

Draft Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 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:

Samara Zwick
Sarah Lang
Peter Barus (Recorder)
FACTV (Videoconference recording)

Call to Order

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

Review changes to agenda if any

Discussion under Roads about a grant request related to the salt/sand shed.

Discussion under Communications of the opioid settlement.

Review / Approve minutes from:

a) September 15, 2021 Regular meeting

Ms. Maggio moved to approve the minutes for September 15, as amended. Second by Mr. Noga. All in favor.

b) September 24, 2021 Special meeting

The minutes for September 24 were approved, with one abstaining.

Scheduled members of the public.

a) Sarah Lang - Southern Vermont Economy Project Manager

Ms. Lang was recognized, from the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, one of twelve regional development corporations in Vermont, serving the Windham region. Ms. Lang thanked the town for financial support of the project in the past Town Meeting, that eighteen of twenty-seven towns provided support, up from sixteen last year; and discussed the funding request letter and an overview of the program; that SVEP is funded by USDA to provide capacity buildings, trainings and programs for municipalities for nonprofits around economic development; that it is currently running a private development series to help volunteers improve grant-writing and project stewardship skills (information on their website); and noted the “pipelines and pathways” program in all the high schools, helping with career preparedness, such as the “Senior Survival” course at L&G; the Business Assistance Program, assisting businesses in the region, most services free or low cost for startup and growth phases, providing lending and help with business plans. Ms. Lang explained in response to a question that funding was both provided and arranged in the form of low-interest loans.

Draft Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Unscheduled members of the public

Samara Zwick discussed an agenda item regarding the treasurer position, noting several different possible structures for reporting and treasury management; developing written recommendations, one of which is hiring a bookkeeper, not an elected position, so that the person could be terminated if not competent; that many towns have external audits, one option (cost about \$15,000).

Ms. Zwick explained that roadwork done in response to recent weather damage was well done; but that Whitney Hill Road was one of the last to be addressed, despite being the second most populated based on tax parcels; and suggested a long term road maintenance plan, and possibly outsourcing some of the work in emergency circumstances, to augment the small road crew.

Ms. Zwick announced her resignation as of the end of October, citing the demands of family circumstances; and will finish as much of the work as possible; and would be available to the treasurer's office for their questions.

Ms. Maggio had attended a FEMA meeting, and discussed the recommended emergency plans, including before-and-after photographs of culverts, etc.

Ms. Zwick noted that a small amount of work was needed to complete the financial reports, and would recommend changes to the format from the current methods; that the auditors would have to agree; and would work to put the June 30, 2021 financial statements into an un-audited format for the budget discussions.

Mr. Noga expressed appreciation and respect for the valuable work and service Ms. Zwick had provided for the town. There was consensus.

New Business

a) Initial discussion about Town Audit

There was discussion of the possibility of an external audit; whether this had been discussed with the town auditors; as to whether it would be necessary.

Ms. Maggio noted that in conversations with Ms. Zwick, it was noted that there had not been an audit for some years, and if one is to be done it should be done by professionals. Mr. Noga noted that external audits are typically far more detailed; that many towns have this done at regular intervals; that a professional auditing firm would insist on an initial audit by third parties. Mr. Jones suggested further discussion in conjunction with Ms. Zwick's other recommendations for the town treasury.

Ms. Maggio will invite the town auditors to attend or send a written opinion about external audits, and obtain Ms. Zwick's information on the un-audited report for 2021.

Mr. Noga noted that past bids from external auditors indicated a range from \$15,000 to \$22,000. Mr. Tanza noted that the last external audit had been eleven years ago, at a cost of twelve or fourteen thousand dollars; not a forensic audit, but a general accounting audit. Mr. Noga noted that as an appraiser, financial losses had not been uncommon, and that for consistency an external audit would

Draft Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

be healthy. There was discussion.

b) Discussion about Human Resource needs - current and future

Temporary Administrative Assistant

It was noted that Mr. Masters had asked that the selectboard look for his replacement; positions were still open for Listers; and Ms. Maggio will ask the town to appoint a temporary administrative assistant for FEMA storm-related work (fully reimbursable), noting that this must be established before October 29, as per the FEMA meeting in Townshend; and that Mr. Tanza had relevant experience during Irene, and access to financials was adequate; noted that board members cannot be paid for this work, but Mr. Tanza could be hired as a temporary administrative assistant, paid based on current salary of \$21.75/hour; estimating three or four weeks, four or five hours per week; and this would suffice to complete the FEMA process.

There was discussion; about whether to put the work out for bids; that given the time constraints, this should be done expeditiously; that the town could be reimbursed for the work of town employees. Ms. Maggio suggested hiring Mr. Tanza above and beyond his normal duties, maintaining separate time sheets, etc.; and that the appointment be made forthwith.

Ms. Maggio proposed that the temporary assistant be paid \$21.75 an hour, for about four hours per week, for a month or more, and that this would appear on the next agenda for a vote.

Listers

There was discussion of the Listers; about informational videos for prospective applicants, suggested by Ms. Holt. Mr. Noga noted that some required password access, and not all were necessary, as many issues had been settled previously.

Mr. Noga will communicate to prospective Listers about the training videos.

Bookkeeping

It was noted that Ms. Zwick's suggestion should be clarified before taking further action.

Old Business

a) Bid tabled from September 15, 2021 RE: Generator hook up bid which also includes upgrading exterior lighting around town hall building. Larson Electric LLC sole bidder. \$2,074.00 total including permit and all equipment as per code. Discussion of funding of this capital improvement at town hall. Vote on bid. Timeline/contract.

Ms. Maggio explained that funding sources were not known, but there was a capital improvement fund that had not been used for some time. Ms. Tanza favored use of the fund. Mr. Mello suggested waiting to see if there would be a surplus from last year, not voting this meeting. Mr. Jones concurred, not necessarily a capital improvement item; more expense than anticipated; the generator is usable in its present condition; and favored waiting and budgeting in the next FY. There was

Draft Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

discussion. If placed on the November 3 agenda the bid might expire.

Ms. Maggio moved to accept the bid for the generator hookup from Lardon Electric including permit and all equipment not to exceed \$2,074. Second by Mr. Noga

In discussion it was noted that there was about \$4,300 in the capital fund; the bid was circulated publicly. Mr. Jones noted \$1,300 for the panel, and it was confirmed that the company had inspected the existing service.

On the Motion, by roll call, two opposed, **motion carried.**

b) Review / Discussion of job description for Road Supervisor

The selectboard reviewed the job summary and related documents provided.

Mr. Noga noted Ms. Maggio's research online, noting the town of Stockbridge, Vermont; and noting variations from what Brookline would need, made appropriate changes to the language; and discussed details related to potential insurance coverage, responsibilities for outsourcing some projects, etc.; logging time and vehicle use, etc. to comply with FEMA, OSHA, state and other requirements; and guidance as to the town's expectations and responsibilities; and policies regarding conduct, qualifications, term of employment, performance evaluation process, training requirements, reasons for termination, periodic review.

There was discussion. Ms. Maggio suggested obtaining additional opinions before sending to VLCT. Mr. Jones approved in general, seeing some minor changes needed, such as the job title of "Road Supervisor" and accountability to the selectboard; and will send an edited version with change tracking activated.

c) Discussion / vote RE: changing the name of the Brookline Historical Society to the Round School House Committee.

Ms. Maggio moved to change the name of the Brookline Historical Society to the Round School House Committee. Second by Mr. Mello.

There was discussion; no negative feedback had been forthcoming; Ms. Nau had approved the idea.

All in favor.

Reports

a) Town Clerk Report - Guy Tanza

Mr. Tanza reported the usual conveyances, marriages, funerals, noting a hot real estate market; three delinquent taxpayers, all cooperating.

i) Dog licenses

Mr. Tanza reported on responses to the listsrv notice on unlicensed dogs.

b) Selectboard Report - Dot Maggio

Draft Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Sept 16 - RESCUE Meeting Brattleboro

Ms. Maggio attended, they will ask for the same amount as in the past; photographed the bill, no fee increase, but looking for a three year contract with slight increases in subsequent years.

Sept 14, 15 & 16 ZOOM Virtual Emergency Preparedness Conference

Ms. Maggio attended, and suggested meeting with those who would be involved in an emergency, such as the recent flooding.

Sept 28 ZOOM Windham Investing in Vermont Future ZOOM

Ms. Maggio attended with about 55 others.

Oct 5 Mandatory FEMA Applicant briefing @ Townshend Town Hall.

Ms. Maggio attended with Mr. Mello, some work to do on "Incident 4621," some assistance with FEMA paperwork will be necessary.

Oct 2 Meeting with David Schupp Re: Camp Granby on Ellen Ware Road.

After discussions Mr. Schupp will incorporate non-development restrictions in his deed, the planning committee was made aware of this matter.

Oct2 Open House – BMH & RSH

Not as well attended as in September, but many came and celebrated the National Historic Registry listing, rang the bell at noon, it was heard at the RSH, a video recording made.

Oct 4 Meeting with Doug Johnstone Agricultural Management Specialist – RE: Pesticide drift complaint

Ms. Maggio had met with the complainant, helped with paperwork and visited with a farmer applying pesticide; Ms. Maggio offered to serve as intermediary. There was discussion. Ms. Maggio will file a health officer report and a copy of the resident's complaint.

Sept 27 phone call re: Wi-Fi Hotspot for Town Hall Date TBD

Ms. Maggio had spoken with Dustin Reed about the installation; they will communicate with the town when they are back in Vermont.

Nov 16 Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC) Requires by law 2 voting members from each town – Due Oct 27

Ms. Maggio noted that this requirement will be on the next agenda; that a second voting member from the town will be needed; that a copy dated September 29 had been circulated to members. There was discussion; it was noted that selectboard members are all members of the town Emergency Response Group; WCR coordinating. The second appointee may designate a proxy for meetings.

Winter Salt bid?

Ms. Maggio noted a salt shortage. There was discussion. Mr. Tanza discussed American vs. Cargill. Mr. Jones noted that there appears to be a statewide problem, no vendors are making offers of salt, and a few have gotten no response from the vendors; and suggested contacting American.

Draft Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Bills will call American and update Ms. Maggio; and reported a ten-wheeler-load on hand.

Oct 7 – Planning Committee meeting scheduled

Ms. Maggio noted that the public is welcome; that Mr. Kavet was stepping down, and the new appointee starting.

Oct 19 10:00 – 12:00 Using Town ARPA funding in conjunction with State ARPA Fund Webinar by WRC ARPA

There was discussion. Ms. Maggio will attend.

Team ACO - two dogs turned into WCHS - Owners claimed each dog

Ms. Maggio following up.

c) Building Commissioner Report – Bruce Mello

Mr. Mello suggested the building projects could be concluded before the end of the year.

i) Day Care Building

Mr. Mello reported switching the UV system over successfully, and noted two extra bulbs on hand; discussed issues with the water system, problems with plumbing, attributing them to hard water; that a water softening system was installed at the end of March, and filters were also obtained and tested on advice of Lynde; at six months, the problems seemed to have been successfully addressed.

Mr. Mello discussed boiler service contracts; and that switching to Cota & Cota would bring the tenant significant savings.

Mr. Mello discussed the pest control vendor; suggested painting work on the roof flashing, work on the gutters, and sealing the bulkhead.

ii) Round Schoolhouse

Mr. Mello showed photographs of the stovepipe thimble in the wall, suggesting it be covered with a painting. There was discussion. A framed document or other wall hanging from the RSH itself was suggested.

iii) Town Hall

Mr. Mello suggested a work-bee, and read from a list of small projects that would improve the building, such as the stovepipe thimble, leveling the steps, landscaping, etc. There was discussion; of inviting people to participate; of Mr. Bills' generous offer of appropriate wood for repairs. Mr. Mello offered the use of a truck, saw, etc.; it was noted that there was heat at the BMH.

iv) Handicap Parking Signs

Mr. Mello discussed handicapped parking spaces. Ms. Maggio suggested a location for the handicapped parking space at the Town Office that would not conflict with snow plowing, close enough to the ramp.

Highways and Roads Report – E. Mark Bills

i) Hill Road – sight line/drainage project

Draft Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Bills discussed projects that had been delayed by the weather; a culvert replacement in a flood area that never arrived until the day before the machine rental ended; that according to Jeff Nugent the grant would pay for the installation, and with permission the machine would be rented again for one day; the issue was a three-foot culvert just off the pavement on Putney Mountain road, where the most damage had been done, and the existing culvert is mostly plugged and will result in a sinkhole. There was consensus in favor of the culvert replacement. Ms. Maggio will place appropriate notices of road closure for the day. Mr. Bills noted that the hole could be quickly covered in the event of emergency traffic during the repair.

ii) Storm damage update

Mr. Bills discussed a meeting with FEMA. Ms. Maggio explained the required procedures, with six months to address this. Mr. Bills explained that the road did not yet have the finish gravel. Ms. Maggio noted that material on hand should also be accounted for to FEMA. Mr. Bills discussed the torn up pavement from the weather damage on Putney Mountain, requiring cutting, preparation, and paving; and that Mark Pickering had suggested issuing a RFP soon to locate a vendor for the work. Ms. Maggio suggested a meeting to established parameters for the RFP for a vote next meeting. Mr. Bills noted that the situation could be addressed with some temporary work if necessary.

iii) Equipment discussion

Mr. Bills discussed a drainage issue on Hill Road near a power line; that he had cleaned the ditch with the excavator, and improved some of the ledge, but drainage around that corner would require hiring heavier equipment; and asked if the selectboard would pursue this immediately or next Spring. There was discussion.

Ms. Maggio suggested that this would require RFP under the purchase policy, and then costs could be determined. Mr. Bills confirmed that the work could be done before Winter, or temporary measures might hold. Mr. Jones suggested that any road work that could be postponed, should be, for financial reasons. Mr. Mello discussed percentages to be refunded by the state, in addition to any funds from FEMA. Mr. Noga concurred that the work should be postponed, despite the seriousness of the condition. Mr. Bills suggested that some mitigation funds might be available in the future. Ms. Maggio noted that there was consensus to wait until later.

There was discussion of FEMA reimbursements, possibly by the end of the year.

Mr. Bills discussed the flood damage; an email from VTRANS stating that centerlines are usually painted on Class 2 roads this time of year, but there is a paint shortage; that only new surface with no lines would likely receive attention; and reported finish gravel needed on the upper part of Putney Mountain, now heavy rock; very passable; no maintenance is done after October, so the gravel should be replenished within a window of about six months. Ms. Maggio suggested that storm damage should be finished. Mr. Bills noted that more than ten inches of erosion is considered flood damage; and that it had been stopped on Hill Road.

Draft Minutes

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

iv) Projects / Plans / Requests

Mr. Bills thanked Ms. Zwick for her years of work; and noted that the hills are usually checked first, and some problems build up because of a lack of equipment and materials; Whitney Hill requires little maintenance other than for some corrugations, and the eroded ditch was addressed; that fresh stone has been applied to the muddy sections regularly over the years, and will probably continue; having some material in stock that isn't frozen would be helpful, that a small shelter for crushed stone would be useful. Ms. Maggio thanked Mr. Bills for his work.

Mr. Jones asked about the Parker Road grant work, due complete by October 31; and will meet with Mr. Bills about the paperwork. Mr. Bills explained the hay-covering step that remained to be done.

Mr. Jones had submitted a Municipal Mitigation Grant application for an additional \$100,000 to make up most of the additional sand shed costs; and noted that a transportation alternative grant would come due in November, which would also be applied for, not knowing exactly what deadlines will crop up; assuming there is enough funding to do the project next year, the amount of town matching will be more than was anticipated when the grant application was submitted five years before. There was discussion.

Ms. Maggio expressed the selectboard's appreciation for Mr. Jones' oversight.

v) Loan discussion for equipment purchase (tabled)

Communications

a.) Email

b.) Regular Mail

- Abatem Extermination
- Vt Family Network re: thanks for \$250 appropriation
- VT Center for Independent Living re: thanks for \$80 appropriation, and new appropriation request
- Request for \$110 appropriation for monitoring rivers
- American Red Cross re: thanks for \$250 appropriation
- Mr. Jones suggested collecting all the appropriations requests for the budget discussions.

Pay Orders

a) Payroll warrant # 2022-- 13 September 29, 2021 Amount - \$1,805.93

Ms. Maggio moved to accept Payroll warrant #2022-13 dated September 29, 2021 in the amount of \$1,805.93. Second by Mr. Noga.

It was noted that the Warrant was Signed on Saturday.

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

Draft Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting
Wednesday, September 6, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

b) Accounts Payable Warrant # 2022 – 14 October 6, 2021 Amount - \$287,293.85

Ms. Maggio moved to accept Accounts Payable Warrant #2022-14 dated October 6, 2021 in the amount of \$287,293.85. Second by Mr. Noga.

It was noted that this included the rental of the excavator, flood damage materials, and West River Modified Education District.

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

11) Set Agenda for the next meeting - October 20, 2021

- Two voting members to be appointed for the town of Brookline to the Regional Emergency Management Committee.
- Ms. Zwick end-of-year discussion
- Response from auditors
- Finalize job description
- bid for winter salt and bid for pavement on Putney mountain road

Mr. Jones suggested a date to start working on the budget; it was suggested to start in November.

12) Adjourn the meeting

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

The meeting was Adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, October 12, 2021