Town of Brookline, NH
Selectboard
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Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 4, 2025, 6:30pm
In-Person Meeting (Town Hall Meeting Room) and via Zoom

In attendance: Eddie Arnold, Brian Rater, Ed Perry, Jerry Roche, Stephen Dolfini, Paul Branscombe, Chief Hebert, Chief Stewart, Eric Window, & Lisa Scalia

6:30: Selectboard Meeting

Pledge of Allegiance

Read "Ground Rules for Hybrid Meetings"

Approve Public Minutes: 7/21/25

Brian makes a motion to approve the minutes of 7/21/25, seconded by Steve. Vote: 5 yes

Approve Non-public Minutes: 6/23/25 #5 amended

Brian makes a motion to approve the non-public minutes of 7/21/25, seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes

Approve Non-public Minutes: 7/21/25 #1, 2, 4-9, 11

Brian wants to discuss #3 & 10 and discuss unsealing some.

Ed makes a motion to approve the non-public minutes of 7/21/25* #1, 2, 4-9, 11, *seconded by Jerry. Vote: 5 yes

Approve Warrants

Accounts Payable Warrant #31 $1,495,011.30
Payroll Warrant #32 $90,260.28
Police Detail Warrant $1,250

Brian makes a motion to approve warrants, seconded by Steve. Vote: 5 yes

Public Input & Announcements

Mr. Dougherty, Ruonala Road, expressed concern over blank pages in the Town Report that could be used to recognize late residents who have made significant contributions to Brookline but have not received proper acknowledgment. He specifically mentioned Eddie Whitcomb and Sunny Porter (Brookline's last World War II veteran), as individuals who deserve recognition. He stated that the lack of acknowledgment "bothers him greatly."

Mr. Dougherty raised multiple concerns regarding Lake Potanipo:
The boat launch had not been properly maintained, leading residents to contact the State of New Hampshire. As a result, Fish & Game Marine Patrol intervened, repaired the launch, and required the Town to move the swimming area lines, reducing the usable space at the Grove for swimmers.

He noted that the same Marine Patrol Warden informed Camp Tevya that the State owns the lake while the Town owns the land. Mr. Dougherty feels that the Town pays to maintain the lake water and the State should do this if they own it.
He expressed frustration that non-residents are using the launch and parking areas, stating he is willing to sit at Mason Road with a sign reading “Brookline Residents Only” until the State or Marine Patrol addresses the issue. He reminded the Board that "No Parking" signs on Route 13 were a result of past overcrowding and misuse.
He stated the Town receives funding only through the Lake Host Program, not directly from the State, and urged the Selectboard to increase its efforts in managing the area. Mr. Dougherty believes that Yvonne Gutierrez (Grove Manager) was bullied by the Warden during recent interactions.
Ed Perry supported Mr. Dougherty’s concerns, adding that he has received over a dozen complaints from parents about conditions and management at the lake.
Mr. Dougherty also claimed that boats are driving onto the sand and parking on the beach, creating safety concerns and limiting space for residents.
He strongly urged the Board not to wait until next year to act on these issues.

Eddie: Jackie Knowles has passed. A founder of BERT (now CERT)

Brian: congratulations to Paul Branscombe on his 1 year anniversary as Town Administrator.

Brian: Town Planner, Michele Decoteau, identified a lot in the commercial zone that the Town has owned for over 30 years and largely forgotten about. At her suggestion, the property was sold for $410,000, much of which will be retained by the Town to reduce taxes. The property is expected to be developed for a new business.

Municipal Accounting Software -Eric Window, Finance Officer, Town of Wilton

Eric presented an overview of his evaluation and recommendation for a new municipal finance software system, following a year-long review process beginning in 2023.
Eric reviewed multiple software solutions, including:
MTS *(Selected for implementation in Wilton),* BS&A, Edmunds, Oracle (Municipal version), OpenGov, and ClearGov *(eliminated due to cost: over $200,000)*
Eric’s primary goal was to find an integrated, cloud-based system capable of managing all municipal financial functions in one platform, with minimal manual reconciliation and scalability to grow with the town.
MTS was chosen because it was designed specifically for municipal fund accounting, it is cloud-based with real-time data access during meetings, and it allows direct upload and attachment of scanned invoices and backup materials. The budget module complies with RSA 32 and allows live collaboration. It also has payroll integration with NH Retirement Systems (NHRS). It also supports audit requirements and tracks user activity (who, what, when). There is an accounts receivable module for billing. Eric likes that there is no additional cost per user and it offers customizable access levels (Admin, Editor, Read-only). A server-based backup option available at additional cost, though not recommended. It offers strong customer support and is based in Plymouth, NH.

Implementation took one week in Wilton. It is used by other towns including Moultonborough (first adopter), Jaffrey, and Lyndeborough. MTS is currently being implemented in 23 NH Towns.
QuickBooks lacks municipal-specific features such as DRA form support, audit controls, NHRS payroll integration, and budget compliance warnings. Wilton's payroll with QuickBooks previously took 1.5 days and 4+ hours of manual journal entries; these are now automated in MTS.
MTS includes audit tracking, year-over-year budgeting, and document management. Monthly reporting and payroll tasks are now significantly faster and more efficient. Eric, as Wilton's sole finance staff member, found the system easy to learn and navigate.
Chief Stewart asked about department-level billing (e.g., ambulance or police detail): Eric confirmed MTS has an accounts receivable module for this.
Brian inquired about system audit tracking: Eric confirmed it records user activity and changes (history).
Ed appreciated the real-time access to financial data and noted the current system may not appeal to future finance professionals.
Eric noted that training is included, on-site, and very hands-on. He strongly recommended MTS as the most suitable financial software for municipal use, noting its capabilities, support, cost-effectiveness, and ease of use. The Board expressed appreciation for his thorough evaluation and presentation.
Board asks Paul to reach out to MTS for info to implement in 2026.

7 PM: Joint Board of Health and Selectboard meeting

The Selectboard, acting as the Board of Health along with Health Officer Chief Stewart, held a discussion regarding the current need for a Deputy Health Officer.
The Board agreed to keep the Deputy Health Officer position open but vacant. Any future appointment will be revisited based on need, with possible adjustments to the stipend. BOH adjourned at 7:35pm.

Digitizing Building Dept Documents

The Board discussed a proposal to digitize all Building Department files into PDF format. This project was originally intended to coincide with the launch of Cloud Permit but was never implemented.
The digitization would provide several benefits, including protection of records in case of disaster, reduced storage needs, and improved accessibility. However, there are logistical and financial considerations. We would have to purchase or rent a large-format scanner and allocate staff time or contract with a vendor to complete the work. This must comply with the Town's Purchasing Policy.
Tad, who previously covered the Building Department, noted that paper copies still need to be maintained in the office for resident access, even if files are digitized.
Eddie asked if the Board is interested in moving forward. The Board expressed unanimous support.
Ed strongly supported the idea and recommended purchasing a scanner, not renting, to ensure the Town can continue scanning files into the future. He also suggested requiring electronic copies of large plans from applicants moving forward.

Brian agreed with digitizing the files but disagreed with keeping paper copies on-site, noting that digital files could be accessed on a large monitor or printed if needed. He suggested a phased approach, starting with digitizing new documents going forward while scanning older files gradually as time allows, which may be more cost-effective.
Paul also supported the project and noted that in another town, hiring someone for 10 hours per week was a slow way to complete the job.
Paul will investigate the cost to hire out, cost to rent/buy scanner, estimate of work load if done during work hours, and will solicit at least 3 vendor estimates.

Town Policy on ICE Assistance

Brian presented draft 2 of a proposed policy, reviewed with Chief Hebert, aimed at establishing a framework for how the Town communicates with the public and the school system regarding federal immigration enforcement actions. He explained that the policy had been streamlined from the original version. The draft now commits the Town to notify school officials (e.g., the principal) if a federal enforcement action is anticipated to occur at or near a school or on a bus, and to share confirmed information with the public if such an incident does occur. Brian emphasized that the Town may not always be informed in advance, but the policy is a public commitment to transparency and communication when possible.
Eddie raised concerns about confidentiality, particularly around advance notifications from federal agencies like ICE. He questioned whether alerting school officials ahead of time could violate confidentiality or even federal law, potentially creating liability for the Town. He emphasized that policies should protect the Town legally, as well as guide operations.
Chief Hebert noted that federal agencies typically do not notify local authorities in advance, likely for that reason. He confirmed that if an incident occurred at a school, the first step would be contacting the principal. He has no knowledge of immigration-related enforcement ever happening on school property.
Brian maintained that the core concern is student safety. In the event that armed individuals, Federal agents or otherwise, appear at a school or on a bus, advance notice to the school could prevent chaos and reassure staff and students. He argued the Town should stand up for safety in these rare but serious situations.
Ed brought up the need to understand how such scenarios would be handled by the schools and bus companies. He posed hypothetical questions: What if a child or driver is removed from a bus? What if ICE attempts an action on school property? He suggested the Board ask the school system and bus company about their protocols.
Steve questioned whether a policy is the right mechanism and whether this issue is better suited to writing letters to State Representatives.
Chief Stewart added that federal activity in the region is more often non-immigration-related and asked whether the policy could create confusion by focusing on immigration.
Eddie clarified that the current draft does not reference ICE or Border Patrol by name, but it is clearly implied. He expressed concern about the Town being pulled into politically sensitive areas.

Brian reiterated that many residents have asked the Town to take a stand and provide reassurance that it won't participate in unconstitutional federal actions. He is surprised at the degree of resistance from the Board.
Ed stated that while they are still in the discussion phase, the Board has heard significant resident interest in the policy. He emphasized that confidence in the local police department is not in question, but concerns with federal overreach remain.
Brian will reach out to school officials and the bus contractor to learn what protocols they have in place for federal immigration enforcement actions involving school property or students.

Update on Auction of Lot J-54

Lot J-54 was auctioned on July 24. The total sales price was $451,000, including a $41,000 buyer's premium. The Town will receive a $400,000 payment at closing, in addition to the $10,000 deposit already received.
Following the closing, we must hold a hearing to accept the unanticipated revenue in the amount of $410,000. We are doing calculations to determine the amount owed to the Town for back taxes, interest, penalties, legal fees, employee time, and any other applicable costs. The remaining balance, after the Town retains its due amount, will be forwarded to a state interpleader, who will contact the former property owners to claim the funds. If the funds are not claimed in accordance with state law, they will revert back to the Town.
Ed: Do we want to do a Warrant Article to let us accept unanticipated revenue without a hearing? Look this up. Eddie doesn't think this is possible.
Set Public Hearing for accepting unanticipated revenue of $410,000 after we know the closing date. (tentatively at Sept 2 meeting).

Compensation Policy: Brian Rater

The Board discussed draft 7 of the Town's Compensation Plan, which is entering the implementation phase.
Chief Stewart has a chart with the proposed placement of all employees within the grade and step system. The next step will be to hold non-public sessions with each Department Head to review and confirm the placements of their employees.
Brian raised the question of whether to move all employees up to the next nearest step on the chart (if they fall between 2 steps) or leave them at their current pay rate, advancing only through regular raises or promotions. He calculated that moving everyone up to the nearest whole step would add approximately $32,000 to the implementation, not including benefits, which would bring the cost closer to $40,000. This cost is equivalent to an across-the-board 2% raise, and he felt that this might not be necessary.
Eddie supported reviewing placement on a case-by-case basis with Department Heads and is comfortable with the potential $32,000-$40,000 cost as an investment in our workforce and fulfillment of a commitment made two years ago. He also said this will be factored into annual cost of living adjustments (COLA) discussions.
Chief Stewart said we need to confirm and approve the pay grades, steps, and job titles before conducting individual reviews of employees.
**Note: the incorrect compensation chart was included in the version of draft 7 distributed at the meeting-it did not reflect the revised Grade 1.

Feedback from departments was positive: the Library is happy with their adjustments, and Chief Fricke is also satisfied with her department's placements.
Edit as follows:

- Philosophy section: Start each numbered item with a capital letter.
- Related Documents section: Rename "policies" to "related documents."
- Definitions: Update "Personnel Plan" to "Personnel Policy."
- In Grade 1: Consider adding "Intern" to the chart, even though it's not a current position, in anticipation of potential future use.
- Capitalize "Library YOUTH" in the position title.

Department Heads will be asked to review their employee placements and report any discrepancies or concerns to the Board. The Selectboard will then meet individually with Department Heads to discuss any requested adjustments. Then the Board will vote to approve final placements and complete Personnel Action Forms with an effective date of January 1, 2026.
Send out draft 7 with correct compensation chart and requested edits.
Ed makes a motion to approve the Compensation Policy Draft 7 (as amended and correct the table), seconded by Jerry, effective January 1, 2026.
Vote: 5 yes

Class 6 Road discussion

Brian: Class 6 roads are roads the Town owns but does not maintain. Spaulding Brook Road is one. An adjacent property owner has put up a gate and no trespassing signs. Brian wants to resolve this. We can notify them to take the signs down, or we could give up the road as a town-owned road. We will ask the DPW and Emergency Management for their opinions.
Eddie: residents can gate the road but cannot lock it or block it to deter use.
He says even if there's a Warrant article in the future, we need the Building Official/Code Enforcement officer to send a letter warning the abutters to correct this situation. We need to take action on what is legal now.
Ed makes a motion for Dave Descheneaux to send a letter to the owners, seconded by Jerry. Vote: 4 yes/1 no (Brian)
Ask Dave D to send code enforcement letter.

Energy Proposals

Tabled for 8/18

Paddle Potanipo

Town recommended the business owners approach this as a home business. They met with Michele Decoteau, Town Planner. They may need a Hawkers & Peddlers permit. Owners asked: can they get this permit and have the trailer there during hours of use? The Board agrees they cannot. It would have to be pick up and drop off. No commercial business on Town property.

Sign MS-535

Signed by the Board.
Ed makes a motion to approve the MS-535, seconded by Brian.
Vote: 5 yes

MPPC Charter amendment

We are adding a Planning Board representative. The Recreation Commission did not reply regarding adding a representative. We will have 6 members
Steve makes a motion to approve the new charter, seconded by Ed.
Vote: 5 yes

Appointments to Committees:

Melendy Pond Planning Committee (MPPC): Scott Grenier (Planning Board [PB] Representative), all current members of Joint Loss Management Committee (JLMC)
Steve makes a motion to approve the appointments, seconded by Ed.
Vote: 5 yes

Sign Policy: Welfare

Ed makes a motion to accept the policy as of August 4, seconded by Steve.
Vote: 5 yes
Add signature lines and print that page to sign on August 18, 2025.

Old/New Business:

- Brookline Woods Building Permits are expiring: can we/do we want to extend them again? These were originally issued in Sept 2024 (to expire March 2025) and then extended to Sept 30, 2025. There are 17 permits for this development. This is workforce/housing for older persons.
  Dave recommends they file for new permits and submit drawings again. We would waive the permit fees. Check with Michele on conditions of grants.
- Oath-taking for Members of Boards & Committees: this is required by NH RSA for some Boards and Committees. Patti stated firmly that she would like to keep this process for all Appointees. Ed does not want to make people get sworn in. He is having a hard time getting people to even come to meetings. Eddie: we said that if people can't fill out a form with their contact info, then will they show up for meetings? He likes the appointment forms. Ed: doesn't like the swearing in commitment. Eddie: *Remove oath section for any position that doesn't have to be sworn in but keep the appointment forms.*
- Scott Leard requested paving improvements at the Transfer Station due to issues with potholes, puddling, and trip hazards. The proposed project would also include widening the area by the book shed. There is $64,000 remaining from the original $100,000 budget allocated for asbestos remediation. The paving estimate is $65,000, leaving a $1,000 shortfall. Eddie noted that the original asbestos remediation funds were not intended for other uses and any repurposing must be clearly justified. He also emphasized the importance of addressing any deficiencies in the base before paving. Does the $65,000 estimate includes base repair? Brian: thought if we had overruns at Town Hall, we might be able to use that asbestos money. Paul: doesn't see anything substantial that needs to be done. There may be overages in IT- not sure yet. The Board approved proceeding with the paving project, contingent on confirmation that necessary base work is included in the estimate or can be addressed appropriately before paving.
  If Town Hall does experience overruns and asbestos funds cannot be redirected, what are the alternative funding sources? Eddie will talk to Scott for clarification. Carry to 8/18.

Review Items for August 18 Selectboard Agenda

- Municipal Finance Software
- Scanning Building Documents
- Immigration Policy
- Compensation Plan/Progress on Job Descriptions
- Closing for Lot J-54 and Hearing on Unanticipated Revenue
- Sign Welfare Policy
- Paving at Transfer Station
- Propane RFP
- Personnel Policy: review pages 11-20
- Grove discussion with Yvonne re: swim area/boat area: what is our property there? *Look for lot plan. Certain requirements were attached to the deed. Eddie thinks the fence line is also the property line. If the lines switched from there, the Board needs to address that. The State owns the body of water. However, if we maintain this area for the past 40 years, we may be able to claim that our swim lines should stay where they were. Ed: talk to Yvonne and Recreation Commission to find out what's going on.*
- Policies to Review: Quick choices: HOLD for next time
    - Anti-Fraud, 3 pages (2019)
    - Cash Receipts, 2 pages (2021)
    - Purchasing Policy, <4 pages (2020)
    - Meeting Video Retention Policy, ½ page (2012)
    - *Political Signs Policy, 1 page (2018), should have been amended in 2021 or 2022. It addressed the Transfer Station. Discussed maybe never done?*
    - *Winter/Inclement Weather Policy, 4 pages (2020): review with Scott first*

Board & Committee Updates:

Melendy Pond Management Committee (MPMC): met and they approved a bid to do road work on the road, including narrowing it to its original width.

Library Study Committee: Met and set up a schedule of 4th Weds of month at the Library. Set up work groups. May work with Keene State College to do mockups of a new library.

250th Committee: where did the minutes go? Someone is sending them to Ed, but he's not getting them. They will enhance the July celebrations and have a month for the Fire Department, a month for the Ambulance Service, and some single events related to what the town was like 250 years ago.

Perambulations: Some towns may do something this fall or winter.

Capital Improvements Committee: waiting for a meeting date.

Energy: tried to meet, but no quorum. They are a 5 member board with one open position. Brian put a notice on Facebook and has a couple of residents interested.

Facilities and Properties: Chief Stewart sent questionnaires to all Department Heads and they heard back from most of them. He is compiling that information. They are putting together a preliminary report for the Selectboard with input for the budget process. The most important recommendation is to hire a Facilities Manager.

Cemetery Trustees: nothing new.

Nashua Regional Planning Commission: Executive Committee next week.

Planning Board: meets August 21.

Fire Wards: nothing new.

Melendy Pond Planning Committee (MPPC): meets Sept 20.

Economic Development: meets next week, working on a downtown policy.

Conservation Commission meets tomorrow and needs to know that we'll be doing renovations at the annex. They may need to move their items from storage.

Digital Transformation Working Group: They will be working on some policies.

Review Mail Folder

- Police Dept: 1419 calls
- Foreclosure date is postponed at a property, no taxes due- private matter.
- Home Health & Hospice is asking for an $11,000 donation for 2026. They served 72 patients from Brookline in 2025.
- Zoning Board: meeting August 13 re: variance at 91 Mason Road for a building within setback.

Review Planning Board Folder

- Planning Board: site plan amendment for housing for older persons on Main Street. Lot H-42. Changed fire protection plan to sprinkler systems. Lighting fixtures changed to something with less light trespass. *No comments from SB*.

Eddie made a motion to enter non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 II (a) personnel, (c) reputation, (j) security, (l) legal, and potentially others at 9:40 pm, seconded by Ed.
Roll call vote: 5 yes

Eddie made a motion, seconded by Ed, to come out of nonpublic at 10:39 and seal the minutes. Roll call vote: 5 yes

While in public, we voted to accept the nonpublic minutes of July 21, set #3.
Ed made a motion to accept these minutes, seconded by Jerry. Vote: 5 yes

We then voted to unseal nonpublic minutes July 21st sets 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11
Steve made a motion to unseal the non-public minutes as above, seconded by Jerry. Vote: 5 yes

Ed made a motion to adjourn at 10:41, seconded by Jerry. Vote: 5 yes

Minutes submitted by Lisa Scalia Date Approved: _____

X	X
Eddie Arnold	Brian Rater
Selectboard Chair	Selectboard Vice Chair

X

Ed Perry
Selectboard Member

X

Jerry Roche
Selectboard Member

X

Stephen Dolfini
Selectboard Member