited to the Building Community Through Better Public Engagement meeting on June 11 that is being hosted by the BDCC (Brattleboro Development Credit Corp).

Executive session re: Property Valuation and Review Hearing, docket number PVR-2025-1 to discuss the litigation and attorney-client communications.

EB made a **motion** to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the discussion of the Property Valuation and Review Hearing, docket number PVR-2025-1, would clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage, because the selectboard risks disclosing its litigation plan and confidential attorney-client communications with the public. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EB made a **motion** that the SB enter into executive session to discuss the upcoming Property Valuation and Review Hearing, docket number PVR-2025-1 under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(E) and (F) of the Vermont Statutes. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The SB entered into executive session at 9:23 PM, MD and VB exited the conference room and closed the door. FactTV recording was turned off. At 9:48 PM, EB made a **motion** to exit the executive session. DW seconded. The motion passed unanimously by the 4 SB Members attending the executive session (DW, BM, EB, EMB). The other attendees returned to the meeting and FactTV recording was resumed. No actions, motions, or votes took place during the executive session.

EB announced that the hearing before the Property Evaluation and Review Hearing will be public and is scheduled for July 6th at 10:00 AM.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

EMB has completed replacement of culverts under the portion of Grassy Brook Road that will be repaved. He has also been working on road grading and improvements to Ellen Ware Road. Given the number of road projects planned for this year, the SB decided to schedule the culvert replacement near the Tattersall property on Grassy Brook Road for next year. The culvert replacement will be covered by the Better Back Roads grant awarded in March 2026 that requires the work to be completed by September 30, 2027.

D. Doug Wellman

New 911 addresses are needed – including for multiple houses built on a private driveway that must now be given a proper road name.

E. Mike DeSocio

None.

9. **Communications**

None.

10. Set Agenda

- A. Regular Meeting June 17, 2026
 - 1) Minutes from June 3, 2026 Regular SB Meeting
 - 2) Windham Services for depression, alcohol and drug abuse
 - 3) Paving Contract
 - 4) Window Washing
 - 5) BMH Architectural Plans
 - 6) Other
- B. Future Meeting
 - 1) Road Naming
 - 2) Round Schoolhouse (communication from Laurie)

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

MD will follow-up with Alyssa Schmidt regarding the process for recruiting and training lister candidates.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk