

Final Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, August 5, 2026, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard (SB):

Mike DeSocio (MD) Chair
Bruce Mello (BM)
Emily Beer (EB)
E. Mark Bills (EMB)
*Via Zoom

Town Officers:

Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk

Public:

Jess Guerrero (JG)
Oliver Ames (OA)
Stan Noga (SN)

1. Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:43 PM and introduced all attendees.

DW was not able to attend the meeting. Technical difficulties with Zoom delayed the start of the meeting.

2. Changes to Agenda

MD **motioned** to make the following changes to the Agenda: add Oliver Ames to the agenda under 4.A. Scheduled Members of the Public and move up 6.E Update on Building Use Workgroup for discussion before 5. Warrants. EMB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

3. Review Draft Minutes

A. Regular Agenda Meeting – July 15, 2026

MD made a **motion** to approve the minutes of the Regular SB Meeting on July 15, 2026 as drafted. BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Special Agenda Meeting – July 21, 2026

MD made a **motion** to approve the minutes for the Special Meeting of the SB on July 21, 2026. BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

C. Special Agenda Meeting – July 23, 2026

MD made a **motion** to approve the minutes for the Special Meeting of the SB on July 23, 2026 when the SB approved the tax rates for the coming year. EB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

4. Members of the Public

A. Scheduled Member of the Public-5 min

- 1) Oliver Ames expressed concerns and raised questions regarding the property line between his property and the Town Garage. Because the boundary between his property and the Town Garage is not clear, he questioned whether some road materials such as asphalt, rocks, old culverts, and Town structures extend onto his property. He offered to split the costs of a new survey with the Town and offered to walk the property line with the Town. The Town will first research existing records for survey information. The SB and OA discussed the road materials stored along the property line and agreed that when practical materials without further use would be removed. There were also discussions regarding

OA's request to plant trees to address erosion and provide screening, to address the Town Garage lights at night, and a 40-mph speed limit sign missing at where speeding cars have run off the road.

2) Update on Building Use Workgroup

Jess Guerrero provided an update on the Building Use Workgroup planned August 18th meeting to which the public has been invited. The goal of the meeting is to inform residents of the Workgroup's progress, additional work to be completed, and especially to listen to the residents' questions and concerns

B. Unscheduled Members of the Public- 2 Min

None.

5. Warrants

A. Payroll

MD made a **motion** to approve payroll warrant 2704 in the amount of \$1,714. BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Accounts Payable

MD made a **motion** to approve Town payable warrant 2705 in the amount of \$75,474.13. EB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

6. Old Business

A. Line of Credit Signing

DW made a **motion** to table the action of signing the Line of Credit Agreement. EB seconded. DW explained that the paperwork is still in process. The motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Posting Agendas and Meetings on Facebook and Front Porch Forum

Marjorie Ray has begun posting a link to SB Meeting Agendas on Facebook and will post links to the minutes. No final plans were made about posting on Front Porch Forum.

C. Cota and Cota Prebuy Plan Approval

The Prebuy Plan applies to gas and fuel oil for the Town Office, Brookline Meeting House (BMH), and former Brookline Elementary School. EB made a **motion** for the Town to choose the cap price option and monthly billing. DW seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously. There was a discussion about paying the contract deposit and adding it to the warrant approved earlier in the meeting. EB **motioned** to add the payment to the AP warrant that the SB already approved. MD seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously. The SB signed the Cota and Cota Prebuy plan.

D. Hill Road Update

The repair to the Stone Arch Bridge on Hill Road is progressing well.

E. Update on Building Use Workgroup

See 4.A. above.

F. Other Road/Culvert Projects Update

The contractor is completing a project and expects to begin work on the Ellen Ware Road project soon.

7. New Business

A. ADA Ramp

BM described a wheelchair lift for ADA access to the BMH as an alternative to the wooden structure he previously presented. The wheelchair lift would greatly decrease the footprint of

the wooden ADA Ramp. The estimated cost is \$4,800 plus installation. MD made a **motion** to table any action on the ADA Ramp. BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Lister Status and Planning

Alyssa Schmidt has resigned from her elected position as Town Lister. BM informed the SB that there is an experienced Lister who might be interested. MD made a **motion** to ask BM to pursue an opportunity that has been identified to potentially hire someone to be a lister from another town. EB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Building Commissioner – Bruce Mello

1) Authorization for Use of Town Buildings

BM raised questions about how groups were getting access to Town Buildings and whether they needed to follow Vermont's Open Meeting Law by posting agendas and minutes. The concern was partly about public access to Town buildings and transparency required by Vermont's Open Meeting Law and partly about liability, security, and responsibility for the buildings. The discussion clarified that while Town Committees discussing public business needed to post agenda's and minutes, a community group with a shared interest using public space but not functioning as a Town committee and not discussing Town business does not need to post agendas and meeting minutes.

Regarding access to Town Buildings, the procedure for using Town Buildings needs to be clarified – such as who authorizes and provides access and how is use of the buildings scheduled. Suggestions included having the group get authorization from the SB and schedule use of buildings with the Town Clerk with the meetings included on the Town's website calendar.

2) Potential Daycare of the School Building

BM reported that three separate groups knowledgeable about daycare operations have expressed an interest and inspected the School House as a potential daycare site. However, none of them have pursued the possibility further. He was asked to share details and outcomes for groups expressing an interest in the Schoolhouse with the Building Use Group.

B. Emily Beer

EB provided an update to the SB regarding the following.

1) Board of Civil Authority (BCA)

A BCA meeting has been scheduled for a tax appeal on August 20, 2026 at 6 PM. EB will send some training video from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) regarding BCA procedures.

2) Notice of Vacancy for Lister

EB informed the SB that the Town is obligated to provide public notice within 10 days regarding the Lister vacancy.

3) Tax Abatement Request

A Town resident who is a veteran has requested Tax Abatement assistance from the Town regarding their property tax.

C. Highway Supervisor – E. Mark Bills

1) Town Garage Property Lines

EMB and the SB discussed concerns raised by OA. The SB agreed that the property line between the Ames property and the Town Garage needs to be established using existing documents if possible. EMB explained that some of the stored materials such as asphalt and rocks may be useful for future road projects and he will move them depending on the property line. He plans to have the old, rusted culverts, which may have some value as scrap metal, removed in the future. The SB also discussed OA's concerns regarding the lights which are motion activated, noise from salt trucks, unauthorized access to the Town Garage, possible environmental impacts given the proximity to Grassy Brook Road, and the missing speed limit sign at the curve where cars have gone off the road. The missing speed limit sign which was falling over has been replaced by new signs installed at the intersection with Grassy Brook Road and Whitney Hill Road in accordance with the requirement to have signs after every intersection. The SB concluded that the planned new structure is within the property lines of the Town Garage and complies with existing regulations based on previous interactions with Vermont governmental authorities. The SB advised EMB to proceed with the planned new structure.

2) Emergency Repair of Bridge on Grassy Brook Road

Scott Jensen from the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) inspected the damage and recommended repairs including replacing material beneath the structure and restoring rocks and stream material around the bridge. The estimated cost is \$25,000. Given the risk of waiting until next year to make repairs, the SB recommended moving forward on an emergency basis to complete repairs by October 1 - including developing a description of the work and getting bids from the Town's established contractors and contacting VTrans (Vermont Agency of Transportation) about possible funding or emergency services.

3) Grassy Brook Road Culvert 57

Based on recommendations from ANR, the culvert will need to be replaced with an 18 to 20-foot concrete box culvert; an aluminum arch is also a possibility. EMB has contacted VTrans regarding engineering assistance. The goal is to have the engineering work completed so that a Request for Proposal (RFP) can be issued so that the work can be completed next year.

4) Ellen Ware Road Grants in Aid (GIA) and General Road Maintenance

Two new culverts have been installed with funding provided by the 2026 GIA. EMB has also worked on general road maintenance including cleaning ditches to prevent culverts from becoming blocked.

D. Doug Wellman

No update.

E. Mike DeSocio

Will delay his update until next SB Meeting.

9. Communications

To be covered at the next meeting.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting August 19, 2026

1) Minutes from August 5, 2026 Regular SB Meeting

- 2) Emergency repair of bridge on Grassy Brook Road
- 3) Town Yard Update
- 4) Building Use Group Update
- 5) Town Lister Update
- 6) ADA Ramp Update
- 7) Line of Credit Signing
- 8) Other

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

None.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk