Final Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, November 4, 2026, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard (SB):	**Town Officers:**	**Public:**
Mike DeSocio (MD) Chair	Vanessa Ballou (VB) Recording Clerk	FactTV*
Doug Wellman (DW) Vice-Chair		Michael Miller (MM)*
Bruce Mello (BM)		
Emily Beer (EB)		
E. Mark Bills (EMB)		
*Via Zoom		

1. **Mike DeSocio called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM and introduced all attendees.**
2. **Changes to Agenda**
   BM made a **motion** to remove from the agenda 6.I. Policy for Use of Town Buildings and Assets. DW seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.
3. **Review Draft Minutes**
   A. Regular Agenda Meeting – October 21, 2026
      MD made a **motion** to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2026 meeting with changes discussed. BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.
4. **Members of the Public**
   A. Scheduled Member of the Public-5 min
      None.
   B. Unscheduled Members of the Public- 2 Min
      None.
5. **Warrants**
   A. Payroll
      MD made a **motion** to approve payroll warrant 2718 in the amount of $1,727.03. BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.
   B. Accounts Payable
      MD made a **motion** to approve accounts payable warrant 2719 in the amount of $4,837.78. DW seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously. Included in the SB's approval is the invoice of $2,608, which is slightly higher than the original estimate of $2,471.04, for painting center double lines on the newly paved sections of Grassy Brook Road. The SB also discussed the requirement for contractors to carry Workers' Compensation Insurance.
6. **Old Business**
   A. Award contract for Plowing & Sanding Contracts
      DW made a **motion** to table. EB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Cease and Desist Letter for Illegal Dumping and SB Designee to Enforce Vermont Statute 24 V.S.A. § 220

MD made a **motion** to table approving the cease-and-desist letter. BM seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

C. Cemetery Commission Update

The Cemetery Commission is planning to meet next week - November 9-13 (Tuesday or Thursday). As there is no longer a Chair and no Vice Chair appointed, Marjorie Ray, Town Clerk, will need to attend and convene the meeting.

D. Paving Update

The paving project has been completed.

E. Hill Road/Ellen Ware Update

The Town has received the 90% FEMA payment for the project on Hill Road and is working to complete the close-out documentation required to receive the remaining 10% from the FEMA grants for the Hill Road and Ellen Ware Road projects. MD shared new information regarding the requirements - which the Town is unlikely to meet - for FEMA to reimburse the interest from the short-term financing the Town took out to manage cash flow during the highway projects. There is no new information on the custom guardrail for the Hill Road stone arch bridge.

F. MERP Funds

After discussing the various options, the SB determined that the best option was to use the remaining MERP funds to insulate the older section of the Schoolhouse. BM made a **motion** to spend the MERP funds, up to the available amount, on insulation for the front of the school – the older portion built in 1929. DW seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

G. Engineering RFP for Culvert 57

MD made a **motion** to table discussion of 6.G. at the moment and move to 6.H. TAP grant and possibly come back to 6.G. EMB seconded. The motion **passed** with 4 SB Members (MD, DW, EB, EMB) in favor and BM abstaining. The engineering plan bids are to be submitted by the next SB Meeting on November 18th.

H. TAP Grant

The SB discussed the benefits and disadvantages of a TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) grant based on new information regarding the complexity of the process and the regulatory requirements that drive up the costs, the lengthy timeline, and experiences shared by other towns and concluded that it was not in the best interests of the Town to proceed. DW made a **motion** to stop any further discussion of the TAP grant and approve moving forward on the engineering work. EB seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

I. Policy for Use of Town Buildings and Assets

Tabled.

7. New Business

A. Summary of BM's October 20 & 21 meeting with Preservation Trust, Vermont Arts Council

BM provided additional details from his participation at the October 20 – 21, 2026 Historic Preservation Retreat that was hosted by Preservation Trust of Vermont and included representatives from Preservation Trust of Vermont, Vermont Arts Council, Historic Preservation, and Efficiency Vermont. The retreat included individual discussions, and opportunities to consult

with specialists regarding energy efficiency, weatherization, moisture management, historic building preservation, contractors, and potential grant funding. BM reported that technical assistance, contractor referrals, financing resources, and grant opportunities are available to towns to improve historic buildings while preserving their architectural character. He described some of the recommendations he received relating to the Schoolhouse and the Brookline Meetinghouse (BMH). Following BM's summary, other members of the SB noted that the Town still needs to establish a decision-making process for evaluating building-related projects and recommendations.

MD made a **motion** to table any action and further discussion. DW seconded. The motion **passed** unanimously.

B. Highway Budget for 2027/2028 Fiscal Year

Melissa Brown, working with EMB, has prepared a preliminary draft of the 2027/2028 Fiscal Year budget for the Highway Fund, however, MD has not had an opportunity to review. A detailed review was tabled until the next meeting.

8. Reports and Updates

A. Bruce Mello

BM identified repairs needed to maintain the BMH including protruding roofing nails on the south-facing portion of the vestry (annex) roof and the deterioration of a structural support beam beneath the sanctuary. He explained that there were potential grants available to address these issues and also reminded the SB that there was an outstanding grant to support insulating the vestry (annex). The SB discussed the need for community involvement as well as a decision-making process in which differing options can be heard and considered to reach a consensus about the best path forward regarding the BMH. One possibility is presenting an article or articles at the annual Town Meeting for the residents to decide via voting.

B. Emily Beer

No additional update.

C. E. Mark Bills

EMB has been working on activities related to the engineering plan RFP as well as highway maintenance associated with fall - scraping roads, clearing ditches to prevent leaves from clogging culverts. He has also been working on the new salt and sand shed.

EMB recommended that the Town establish a budget to fund the Town's required match of awarded grants similar to the paving fund. MD recommended sharing with the Town the existing list of critical highway projects, including what's been completed, and what's left. DW recommended using the FEMA funds for the Town's match to highway grants. The SB also discussed the need for grant administrative support to identify and prepare grant applications.

D. Doug Wellman

No additional update.

E. Mike DeSocio

No additional update.

9. Communications

The SB discussed an email about painting lines on roads. The state is responsible for painting lines on class 2 roads such as Grassy Brook Road. The Town is responsible for painting double center lines on class 3 roads such as Hill Road and funding it from the Town budget. The SB recommended that the

costs come from the paving budget line item and will address painting lines on Hill Road next Spring of 2027 – when it will once again be warm enough to paint.

10. Set Agenda

A. Regular Meeting November 18, 2026
   1) Minutes from November 4, 2026 Regular SB Meeting
   2) Open Bids for Engineering Plan for Culvert 57
   3) Approval of Contract for Plowing & Sanding and Sand Delivery
   4) Highway Budget for 2027/2028 Fiscal Year
   5) End of Year Announcement for Highway Projects
   6) Cemetery Update
   7) Building Use Workgroup Report
   8) Policy for Town Buildings and Assets Use
   9) Other

B. Future Meetings
   1) Painting double center lines on Hill Road – *before next Spring 2027*
   2) Brookline Historical Society – Hill Road Stone Arch Bridge Celebration – *target Spring 2027*

11. Other Discussion Not Requiring Action

None.

12. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Vanessa Ballou, Recording Clerk