

# Draft Minutes

## Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting Wednesday, June 1, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

### Attending

#### *Selectboard:*

Dot Maggio (Chair)  
Bruce Mello  
Stan Noga

#### *Town Officers:*

E. Mark Bills  
Guy Tanza (Town Clerk)  
Melissa Brown (Asst. Treas.)

#### *Members of the Public:*

Peter Barus (Recorder)  
Josh Morelli FACTV (Videoconference recording)

### Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:42 p.m.

### Review changes to agenda if any

Old business: Office chairs, Phone system discussion

### Review / approve minutes from May 18, 2022

Ms. Maggio moved to approve the minutes from May 18, 2022. Second by Mr. Mello. All in favor.

### Review / approve minutes from May 4, 2022

Ms. Maggio moved to approve the minutes from May 4, 2022. Second by Mr. Noga. All in favor.

### Members of the Public

#### Scheduled - Melissa Brown - Assistant Treasurer

Ms. Brown was introduced and discussed a transfer from the highway to the general fund to cover the school budget tax, about \$60,000. The bank had approved the action. There had been some uncollected taxes in the amount of about \$40,000.

There was discussion of a \$20,000 shortfall. Ms. Brown had been in contact with Ms. Zwick. Mr. Bills suggested that some unusual crushed stone expenditures from February and Spring could account for it. Ms. Maggio noted that the shortfall had been in the general fund, not the highway fund.

Ms. Brown explained that the highway fund owed the general fund about \$20,000 and should level out; that it would be tight until the rest of the unpaid taxes came in; and would apply the 8% delinquent tax penalty if the selectboard so directed.

Mr. Tanza explained that the 8% related under Homestead, that the penalty is typically applied after fourth payment four or five days after the due date. Ms. Brown noted that all checks had been deposited. Mr. Tanza suggested that the 8% penalty should be part of a delinquent tax report. Ms. Brown noted mailing out late notices Friday [date unspecified] and following up with phone calls to get late taxes in.

Mr. Noga concurred with Mr. Tanza's assessment; and had been awaiting the release of received donations (had sent Schwab the paperwork).

Ms. Brown was directed to keep the board informed on the transfer. Ms. Brown noted that there was nothing unusual about it. Ms. Maggio asked about changes to the way warrants were done. Ms. Brown explained that no change had occurred yet, that details were being worked out with Ms. Acampora.

### Unscheduled

### Old Business

#### ARPA

Ms. Maggio discussed email from Daniel Schroner (see communications, email) who had been participating in the Brattleboro Economic Summit and was familiar with federal guidelines and spending; and noted one of two residents expressing interest in working with the selectboard.

Mr. Noga acknowledged the email and had thanked Mr. Schroner for his interest and summary, and would be meeting by phone tomorrow (May 19) at 3:00 p.m.; that Mr. Schroner might be interested in the selectboard position, and would send the VLCT job description to Mr. Schroner.

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### FEMA

Ms. Maggio discussed the FEMA inspection. Mr. Tanza noted that Mr. Bills had also attended; that they covered Putney Mountain Road, a long process, with the mitigation official from FEMA; that some mitigation funds might be forthcoming for Putney Mountain Road; that the inspection had started there, the site of most damage; Holland Hill and the rest remained to be inspected; FEMA would be available until Friday, the inspection to be completed this week; and all documentation had been provided.

Mr. Bills observed that five people, some from Wardsboro, each with different expertise had attended the inspection; that one discussed FEMA coverage and how mitigation would work; that the big culvert might be paid as mitigation (not from grant funds); that moving up the mountain, failed or undersized culverts would be brought up to code so they would not wash out in the next storm; that in the long run there would probably be money back and saved funds.

Ms. Maggio asked about when to expect reimbursement. Mr. Tanza explained that they had not said when, and that if falling short and new ARPA funds had not been forthcoming, some ARPA funds might be used and returned back to ARPA, rather than taking on new loans.

### Office Chairs

Mr. Mello discussed replacement chairs noting no new activity.

### New Business

**A. Bill received from the Putney Fire Department for costs associated responding to a forest fire on Purple Mountain Road.**

**Amount: \$5,770.00**

**Date of Incident : May 1, 2022**

**Service Location 72 Purple Mountain Road**

**Property owner: John Rawley 74 Purple Mountain Road Responsible party: Jamie McAullife 72**

**Purple Mountain Road Collection/reimbursement to town of Brookline discussion**

Ms. Maggio discussed the bill, explaining that a mattress fire had gotten out of control; and had spoken with Chief Goddard of Putney Fire Dept.; that Engine One, Tanker One, Brush Truck One, squad One, Car One, an ATV, and 14 personnel had been dispatched; that there had been a loss of forestry hose burned, the only department billing; that Chief Goddard had said the town of Brookline was responsible, and could pursue Mr. McAullife for recompense.

There was discussion; of placing a lien on property; of the Town's responsibility for such a bill. Mr. Noga suggested obtaining legal advice, as private property had been burned, and the town should not be billed for this.

Ms. Maggio noted Chief Goddard had asserted that the town was responsible, and could pursue the individual; that the other three fire departments involved were not billing the town.

There was discussion. Ms. Maggio suggested sending the paperwork from the fire dept to Mr. McAullife with a cover letter. Mr. Noga suggested consulting a lawyer first, then the property owner, noting that the event had occurred on the Rowley property, a rental unit.

There was consensus on consulting Bob Fisher esq., who could already be familiar with the case. Ms. Maggio will call Fisher & Fisher and communicate with the parties concerned.

### Phone System discussion

Ms. Maggio suggested looking into a system that would help the Town Clerk when answering calls for the various town departments. Mr. Tanza suggested consulting with Mr. Grimes, who had set up the system

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previously; and would call Mr. Grimes to find out what would be involved, get an estimate and invite a presentation to the selectboard.

### Reports and Updates

#### Treasury Update - Melissa Brown - Asst. Treasurer

(Discussed above)

#### Town Clerk Update - Guy Tanza

Mr. Tanza noted that the Town Clerk was not statutorily required to submit a written report; and suggested waiving the report as unnecessary.

#### Road Supervisor - E. Mark Bills

Mr. Bills reported on the grant for the leaf blower, completed, and had picked up the machine at HP Fairfield on Friday, May 20; had located poison ivy (and got a rash); had taken Mr. Lavorgna's suggestion vinegar and Dawn detergent in a sprayer to reduce the weed during brush cutting.

Mr. Bills noted that repairs for FEMA last Fall had been held back for funding, until reimbursement; that gravel had been reapplied and roads settled somewhat, corrected with finish gravel for better drainage; that repairs on flood damage were nearing completion, culverts and stone lined ditches as required, going well; that Mr. Towler had discussed some materials that didn't belong, and will obtain some signage on what is permissible and work together to install signs; that the third stop sign down, at Hill and Grassy Brook had been pulled from the ground, probably with a heavy vehicle, and the stop sign at Ellen Ware had been replaced, hooked it to a tree; that also on Mountain Road a new sign had been mounted higher, harder to reach.

Mr. Bills reported driving around following heavy rain and wind and removing debris and replenishing gravel on Ellen Ware at the far end; that there was still patching to do on hot days (cold patch works better then); that applying driveway sealer before the new patch material was working well, good for shallow areas where pavement doesn't adhere; and planning for work with FEMA in the next day or two, measuring repaired sections.

Ms. Maggio: suggested that when meeting with FEMA, recent minutes showed approval of paving bids for washed out areas at Putney Mountain and Amedon's corner, and the actual cost of repairs; that Mr. Noga would send the RFP; that the minutes for Wednesday, May 4, page 4, shows the bids and votes; that Mr. Tanza had mentioned this to FEMA. Mr. Bills discussed the bids; how close to estimates. Ms. Maggio noted that the bids had been accepted at the May 6 Special Meeting.

Ms. Maggio asked about (and Mr. Bills confirmed) weed cleanup done at the iron bridge, and expressed the selectboard's appreciation.

#### Selectboard Chair - Dot Maggio

Ms. Maggio discussed the Vermont Visiting Nurses appropriation request, etc. Mr. Tanza noted that appropriations had been updated on the town website.

#### Building Commissioner - Bruce Mello

Mr. Mello discussed conversations with Mr. Bills on some projects, such as the SLP A/C, town office painting, roof and bulkhead, SE corner; and noted no new mouse infestation; discussed possible work on RSH in the Fall, a broken window needing replacement, for which Mr. Bills had a possible lead.

Mr. Mello discussed a memorial garden for Ms. Nau, and book kiosk for Hill Road; and invited ideas for the garden. Ms. Maggio suggested stone from the homestead for a plaque, and a listsrv letter inviting design ideas.

Mr. Mello discussed his final report on SLP work, November 8, 2021 and April 1, 2022 visits from Cota & Cota, for which eight were covered; one charge for a dishwasher hose; discussed items replaced in the

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building; noted that the last two visits were free, invoices on hand and organized, for total expenditures of \$10,644.56.

Mr. Mello discussed an air exchanger time clock that C&C had agreed to replace; the heat pump, solar panels, electricity; the difficulty getting responses, expecting four quotes; and would recommend considering RFP for the heat pump; and discussed details, noting solar panels were different.

Ms. Maggio will call the electric contractor.

Mr. Mello discussed replacing old lighting with LED; no information from Efficiency Vermont regarding infrastructure funds for municipalities; and suggested heat pumps would be best for lower bills, and to bide time on a boiler decision.

Ms. Maggio noted Mr. Mello's participation with an energy audit at NewBrook; and suggested that the selectboard hire professionals to assess actual needs; and to discuss RFPs and the **next meeting**.

There was discussion.

### **Highways and Grant Updates - Stan Noga**

Mr. Noga discussed a submitted request for reimbursement from WRC; completed forms; reported mileage; a call with Fairfield about serial or model number for the leaf blower (they have the check in payment); that Mr. Bills had provided all the serial numbers; that \$5,600 was coming in; that the registration would be completed; RFP work had been started; will send the selectboard a question of electronic bidding for review; the paving bid would be complete this week.

Mr. Noga discussed the WRC meeting, the possibility of participation in resiliency zones, in which seven towns (Brookline included) will get Generac batteries at residences, funded from FEMA and other federal sources as an upgrade at no cost to citizens; the batteries cover outages up to three days; a pilot program.

Mr. Noga had attended a Rescue, Inc. meeting following their dismissal by Brattleboro, noting RI's good administration; that substantial funds had been generated to operate without Brattleboro; that the Department of Health had hired them to administer vaccines where residents were housebound in Windsor and Bennington; that other means of generating funds to replace Brattleboro would be announced after July 1; and noted that Drew Hazelton had indicated contracts would be honored for the next three years and discussed small percentage increases in fees; that after July 1, 911 calls would go through the Keene dispatch system.

Mr. Noga reported searching through the cemeteries without finding any H.F. Fuller, and suggested searching death records in the vault, that there was not another Fuller anywhere in those four cemeteries. There was discussion, that perhaps a veterans' organization can help.

Mr. Noga discussed a VTRANS notice of a grants-in-aid deadline of June 24; that \$11,000 was allotted for culverts, drainage areas, turnouts, etc.; that application must be submitted to be considered and awarded; and suggested meeting with Mr. Clark and Mr. Bills to determine what should be done; and noted that matching would be 20%/80%, and because it complied with state road standards the match would be reduced to 90%/10%.

Ms. Maggio suggested that Mr. Noga schedule that meeting with Mr. Clark and Mr. Bills; and since FEMA was now 90\$/10% matching, the town may incur no expenditures for the storm.

### **Any other reports or concerns by Selectboard Members**

Mr. Mello noted A/P warrant charges for equipment repair. Mr. Bills noted that the equipment had been idle for a long time. Mr. Mello discussed the damage from ethanol in fuel; and suggested hiring Kerry Bourne to repair the window in the RSH.

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Ms. Maggio discussed Mr. Tanza's past two pay periods, noting an additional hour per week for community service, helping residents understand tax bills, etc.; noting that this was not a treasurer or assistant treasurer, nor a town clerk cost (capped at 21 hours a week and one Saturday a month), but should be categorized differently. There was discussion. Mr. Noga suggested allowing the treasurer to handle certain calls, such as closings, rarely an emergency. Ms. Maggio explained that the hours could not be recorded as treasurer hours as an audit would see a problem; that it had been noticed it in May, and Ms. Brown had questioned it. There was discussion about adding the hour to the town clerk's salary.

### Communications

#### Email

- Christine Chandler
- Daniel Schroner

Ms. Maggio noted that Mr. Schoener, while not a citizen, could serve on a committee. Mr. Mello suggested an invitation to a meeting June 15. There was discussion. Ms. Maggio suggested members speak individually with both as to their interest in working with the selectboard.

#### Regular mail

- Red Cross re: donation request;
- Windham Co Humane Soc. re: contract renewal;
- Returned mail;
- Emergency Management;
- Grace Cottage re: dog bite report;
- Constable re: (c/o Mark Bills).

### Pay orders

#### Accounts Payable Warrant

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #S2022-47, in the amount of \$261,726.44. Second by Mr. Noga. All in favor.

#### Payroll warrant

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Payroll #2022-46, dated May 25, 2022, in the amount of \$1,950.76. Second by Mr. Mello.

There was discussion; of Mr. Tanza's extra hours categorized as treasurer. There was consensus on discussion at **next meeting**.

On the Motion, all in favor.

### Set Agenda for June 15, 2022

- RFP for heat pumps, discussion
- Window repair at RSH

### Adjourn the meeting

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

The meeting was Adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, recorder, June 2, 2022*