

Town of Brookline Selectboard Meeting

Wednesday, December 1, 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:

Peter Barus (Recorder) FACTV (Videoconference
recording)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Introductions were made

Changes to agenda Review / Approve minutes:

Agenda item, Review - Discuss - Lease Contract before adjournment.

Regular Selectboard meeting minutes from November 17, 2021

Ms. Maggio moved to approve the minutes for November 17, 2021, as amended. Second by Mr. Mello. All in favor.

Emergency Selectboard meeting minutes from November 23, 2021

Ms. Maggio moved to approve the minutes for November 23, 2021, as amended. Second by Mr. Jones. Passed with one abstaining.

Members of the public (none)

Old Business

Budget items

Review - Discuss - Finalize Road Supervisor Job Description - attachment

There was discussion. Tabled.

Appropriation Requests - attachment

Ms. Maggio read and the Selectboard discussed a new request from Southeastern Vermont Watershed Alliance, for \$130. It was noted that the organization had changed its name from "West River Watershed Alliance," and that this was a second request; the list was corrected to reflect the newer amount.

It was noted that new requests totaled \$970, total requests at \$9,866.00.

Ms. Maggio suggested that a new request from The Gathering Place would need a separate Article, and discussed increases to other requests. There was discussion. Mr. Jones noted that amounts including the previous year's request, were displayed in the Town Report, or in the case of Australian ballot, would be made clear in an Informational Meeting prior to the vote. Mr. Tanza suggested that the selectboard had discretion to change amounts presented to voters. Mr. Jones noted that the selectboard had not previously made such changes before presenting to voters; that Newfane had done so and experienced controversy; that to change the amount for organizations voters had voted to support would be unusual; that the Town Warning for a normal Town Meeting included a chart showing requesting organizations and what was approved, in an Article or Articles.

Ms. Maggio noted 22 recurring and one new request; and a list for both last year's and current requests for the Town Report.

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Mr. Jones explained that the Moderator would read the article and ask the selectboard to comment before opening the floor for general discussion, at which point the changes in this year's requests could be announced.

There was discussion of whether an Article would include changes that had been made to a request, or all requests should be put forward as submitted. Mr. Mello suggested declaring all changes for transparency. Mr. Jones noted that appropriations would not show up as budget items until after the vote.

Ms. Maggio will retype the list for the Town Meeting booklet.

It was noted that The Gathering Place was a new request and would be presented as a new Article.

Review - Discuss - Finalize Road Supervisor Job Description - attachment

(Previously tabled)

Ms. Maggio moved to adopt the Road supervisor job description as presented. Second by Mr. Noga.
All in favor.

Ms. Maggio signed the document.

Municipal Budget - items researched by Town Clerk

Mr. Tanza noted that Windham Regional Commission dues listed as \$1,400.00 should read \$1,301.00.

Mr. Jones discussed a related spreadsheet from Ms. Zwick, and offered to add the appropriations list, etc., for an updated version showing increase/decrease, for the next meeting.

Mr. Tanza discussed the insurance package, including liability and workman's compensation, totaling \$9,340.00. There was discussion. Mr. Jones discussed previous practice when developing budgets.

There was consensus that the budget could be represented more precisely as to allocations for the school and highway budgets.

Mr. Jones suggested that Fund One had been listed as \$5,708.00; that this would be reduced by \$804.00 to \$4,904.00; and that the highway budget previously at \$5,239.00 would be reduced by \$803.00 to \$4,436.00.

Ms. Maggio discussed an email from Mr. Lavorgna regarding Mutual Aid Dispatch Fee previously at \$10,467.00 would be \$10,729.00. There was discussion.

Mr. Tanza discussed NEMRC dues. Mr. Jones suggested a discussion of recycling.

Reports

Town Clerk Report - Guy Tanza

Mr. Tanza noted a downturn in conveyances; slower pace; working with FEMA; that the legislative body meets the first week in January about the annual Town Meeting, and may give towns authority to use Australian balloting; that the emergency ends January 31, which will determine what happens in March; and that the land records digitizing project continues.

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Selectboard Chair Report - Dot Maggio

Ms. Maggio had received a note of thanks from Town of Townshend for support and solidarity; and noted Monday Feb 28 would be Town Meeting Day; that the Governor could issue a mask mandate at a special legislative session Monday, November 29, and this could be on the April agenda.

Ms. Maggio discussed accounting changes, possible transfer of fund #6, allowing it to be deleted (\$2,069.20 from old fundraising).

Ms. Maggio read aloud a letter from Howard Cutler re: donation of \$10,000 for restoration and upkeep of BMH; there was discussion.

Ms. Maggio discussed and signed a contract from Windham County Humane Society, \$350 flat fee for services.

It was noted that David Parker had expressed willingness to serve as Moderator for Town Meeting.

A Better Backroads grant agreement was received by email from AoT, signed in October, 2021, dated November 30, 2021; Ms. Maggio had communicated with Mr. Clark about this and other budget matters.

Town Building Commissioner Report - Bruce Mello

Mr. Mello discussed previous negotiations about wood chips; changes in the way issues would be addressed with SLP; that systems were working; that Cota & Cota had responded the same day to service requests; and planning maintenance and repair to minimize malfunctions.

Road Supervisor Report - E. Mark Bills

Mr. Bills discussed work with the FEMA representative, paperwork, reimbursement, examination of damaged areas for GPS data; and noted that some areas that would need more repairs were under contract; a request from FEMA for a professional estimate for damaged pavement repairs, awaiting response from Bazin Brothers; that American Salt Company had delivered the first load of winter road salt promptly; that 3/4" crushed stone had been ordered anticipating February thaw, and covered against freezing; general maintenance around town, small jobs, cleaning around the recycle area as needed; and noted that the work changes with the seasons, and the town is prepared for the winter months.

Ms. Maggio noted Mr. Bills' thorough knowledge of the roads, materials, etc., after visiting locations to obtain GPS data for FEMA. Mr. Bills acknowledged Ms. Maggio's assistance with grant applications.

Any other selectboard members report/comment/concerns

Mr. Mello discussed federal infrastructure funding. Mr. Jones noted confirmation from Alan May, that all paperwork had been approved for the Parker Road grant, and to expect funds in the next few weeks; and confirmation from VTRANS that paperwork for the Transportation Alternatives grant had been received, for additional supplemental funding for the salt and sand shed, although awards would not be released until February or March; and RFP should be possible by January. There was discussion. Mr. Jones noted that much treasury-related information would be needed.

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Ms. Maggio discussed a webinar about the DVFiber network, a likely request for a letter of credit against ARPA funding, and how to determine the percentage of ARPA funds to allocate to the network.

Communications

Regular Mail

- Re: masking mandates.

E-Mail

Pay Orders

Payroll Warrant

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Payroll Warrant #2022-21, dated November 24, 2021, in the amount of \$4,174.76. Second by Mr. Noga.

The Motion was amended to reflect the correct amount.

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

Accounts Payable Warrant

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #2022-22 dated December 1, 2021, in the amount of \$5,636.66. Second by Mr. Jones.

Ms. Maggio inquired about the item code, noting “services” and “material.” There was discussion.

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

Set Agenda for the Special Budget Meeting #2 on December 8, 2021

The meeting to be held at Town Hall.

- Budget discussion

Set Agenda for Regular Selectboard meeting on December 15, 2021

- Lease review
- Budget - Salary discussion
- Town Meeting
- Recycling.

There was discussion of the quarterly water quality report. Mr. Tanza had cc'd Nancy Burke. Mr. Noga noted that a request had been made for further information on the water system. Ms. Maggio will follow up.

Review - Discuss - Lease Contract for the school building currently known as Suzy's Little Peanuts Daycare.

(Previously tabled)

A motion may be made to find that premature general public knowledge

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regarding the town's lease contract with Suzy's Little Peanuts owner Suzy Coutermarsh would place the town at a disadvantage, because the selectboard risks disclosing its negotiation strategy if it discusses the proposed contract terms in public. A second motion may be made at this time to enter into executive session to discuss the town's lease contract with Suzy Coutermarsh under the provisions of Title 1, Section 212 (a)(1)(A) of the Vermont Statutes.

Ms. Maggio moved to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the town's lease contract with Suzy's Little Peanuts owner Suzy Coutermarsh would place the town at a disadvantage, because the selectboard risks disclosing its negotiation strategy if it discusses the proposed contract terms in public. Second by Mr. Noga. **All in favor.**

Executive Session (legal matter)

Ms. Maggio moved to enter executive session. Second by Mr. Noga. All in favor.

It was noted that no action would follow.

The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recorder, December 5, 2021