

Approved Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, November 3, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Attending

Selectboard:

Dot Maggio (Chair)
David Jones
Bruce Mello
Stan Noga
Gwen Tanza

Town Officers:

Guy Tanza (Town Clerk,
videographer)
Mark Bills (Road Supervisor)

Members of the Public:

Marjorie Ray
Peter Barus (Recorder)
FACTV (Videoconference recording)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Changes to Agenda

Mr. Jones suggested changing heading no. 8 to “other selectboard reports.”

Review / Approve minutes from the October 20th regular meeting.

The minutes for October 20, 2021 were reviewed and approved as amended by unanimous consent.

Scheduled members of the public

Ms. Ray discussed DVFiber, a member of communications committee attending monthly meetings, a \$4.5M grant to start the engineering and design for high speed fiber optic network; preparation of utility poles for Phase One towns, Halifax Marlboro, Readsboro, Stamford, Wardsboro and Whitingham; Brookline is a Phase Two town, probably not to expect service until early 2023; a \$20M grant anticipated. There was discussion.

Ms. Ray noted that a new resident was interested in being an alternate for the CUD group. Ms. Maggio suggested that this would be discussed at the **next meeting**; that some ARPA funding would be supporting DVFiber, CUDs, etc.; and thanked Ms. Ray for representing the town.

Unscheduled members of the public

Old Business

A. Review / Discussion of Job description for Road Supervisor

There was discussion; of modifications made (copies provided). Ms. Maggio discussed a summary of the VLCT seminar attended by Mr. Noga, October 7, regarding job descriptions in general; and suggested adding a section for inventory of materials on hand, schedules, culvert maintenance,

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before and after photographs of road work. There was discussion; of where responsibility for recycling facilities should best be allocated; of mowing and locations to be mowed; of budgets and costs; adding two items, maintain grassy triangle, and check recycle area.

Mr. Jones noted that the mowing and possibly helping with cleaning up trash dumped inappropriately at the recycle bins could fall within the job, but that scheduling calls to have the dumpsters switched out would be a significant change of responsibilities. There was discussion; that the dumpsters did not fill on a regular schedule; working with the vendor in anticipation of unusual activity.

Mr. Bills expressed willingness to accommodate these changes. There was discussion; that the job description was a living document, and could be adjusted. Mr. Jones urged careful thought before making significant changes. Mr. Tanza noted that the Town Clerk might not be the appropriate person to clean up garbage on the way to work in the morning.

Ms. Maggio noted that the calls to the vendor would remain with the Town Clerk, while maintaining the recycle area would be added to Mr. Bills' tasks.

Ms. Maggio discussed plowing, sanding and salting; it was suggested that "monitoring" be inserted for clarity.

Mr. Noga will generate clean copy for further discussion, on the **next agenda**.

B. REMC Appointee - must be NBF, Rescue Inc. or Police

Ms. Maggio explained that the Regional Emergency Management Committee appointee must be a member of one of these organizations; that Mr. Lavorgna had been approached, but was stepping back from his roles at the fire department, and recommended Mike Fontaine (a past member of the fire department and board member.). Ms. Maggio will communicate with Mr. Fontaine, to ask for his participation at a meeting Tuesday, November 16; and asked the select board's permission to appoint Mr. Fontaine contingent upon his agreement to serve in that capacity.

There was discussion; by unanimous consent, Mr. Fontaine was so appointed.

C. Statement from Brookline Selectboard to Townshend Selectboard

Ms. Maggio had reviewed the Townshend lawyer's statement, and wrote to the Townshend selectboard regarding the following statement:

"The town of Brookline, like the town of Townshend, values all of our residents and visitors, no matter their background or identities. While differences of opinions can be celebrated and debated, we also condemn symbols of hate being displayed. Brookline, like Townshend, is a welcoming community as a whole, and we wish to be supportive of the health and well-being of all the West River Valley towns."

Mr. Noga noted that the selectboard had approved this statement at the previous meeting. Mr. Jones thanked the Chair.

D. Repairs to class 4 trail - Discussion about actual cost with

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materials

Ms. Maggio discussed the situation at Bennett Road. Mr. Bills explained that Mr. Clark had inspected the area, that the uppermost culvert was exposed, and materials had washed away; that culverts were clogged; the road was deeply rutted; that to make it passable material could be pulled into the middle; that each culvert had a rise to divert floodwaters that had washed away as well; that the road could be made passable by SUV as far as the camp; that Mr. Clark had suggested that the material to do that and cover the exposed upper culvert was insufficient, and that if there were funds available, further assessments would be needed, suggesting about \$5,000.

Ms. Maggio reported that Mr. Swing had indicated patience if the project must be put off until springtime.

Mr. Bills reported on a meeting of Road Foremen, also attended by Ms. Maggio, exchanging information on problems, grant issues, etc.; discussions of the Better Back Roads grant and another mitigation grants that is in process; asked about funding, Jeff Nugent had said there would be funding available for Class 4 roads; and Alan May from Better Back Roads spoke about how to access funds. There was discussion of available grants. Ms. Maggio discussed erosion above 12 inches diameter.

Ms. Maggio asked Mr. Bills to research Greer Road. There was discussion of several other Class 4 roads and their condition.

E. Wheeled Excavator - discussion on Lease/option to buy possibility

Ms. Maggio discussed a VLCT Newsletter with several articles of interest, noting legislators borrowing money without voter approval, for purchase of tools, equipment, materials necessary for construction, maintenance, or repair of highways and bridges, also for heavy equipment loans, as long as the term was five years or less; and noted that there were two dates, October 15 and April 15; that when originally leasing excavators, there had been discussion of a lease-purchase arrangement. Mr. Tanza explained that in negotiations with a company in Albany that had been willing to apply lease payments as downpayment. There was discussion of different offerings and configurations. Mr. Jones suggested assessing needs first, then researching available machinery.

Mr. Bills discussed his research into available wheeled excavators; and noted that Stratton had traded in a backhoe for an excavator, and subsequently purchased a mulching mower; that Stratton's road foreman had examined the rental excavator and purchased it, and had been pleased with its performance; that Wardsboro had also traded in a smaller machine for the same type as the rental; that Jamaica had a smaller excavator, and was now considering this machine; Londonderry had one for a few years; and discussed the versatility of the equipment for mowing and culvert replacement; that this model was becoming popular with small towns with gravel roads.

There was discussion of financing issues.

Mr. Bills noted a grant offer to purchase one of five pieces of small equipment, requiring a

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declaration of intent to purchase, an 80-20 grant; and discussed a leaf-blower that can be attached to equipment to remove sticks and leaves from ditches; that stone lined ditches being installed under the Clean Water Act, require separating the stone from leaves and sticks that are removed by other methods; that by 2025 all ditches are supposed to be stone-lined; and noted that the leaf-blower could be attached to a hitch on Stratton's machine. Ms. Maggio explained that the \$7,000 grant had been awarded, contingent upon purchase by June 22, 2022. Mr. Bills noted that purchase of the leaf-blower would be about \$1,400. There was discussion of the different methods of leaf-blower deployment. Mr. Bills noted that this equipment could do mowing, culverts, stone-lined ditches, and leaf removal.

Mr. Mello discussed over-rail mowers, backhoe-thumbs, and suggested ascertaining what features and attachments would be necessary before shopping for the excavator.

F. Loan discussion for equipment purchase

Mr. Noga discussed preparation for bank loans; suggesting lease-purchase, obtaining approximate purchase price, downpayment requirements, repayment schedule, whether monthly, semiannual, annual, how it fits with the town budget; and noted that the financial condition of the town going into next year could not be known; and that in the budget process this information would emerge, but citing experience in collections for a bank, noted that the process was not simple; and urged prudence and restraint, a well-organized approach. Mr. Noga suggested that, for example, there were assets in the town that could be liquidated, rather than creating new debt.

Ms. Maggio suggested making calls, assembling the information. There was discussion. Mr. Jones concurred with Mr. Noga, that more information should be obtained; how the equipment might have affected the recent FEMA situation, had it been purchased before; and that a substantial amount of money must be raised, sources for which were as yet unknown; that the funding and the specifications should be in hand before approaching vendors with a view to lease or purchase.

Mr. Tanza noted that currently, \$39,000 per year was appropriated for equipment vendors; and there was an equipment budget with some funds; and suggested taking a long-term view, five or ten years; that after the purchase, costs would be lower. There was discussion.

Ms. Maggio suggested a committee was needed, given that complexity and time involved.

Mr. Bills noted the stone ditching that must be completed by 2025, and mowing, which equipment must now be rented; and suggested taking the winter months to develop a budget, to know what to offer vendors.

Ms. Maggio suggested a schedule must be developed, and the town budget must be done; that April 15 was the deadline for the loan. Mr. Noga suggested that the data from past efforts should be pulled together in a way that would make sense to voters, showing how it would save money.

Ms. Maggio suggested tabling further discussion, noting that by the second meeting in January there must be a consensus on who would do the research on loans, equipment, costs vs. savings. Mr. Noga offered to work with Mr. Jones and Mr. Bills to ascertain the viability of equipment acquisition. Mr. Jones suggested Mr. Tanza generate an expense report from NEMRC for the

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previous year's summer contract services, to show how the equipment could have saved money. Mr. Tanza will generate the report.

Mr. Noga noted that the municipal loan fund will finance used equipment if it has five years of functional utility left; and suggested ways to structure the finances. There was discussion.

New Business

A. RFP wording for FEMA storm repairs to pavement on Putney Mnt. Road and the Bridge at the intersection of Putney Mnt. Road and Grassy Brook Road.

Ms. Maggio discussed a template for RFP; a conversation with FEMA (ongoing); that projects need not be completed by the December 1 deadline, that they should be done correctly; and suggested that the RFP for the two damaged areas would not be effective if the vendor was estimating in December for work in July; that a second RFP could be done when the equipment is in town. There was discussion of repairs that would be necessary immediately. There was discussion; that work should be scheduled in advance to meet vendors' schedules.

Tabled pending further information and a timeline.

Reports

A. Town Clerk Report - Guy Tanza

Mr. Tanza reported a robust real estate market; digitizing land record books; BCA meeting November 10, 6:00 p.m., on redistricting issues, Carolyn Partridge and Leslie Goldman invited; an opportunity for public input on redistricting. There was discussion.

B. Selectboard Chair Report - Dot Maggio

i. Health Officer activities

Ms. Maggio discussed a citizen complaint, awaiting a call.

ii. Animal Control Officer activities

Ms. Maggio discussed finding a new approach, after changes in the court system.

iii. Webinars - Training completed/scheduled

a) VLCT Newsletter - Articles of importance

Ms. Maggio recommended reading the VLCT Newsletter.

b) Road foreman meeting 10/27 in Dover

Ms. Maggio had attended the Road Foremen's' meeting in Dover, October 27.

c) ARPA webinar meeting 11/03

Ms. Maggio discussed using ARPA money efficiently, such as soliciting money from neighboring

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towns to support the daycare center, or installing a septic system at the BMH, ADA compliance, a heated workroom at the town shed; that there was not pressure to move quickly; noted that there might be appropriation requests based on ARPA funding; that there would be a new net-loss calculator; that the state FEMA representative and assistant had provided contact information.

iv. Employees/Appointments/Elected officials update

a) Auditors asked to take over monthly check reconciliation.

Ms. Maggio discussed the request to the auditors.

b) Treasurer position

Ms. Maggio discussed some details to be addressed on the treasurer position.

c) Town Planners - Review Town Plan and suggest ARPA projects.

Ms. Maggio noted that the town planners had met, but had not had sufficient information.

C. Town Building Commissioner - Bruce Mello

i. Day care building - thermostats / boiler maintenance

Mr. Mello discussed conversations with Cota & Cota, anticipating approval on the gas boilers; that there had been tenant complaints about the heat, suggesting that a programmable thermostat might be indicated, and will consult Mr. Larson; that there had been a clogged toilet (Halloween costume); no major issues.

ii. Town Hall building

- Cleaner Monday December 13 @ 4 pm
- Electrician - Wednesday Nov 17th @ 8 am
- Mice - final sealing up of basement

Mr. Mello discussed anti-rodent sealants.

iii. Brookline Meeting House building

- turn water off

It was noted that Mr. Bovat had been called.

Bats in the Belfry

Mr. Mello read from a quote for bat removal and exclusion for \$5,000 not including two lift rentals (\$705/day); that the price was reasonable; and discussed other projects that could not be done until the bats were removed, such as painting, insulation, heating; and discussed funding through the Arts Council.

Ms. Maggio noted an invoice for \$700 for the RSH sign.

Mr. Noga moved to approve payment for the signage installed at the Round Schoolhouse. Second by Mr. Mello.

Mr. Noga asked permission to send the closure package to PVT and others with a copy of the invoice, with the town making up the difference.

On the Motion, **all in favor.**

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D. Road Supervisor - E. Mark Bills

i. Winter Salt account set up with American Rock Salt company

ii. covering gravel at the yard

Mr. Bills explained that 3/4" stone had been stockpiled, and asked permission to replenish the supply, noting that this would not be the full amount, but would cover emergencies; and to purchase a large tarp to cover the stone pile.

iii. Completed projects / planned projects

Mr. Bills discussed ongoing road and culvert maintenance, keeping list of jobs the excavator would handle; and addressed questions about furniture found on the roadside.

Mr. Jones discussed grant paperwork for the Parker Road grant, for submission to Alan May for reimbursement, and will work with Mr. Bills on this; and noted that the town had been awarded a little more than \$73,000 for a municipal mitigation grant, for the salt/sand shed, and explained that this was not as much as requested; that emails had gone to the two project managers asking to discuss next steps, as the award had not been expected so soon; and that there is a document connected to the grant requiring signature.

There was discussion.

E. Other selectboard reports

Mr. Noga discussed the opioid settlement, noting a requirement for minimum population that precludes participation.

Communications

Email

i. appropriation request from SeVEDS - \$1590.00

ii. appropriation request from Senior Solutions - \$700.00

iii. Peter Barus - Schedule change due to WCSU Nov 3, 17, Dec 1 meetings will be done from video

B. Regular Mail

Code 3, re: fire safety inspection

SeVEDS appropriation request

Youth Services appropriation request (\$255)

Efficiency Vermont

Department of Health re: survey

SeVCA appropriation request (\$465)

Cota & Cota re: service policy

Pay Orders

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A. Payroll Warrant

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Payroll Warrant #2022-17, dated October 25, 2021, in the amount of \$2,286.49. Second by Mr. Noga. All in favor.

B. Accounts Payable Warrant

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #2022-18, dated November 3, 2021, in the amount of \$3,848.68. Second by Mr. Noga.

There was discussion of “payroll fee.”

One abstaining, the Motion passed.

There was discussion of state fire inspections.

Set Agenda

For Special Budget Meeting on Wednesday November 10th@ 6:30

A. Decide on which FUNDS will be discussed at the Budget meeting

Ms. Maggio that appropriations and highways be omitted.

B. Set Agenda for second special Budget Meeting - pick date/time/Funds to budget

Ms. Maggio suggested addressing appropriations during a regular meeting; and that a special meeting might be needed for highways.

C. Set Agenda for Regular Meeting on Wednesday Nov. 17th @ 6:30

Ms. Maggio noted the Road Supervisor job description, alternate DVFiber appointment, Regional Emergency Management Coordinator, etc.

Adjourn the meeting

Ms. Maggio moved to adjourn. Second by Mr. Mello. All in favor.

The meeting was Adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, November 13, 2021