

Final Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, July 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
Melissa Brown (MB) Treasurer*

Public:

FactTV*/Alex Stradling (AS)*
Michael Miller (MM)*
Alyssa Schmidt (AS)*
Dan Towler (DT)*

1. Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM and introduced all attendees.

BM joined the meeting at 6:32PM. There were technical difficulties with the internet during the meeting with many instances where the connection between the Town Office and remote participants was interrupted.

2. Changes to Agenda

None.

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting – July 1, 2026

MD made a **motion** to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2026 SB Meeting as drafted.

EMB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously by the four SB members present (MD, DW, EB, EMB).

B. Special Agenda Meeting – July 8, 2026

MD made a **motion** to approve the one sentence July 8, 2026 minutes. EB seconded. The motion **passed** with 3 SB members voting in favor and 2 abstaining.

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Member of the Public-5 min

None.

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public- 2 Min

Dan Towler expressed his approval of the concept of regional policing and Windham County towns working together to address policing needs. He also acknowledged the difficulty of participating in the program and committing to the budget without knowing the cost and without approval from the Town. DT noted that the Town is currently not paying the Sheriff's department for policing, and it's not known if the residents want to pay for coverage.

Alyssa Schmidt was in favor of Brookline joining the Windham County Regional Law Enforcement Council and trying regional policing for a year. She noted that the estimated cost of \$18,000 was comparable to the \$15,000 the Town approved to support planning for the Town's Buildings.

AS stated that the Town failed miserably in notifying people of the closure of Hill Road for the repair of the stone arch bridge and this has caused difficulties for people who didn't know it was going to happen.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a **motion** to approve payroll warrant 2702 in the amount of \$2,009.08.

BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a **motion** to approve Town payable warrant 2703 in the amount of \$13,904.29.

EMB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Regional Policing Participation

DW made a **motion** that the Town join the Regional Policing Program. EB seconded the motion.

During the discussion, the SB discussed advantages and disadvantages of the program as well as feedback from residents who responded to the Facebook posting. It's not clear what services would be provided, and people are not interested in paying \$18,000 for traffic policing.

Attending as a non-voting representative would allow the Town to hear the discussions and decisions and make a Town decision about joining next year once more information was known. SB in favor of concept, but the timing requires the SB to agree to a significant expense without the Town's approval and too much information is unknown to make a commitment by the July 15th deadline. BM called the question. The SB voted; the **motion failed** with all SB Members voting against.

EMB suggested inviting the State Police, who cover the Town, to talk with the SB.

B. Line of Credit

MB is in the process of getting a \$250,000 line of credit for the Town. The Town will be charged interest for the duration that the line of credit is used with no other fees and no penalty for paying it off early. Based on an analysis of the Town's expenses and cash flow this summer while three major highway projects are underway (stone arch bridge on Hill Road, culvert replacement on Ellen Ware Road, and paving on Grassy Brook Road), the Town will likely need this line of credit in August.

C. Ramp ADA Discussion

BM is still waiting for additional information. He **motioned** to table discussion of the ADA Ramp.

EMB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

D. Road Naming

DW made a **motion** to name the unpaved road to Bruce Mello's driveway Spring House Lane. EB seconded. The motion **passed** with 4 voting in favor (MD, DW, EB, EMB) and BM voting against.

E. Posting on FB (Facebook)- Agendas and Minutes

The SB discussed posting the meeting agendas and minutes on the Town Facebook page in addition to the 3 Town bulletin boards and webpage. The SB also discussed using the Town Facebook page and Listserv to inform the residents about other planned highway projects that will impact travel this summer – including Green Mountain Power (GMP) plans to replace utility poles on Grassy Brook Road. Details, known as of this SB Meeting, for the 4 road projects are summarized below.

Grassy Brook Road – GMP – Installation of New Utility Poles	
Where:	Grassy Brook Road between Hill Road and Whitney Hill Road
When:	For 8 weeks, potentially starting in July and continuing through September; Exact dates not yet known.
Note:	GMP will work around the paving that may also occur during the same time period on Grassy Brook Road.
Ellen Ware Road – Culvert Replacement – ROAD CLOSURE	
Where:	Ellen Ware Road will be closed to through traffic.
When:	Work could begin in July and is expected to take several weeks; Exact dates not yet known.
Note:	Contractor is waiting for delivery of the culvert.
Grassy Brook Road – Paving	
Where:	Two sections of Grassy Brook Road north of intersection with Hill Road near the recycling bin; Additional segments to be determined.
When:	August or September Exact dates not yet known.
Note:	GMP may be installing new utility poles at the same time.
Hill Road – Stone Arch Bridge – Repair – ROAD CLOSURE	
Where:	Hill Road closed to through traffic for the repair near the intersection of Hill and Kirsch Roads
When:	Hill Road is expected to remain closed through September Exact completion date not yet known.

7. New Business

A. Cota and Cota Pre-Buy

MD made a **motion** to table and include for action at the next SB meeting. BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

BM informed the SB that the School building heat pumps and boiler need some maintenance and the building needs some cleaning. He also provided an update about which of the Town's buildings need pest control to address powder post beetles and carpenter ants.

He reminded the SB of some of the recent meetings with potential renters of the School building – including the Windham Central Supervisory Union (WCSU) who have decided that the building does not suit their needs. He attended the latest meeting of the Building Use Workgroup where he provided a summary of the ownership of the School building and recommended a title search on the Town Office property. A motion regarding the title search did not pass as the Workgroup felt it was more important to address the easement on the Town Office property. MD and EB have volunteered to follow up regarding the easement.

The Workgroup plans to invite the public to their August 18th meeting so that the public can hear their plans and the Workgroup can get feedback from the public. Then the Workgroup plans to hold a Saturday meeting at 10 AM on September 12th.

B. Emily Beer

The Property Valuation and Review Hearing took place on July 6th and the Town should hear something within 60 days. If the Town does not hear back, the next step would be to follow up with the Docket Clerk.

The SB briefly discussed planning for future appraisals - expected within 5 years – including a contract change to require the appraisal group to participate as needed in any Property Valuation and Review Hearings. Other topics included the change in market prices of properties post-pandemic and the impact of potential changes in FEMA's designation of flood zones. Another property grievance is expected to be brought to the BCA (Board of Civil Authority). The SB recommends having 5 people on the BCA if possible; Marjorie Ray, Town Clerk, is working on this.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

EMB has been working on road maintenance throughout Brookline and helping with signs for the road closure on Hill Road.

\$200,000 Structure Grant

EMB has a meeting on Friday, July 17, 2026 with Archie Clark, Brookline Road Commissioner, and Scott Jensen (Agency of Natural Resources) to discuss the hydraulic study for the replacement of a badly damaged culvert on upper Grassy Brook Road. The hydraulic study calls for a structure with a 20-foot span, 6 feet high – so probably a bridge. The Town received a \$200,000 Structure Grant with a 2-year window for completion by October 1, 2027 for this project. However, the grant is not sufficient to cover the costs estimated to be at least \$500,000 for the new bridge, temporary bridge for traffic diversion, etc. The Town has also received a grant of \$18,000 for an engineer to develop a design and an idea of costs. What is unknown at this time is whether the Town could get an extension on the grant or shift the grant to a different project. The bottom of the existing culvert is rusted out and is beginning to cave in. While EMD stated he has steel plates he could use to cover the road, this is a safety issue that cannot be ignored. The next step is to generate a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select an engineer. The SB could ask the Town for funding, estimated at \$300,000 in addition to the grant, at the next Town meeting or borrow the funds and pay it off over a number of years.

Another site for discussion during the meeting with ANR is the narrow bridge north of Papoose Lane where part of the concrete under the bridge has been undermined by the collapse of the Greer Swamp beaver dam.

D. Doug Wellman

No update.

E. Mike DeSocio

AS sent MD an email regarding the FEMA required historic review of the stone arch bridge repair. When MD followed up, he was informed by representatives of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation that FEMA has not requested an historic review of the repairs to the Stone Arch Bridge. Based on his discussions with them, it is possible that a review was not requested because no work is being done on the historic section of the stone arch bridge. MD was advised to continue with the project.

9. Communications

None.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting August 5, 2026

- 1) Minutes from July 15, 2026 Regular SB Meeting
- 2) Update from the ANR Meeting
- 3) Posting agendas and minutes on Facebook
- 4) Line of Credit
- 5) ADA Ramp
- 6) Cota & Cota Prebuy Plan
- 7) Hill Road Update
- 8) Hill Road Update – Performance Bond
- 9) Update to Road Projects and Closures
- 10) Other

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

There is still no definitive date for when the Town will receive all the financials needed to provide the tax rate for a Special SB Meeting – timing to be determined - for the SB to approve the Town's municipal tax rate for the 2027 fiscal year.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk