

Draft Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, May 5, 2021, 6:30p.m.
(videoconference)

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

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

Members of the Public:
Joseph Dutton
Dr. Steven John
Peter Barus (Recorder)
FACTV (Videoconference recording)

Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31p.m.

Review changes to agenda if any

Strike GMP Resilience program discussion.

There was discussion about whether additions to the agenda must be Warned.

Approve minutes from the April 21, 2021 selectboard meeting

Ms. Maggio moved to approve the minutes for April 21, 2021 as amended. Second by Mr. Jones. All in favor.

Scheduled members of the public

A. Stanley Noga Jr. Re; Appointment to the selectboard

Vote to appoint Mr. Noga to the 1 year vacant selectboard seat

The Chair welcomed Mr. Noga.

Ms. Maggio moved to appoint Mr. Stanley Noga to the one-year term remaining. Second by Ms. Tanza. All in favor.

B. Administration of the oath of office to Mr. Noga by the town clerk

The Town Clerk administered the oath of office and certified the appointment.

C. Joseph Dutton Re: Round Schoolhouse \$5,000 grant plan

Discussion on the scope and sequence for the project to enhance the Historic Round Schoolhouse using money from a grant from the Historic Preservation Society. Review of the Brookline Historical Societies description of work needed to be performed. Discussion and vote.

Mr. Dutton discussed a communication to Mr. Ben Doyle regarding professional deep cleaning and window restoration, the remainder of funds to be used for the attached shed. It was noted that Preservation Trust funds would be released contingent upon consultation with their field representative, and vendors' statements of work sent to Mr. Doyle and/or Ms. Ryan.

Mr. Dutton will follow up with next steps based on the selectboard's decision whether to proceed.

Mr. Dutton explained that contracts and materials for restoration would be needed, and suggested that the selectboard should vote in order to proceed. Ms. Maggio suggested that further consultation would be necessary. It was suggested that Mr. Mello should be included in discussions.

Mr. Jones suggested that the cleaning and window restoration, and work on a beam in the shed, was acceptable work under the grants involved; and expressed support for the project. Mr. Noga concurred and expressed support.

Mr. Mello will communicate with ServPro, had discussed alternatives with them, and would add repainting the outside sign to the scope of work; and suggested a site visit by the selectboard. Ms. Maggio suggested that in addition to painting the sign there should be a National Historic marker; and supported proceeding with the project, noting that a site visit would require a Warned meeting if a quorum was present.

Ms. Tanza suggested an extension on the grant; this was thought unlikely as the grant had been extended already.

Ms. Maggio called for less than a quorum of volunteers for a site visit. Mr. Jones suggested that the committee has identified the issues to be addressed under the grant, and that a site visit would slow the project. Mr. Noga concurred.

Ms. Maggio offered assistance to Mr. Dutton with drafting documents, etc. Mr. Dutton suggested that a statement of work from would be sufficient, and ServPro's SOW (obtained by Mr. Mello) while Mr. Dutton consults a carpenter on how much could be done for \$3,000. Ms. Maggio offered to draft a cover letter.

Mr. Bills suggested adding window screens to improve circulation during the summer and reduce the moisture. Mr. Dutton noted this addition and will consult with the committee.

Mr. Mello will call the Preservation Trust.

D. Sally Peery Re: GMP Resilience program

Discussion about the program and its appropriateness for Brookline (Dropped)

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Unscheduled members of the public (none)

New Business

Old Business

A. Appointment to vacant 1 year seat on the selectboard (Completed above)

B. Round Schoolhouse Grant - J. Dutton (Discussed above)

C. Green Mountain Power Resiliency Zone in Brookline - B. Mello (dropped)

D. WiFi Hot Spot at Town Hall by ITDRC - D. Maggio

Ms. Maggio noted receipt of a survey about the hot-spot offer, and suggested no action be taken pending further communications.

E. DVFiber in Brookline - S. Noga

[*Note: A Communications Union District (CUD) is an organization of two or more towns that join together as a municipal entity to build communication infrastructure together. see Title 30: Public Service, Chapter 82: Communications Union Districts, in Vermont state statutes.*]

Mr. Noga had done research and discussed findings, noting that:

- no costs or liabilities to citizens or town;
- broadband is it needed and would it be constructive;
- most of the funds would come from grants and loans, and federal money (ARPA);
- Steven John had answered a number of questions;
- there were five towns without cable, 3,507 people without internet service;
- DVFiber had 24 towns involved to date;
- fees to be assessed from the districts appear to be based on paying back loans and costs across an entire district;
- overall benefit to the town seemed uncertain;
- there were four underserved households listed in Brookline, but 26 by the WRC count;
- the estimated time for build-out is five to ten months;
- the route map covered every road except Bennett Road, Purple Mountain Road (town line with Dummerston) and the end of Marsh Lane.
- it may not be advantageous for the town.

Dr. John explained that:

- the private sector (ISPs) has little financial incentive to connect on the periphery, and their present approach has been profitable;
- Brookline may be the exception, having so few underserved households;
- second homes are a big concern for towns, attractive to prospective residents;
- there is an equity issue, being located in a place with limited coverage where the private sector does not see profit;
- this is why the public entity (CUD) was devised;
- a CUD has no taxation authority;
- the DV Communication District must be accessible to all financially, requiring some form of subsidy;
- this relates to economic, educational and medical opportunities during the pandemic;
- the (adverse) numbers and issues are probably correct, but that towns have joined on behalf of the underserved households, and this helps the entire project;
- Townshend was the 23rd town to join the local CUD that extends to Brattleboro and Stamford, and north to Weston;
- a liaison group is working to see how the Communications Union District might partner with the Southern Vermont CUD (Bennington);
- there is little risk, and few alternatives to connect the community.

Members were invited to comment.

Mr. Noga expressed support for the CUD and its goals, but expressed concerns for the level of organizational complexity, *eg*, monthly and annual meetings requiring attendance by new appointees from towns, and additional negotiations with vendors in response to RFP to build the network out; that a selectboard may not have an individual willing to serve in this capacity; however, no debt falls on citizens; that the distribution of coverage expressed as percentage obscures numbers of actual households without internet access; and that these concerns notwithstanding, Mr. Noga will represent the town, if the selectboard decides to be involved.

Mr. Jones expressed support for the formation of the district, but suggested a decision at this time might be premature, from the information on hand; and having been involved in the original survey, the results being as anticipated, trusts Mr. Noga's judgment.

Ms. Tanza explained, as the WRC Commissioner for the town, that residents do not have internet by choice (citing a Comcast special low-income program); and that some areas cannot be served.

Mr. Mello asked about the underserved households in town. Mr. Noga noted the two different estimates. Mr. Mello suggested that there were alternatives, and there had not been complaints; and supported Mr. Noga's assessment.

Ms. Maggio discussed the process involved in joining a CUD; and suggested that the matter be taken up again on May 19; and that this, and the resiliency plan, should also be passed to the planning board.

It was noted that Comcast is the sole broadband provider in the area; that the others do not provide as much upload and download speed; and speaking as a tele-worker, that less would be non-viable, and fiber-optic would be much better.

The Chair noted the matter for the May 19 agenda.

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Dr. John noted that there are significant differences in service that affect future opportunities, and towns have joined the CUD on that basis.

F. Recycling bins - D. Jones

Mr. Jones noted an additional \$0.08 per \$100 for insurance to retain the bins on site; and discussed Triple-T's likely cooperative response; that the town was already covered for liability; that this amounted to an additional \$3.00 for insurance, and that the a vote might be necessary on taking ownership of the bins.

After discussion, for the **May 19 agenda**, sign the paperwork to assume ownership of the recycle bins.

G. Salt & Sand Shed project - D. Jones

Mr. Jones: still awaiting Newfane's review to come back from VTRANS; need that to know what changes to make, to know whether to issue RFP; holding pattern; will notify when there is new information.

H. Green Up Day

Mr. Bills reported several volunteers showed up, already bags and a few tires collected, spent the day concentrating on the worst, Putney Mountain and Ellen Ware, picked up recliners, cabinet, swimming pool liner, tanks; a great accomplishment; one full dump truck load, and more by Monday morning on the roadside, fresh loop and picked up a pickup load, two trips to WSW, total bill just under \$200. Asked if this were budgeted, or should be in the next one. Mr. Jones noted consistent cost over the years, and this could be a budget item. Mr. Bills noted that people had started the day before, and continued.

Mr. Jones noted the great job done by Mr. Bills, Mr. Tanza, Mr. Clark, and others who consistently come out for Green-up Day, and a successful handoff to Timbo Maddelena-Lucie

I. TBD

Summary / Update / Reports

A. Town Clerk Report - Guy Tanza

Mr. Tanza acknowledged Timbo, Swing, Bills, for green-up day, 67 dog licenses, no rabies clinic yet, contingent on Governor's emergency order; important to register dogs; still busy with home sales, inventory mostly sold; Ms. Tanza digitizing the land records;

B. Selectboard Chair Report - D. Maggio

Ms. Maggio reported conversation with Mr. Masters; suggested Treasurer at selectboard meeting before end of FY. Mr. Jones explained the previous cycle and the challenges; should be getting monthly financial reports, should be discussed with Mr. Masters, noted June 30 is end of FY;

Ms. Maggio will consult Mr. Masters on the questions; **agenda item for May 19.**

Ms. Maggio noted a cat that was picked up and taken to the vet in very bad condition and euthanized at no cost to the town.

There was discussion of a tour of BMH with Ms. Parker, Mr. Towler, visitors from Athens and Wardsboro, and emails between the respective historical groups. Mr. Jones noted that a decision not to combine historical societies and building committees from different towns had been made some years ago, citing significant differences in properties and public engagement.

C. Building Commissioner Report - B. Mello

1. Town Hall basement clean up

Mr. Mello explained that the job will need two weeks without mice entering; and raised a question of funding. Ms. Maggio noted that there were three different accounts with positive balances, being trash removal, town property maintenance, and postage and supplies; also a capital improvement fund; and noted the potential ServPro bill, etc. Mr. Mello noted an estimate of \$2,300.

There was discussion. Ms. Tanza reported mouse droppings in the bathroom every day, and that this requires a professional cleaning. Mr. Noga suggested locating other vendors, sealed bids; and that the situation was dangerous for office staff.

Mr. Mello will research other vendors. Mr. Noga offered assistance. There was discussion of access to the basement with potential vendors.

2. Day Care Building

Mr. Mello reported one UV system in use, working well; first shot of salts through the water system, small amounts needed; the system had been inspected twice in two months, technically fulfilling a quarterly inspection requirement although irregularly spaced. Mr. Noga suggested that irregular inspections might not be serving the children well, and thanked Mr. Mello for a tour of the building.

Ms. Maggio confirmed receipt of the test findings.

3. Round Schoolhouse (Discussed above)

D. Highways & Roads Supervisor Report - E. Mark Bills

Mr. Bills reported the roads dry enough for grading, and will be adding some gravel over the stone that went in over the winter; had ordered the gravel; noted significant wind damage to trees, much debris in the ditches being removed; had checked the culverts frequently since fall; cleaning up winter damage in preparation for summer roadside mowing; and asked about the insurance for the mower rental. Ms. Maggio noted that the insurance information had been sent by the Treasurer, and no response had been seen to date.

Ms. Tanza asked for Mr. Bills signature on an overweight permit. Ms. Maggio discussed the matter as a budget item, and noted a stormwater permit fee. Mr. Jones clarified that last year's fee had been paid recently.

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Communications

A. Email

1. Agency of Natural Resources - Stormwater municipal roads annual fee due 6/1/21. Permit 8066-9040 Cost \$500.00
2. Daycare building water test - Chloroform & E.coli absent.
3. ICS 402 Registration for Thursday May 6 8 to 12 Webinar

B. Regular mail

(None)

Pay Orders

A. Accounts Payable Warrant

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #2021-18, dated May 5, 2021, in the amount of \$11,528.72. Second by Mr. Mello.

In discussion, Ms. Tanza asked about road maintenance and materials. Mr. Bills noted some major washouts that had been repaired, and mud season had been longer than usual, requiring extra crushed stone. Ms. Maggio noted an email from Win Clark identifying each load and the transportation time involved, confirming that this had indeed been due to the unusual mud season.

The treasurer will send the accounts payable records to each member.

Ms. Maggio noted that winter material was only for plowing contracts, and all other road maintenance materials would be under the summer accounting, according to the treasurer's office. Mr. Jones suggested that some changes to allocations might make sense during the next budget deliberations, in view of recent weather changes; and that the treasurer sends a summary (not full details) to the selectboard.

By roll call, Jones, aye; Mello, aye; Tanza, aye; Noga, abstained; Maggio, aye; the **Motion passed**.

B. Payroll Warrant

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Payroll Warrant #2021-17, dated April 28, 2021, in the amount of \$1,924.30. Second by Mr. Jones.

Ms. Tanza asked about Mr. Bills payroll. Mr. Bills will be filing next week, and biweekly.

By roll call, Jones, aye; Mello, aye; Tanza, aye; Noga, abstain; Maggio, aye; the **Motion passed**.

Set Agenda for the next meeting - Wednesday May 12, 2021

- DV Fiber, Steven John
- Recycle bins, transfer of ownership
- Budget line items discussions
- Round Schoolhouse
- End of year budget, Treasurer

Adjourn Meeting

Ms. Maggio moved to Adjourn. Second by Mr. Noga.

The meeting was Adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, May 7, 2021