Town of Brookline, NH
Selectboard
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Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 22, 2025, 6:00 pm
In-Person Meeting (Town Hall Meeting Room) and via Zoom

In attendance: Eddie Arnold, Brian Rater, Ed Perry, Jerry Roche, Stephen Dolfini, Andrea Williams-Cameron, Chief Fricke, & Lisa Scalia

6:30 Pledge of Allegiance

Read "Ground Rules for Hybrid Meetings"

Approved Public Minutes: 12/8/25 (edit lot B-53 should be B-55)
Brian made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/8/25 as amended, seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes

Approved Non-public Minutes: 12/8/25 #1-10
Brian made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of 12/8/25 #1-10 seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes
Brian made a motion to unseal sets #3 & #8 of 12/8/25, seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes

Approved Warrants
Accounts Payable Warrant #51 $192,610.41
Payroll Warrant #52 $123,141.09
Detail: $??
Brian made a motion to approve the warrants, seconded by Jerry. Vote: 5 yes
2 Bills due before next Warrant: 1 to DES for Dam Registration fee: $1,500 and NH Bond Bank for $15,342 for principal and interest on a bond.
Brian made a motion to approve the warrants, seconded by Jerry. Vote: 5 yes

Public Input & Announcements

- Buddy Dougherty, Ruonala Rd: saw "Authority over Conservation Land" on agenda and questions why the Conservation Commission (CC) was not informed and asked why Selectboard members don't come to a Conservation Commission meeting? He is heated over this. Eddie: this is a conversation from the last meeting discussing some emails regarding the CC looking for information about authority over issuing fines, etc.
- Town Hall will close at noon on Dec 24.
- Eddie reads a statement on Rondeau lawsuits: "The Town of Brookline has been named in multiple lawsuits, as well as a HUD Complaint, brought by the Rondeaus, two Melendy Pond Lessees. The Rondeaus have collectively signed 4 separate Melendy Pond Leases agreeing to their terms, which were approved by an affirmative vote of the Town Residents at the 2019 Town Meeting. Furthermore, as required by the Lease, these Lessees provided sworn affidavits that they have permanent legal residence elsewhere. However, these Lessees are now arguing

these terms are too restrictive despite agreeing to the Lease terms, which clearly state that the Melendy Pond lots are to be used for seasonal and recreational purposes only and cannot be used to establish domicile or residency in the Town of Brookline. Indeed, the Melendy Pond lots are taxed at a reduced rate for this reason. While these lawsuits will cost the Brookline taxpayers' legal fees to resolve, we strongly believe it is our duty to defend against these claims and honor the will of our fellow Brookline residents."

Encumbrances

Chief Fricke requested one encumbrance for which she had a quote. It is with Powell for reground asphalt for fire ponds. Total $1,350. The material is in stock, but frozen.

Steve made a motion to approve the encumbrance from Fire Department Fire Hole Maintenance line, seconded by Jerry. Vote: 5 yes

There was also a request from Planning and Economic Development to encumber $22,824 for Housing Opportunities Grant 2.0. This is for NRPC to do work funded by a grant. The Town will meet the deadline and there is a contract.

Steve made a motion to encumber $22,824 for the Housing Opportunities Grant, seconded by Brian. Vote: 5 yes.

There was also a request from Chief Stewart to encumber $4,049.58 for a lighting project at the Safety Complex to come from Maintenance & Improvements. Work has begun and 50% was already paid.

Brian made a motion to encumber $4,049.58 for lighting at the Safety Complex, seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes.

Sealed Bids for Fire Trucks

Sealed bids will be requested in January to sell two fire trucks. The Request for Bids (RFB) will go out this week as long as the date to receive bids is January 30. The bids will be opened at the February 2 Selectboard meeting.

Antique Fire Trucks

The Board discussed the lack of clear documentation regarding ownership of several antique fire trucks. Patti noted that vehicles older than 1969 do not have titles, making title searches ineffective. The vehicles in question include a 1919 Ford, 1929 Chevrolet, 1939 Chevrolet, and a 1969 Chevrolet, all of which currently appear on the Town's Primex insurance policy. A 1989 Town Report shows a vote authorizing the sale of the 1939, 1950, and 1967 trucks, though it does not specify buyers and is only relevant to the 1939 truck for this discussion.

Eddie explained that the Fire Association stores several antique trucks at the fire station and that some are insured by the Town even though they may be owned and maintained by the Association. He emphasized that there must be a clear separation between the Fire Association and the Fire Department, including ownership, insurance, and responsibility, and that Primex coverage should be removed for trucks owned by the Association. He noted that while the 1939 truck appears to have been sold to and is now owned by the Association, three other trucks remain insured by the Town, and the ownership of the 1969 Chevrolet is unclear, as it may never have been formally transferred from the Town.

Public comment raised questions about insurance policies, registration, and use of vehicles at Town events versus Association activities. It was noted that RSA

requirements do not allow co-ownership or shared responsibility and require a clear delineation of assets. Concerns were also raised about government plates, which are registered to the Town, and how that affects ownership and insurance responsibility.
Mark Fessenden, representing the Fire Association and speaking from long involvement, provided historical background on six antique trucks and explained that all were acquired through fundraising, donations, or Association purchases rather than tax dollars. He stated that these vehicles are insured under the Fire Association's policy at an annual cost of $472, registered with permanent plates, and maintained by the Association. He detailed the history of each vehicle, including the hearse, hand pumper, and various pump trucks, and asserted that the Town never owned them.
Eddie suggested creating a simple agreement, similar to one used with the Historical Society, clarifying that the antiques are Fire Association property with permission to store them in Town facilities, and confirming insurance responsibilities. He also raised concerns about whether equipment purchased by the Association but used by the Department might legally be considered Town property under RSA 154, and whether a nominal sale or written agreement might be needed to clarify ownership, particularly for the 1969 truck.
Additional comments emphasized the need for facility use agreements and documentation to ensure compliance with state law and Fire Chief authority.
Buddy Doherty raised his voice and tensions rose during the discussion, leading the Chair to restore order and move the meeting forward, characterizing the issue as minor and urging professionalism. The discussion concluded with a request to determine the cost of Primex insurance for the antique trucks and whether the Fire Association could assume that expense if needed.

Wright Road

Michele Decoteau submitted a memo outlining multiple cost scenarios for completing the remaining work on Wright Road, focusing primarily on drainage corrections. Five estimates to address the drainage issues ranged from $16,000 to $40,000, with an average of about $20,000. If the Town uses DPW staff as much as possible, the remaining work requiring outside contractors would be limited to remediation of infiltration basins and final paving, at an estimated cost of approximately $52,000. If all remaining work were contracted out, the total cost would be at least $75,631. While using DPW reduces contractor costs, it still carries an internal cost and could delay completion compared to contractors, who could perform the work in the spring.
The Town is currently holding a construction bond of $53,600, which must be used to complete the road. By accepting the bond funds, the Town has committed to using them to finish the work, though this does not obligate the Town to accept the road or spend additional funds. Brian stated that the Town should acknowledge it erred in reducing the bond when it did, noting that the bond is now insufficient to cover all remaining work. He supported outsourcing the work and covering the additional roughly $20,000 as a consequence of that earlier decision. Eddie disagreed, stating the Town was not aware of the drainage problems at the time of the bond reduction and that taxpayers would bear costs regardless, arguing the Town should not absorb the additional expense.
The Board discussed the scope of remaining work, which includes drainage improvements, retention pond excavation, erosion control, new materials, signage, top

coating, gravel shoulders, loaming, seeding, and headwall work. Several options were outlined, including fully outsourcing the work and paying the difference, using DPW to complete as much as possible, combining bond funds with DPW labor, or using bond funds only and requiring homeowners to pay for any additional work. Scott Leard stated that DPW is capable of performing the work, estimated it would take two to three weeks, and felt it should be prioritized, assuming the road would then be accepted. Public comment included opinions from residents that accepting bond funds obligates the Town to complete the work and does not allow costs to be passed on to homeowners. Andrea reported that NHMA advised the Town must use the bond funds to finish the road but is not obligated to spend beyond the bond amount.

Steve questioned whether drainage was part of the original approved plans at the time the bond was reduced, noting that if it was, the timing of when the issue was identified may be irrelevant. Eddie responded that the key question is when the drainage failure was identified relative to the engineer's assessment that supported the bond reduction. The Board agreed to provide residents with a list of required work and related estimates. No motion was made, and the discussion concluded with continued disagreement over responsibility for the bond reduction and next steps.

Brian made a motion to expend the remaining bond money to finish wright road and any further work to be done by the DPW. Seconded by Jerry. Vote: not taken yet.

Scott noted that the DPW does not work on private roads, so Wright Road would need to be accepted before the DPW could begin work. He explained that once the DPW starts work, the Town would be implying acceptance of the road, with formal acceptance occurring later. This implied acceptance would take effect when the DPW begins work in the spring, not immediately. Ed asked whether the contractor quotes would remain valid until spring, and Eddie confirmed that several are marked for spring work. Ed expressed concern about cost escalation over the next few months, particularly the risk that a projected $20,000 gap could increase significantly. Eddie responded that paving makes up a large portion of the cost and prices could fluctuate, while Scott estimated potential changes of only $2,000 to $3,000. Scott added that the road should have been inspected from the ground up by the Town Engineer and did not believe additional underlying problems were likely.

Eddie explained that the estimate was based on the highest drainage cost, which would normally require sealed bids, but suggested waiving the Purchasing Policy to allow flexibility and potential savings, with the DPW Director awarding the contract.

Brian made a motion to expend the remaining bond funds, approximately $55,600, to finish Wright Road, with any additional work to be completed by DPW, and to waive the Purchasing Policy to allow the DPW Director to award the contract. The motion was seconded by Jerry. Vote: not taken yet.

Discussion followed regarding implied acceptance of the road. Eddie confirmed that acceptance would be implied once DPW begins work, likely in the spring after the road acceptance policy blackout period. Brian questioned the benefit of delaying acceptance if the Town intends to accept the road in a few months anyway, noting that the main difference would be responsibility for plowing and suggesting DPW could handle it now. Eddie cited pros such as improved access for emergency management, but also cons including added taxpayer cost and implied acceptance before the road meets specifications. Scott stated he did not have a strong preference and felt the added cost and effort would not be significant.

Eddie requested that the minutes clearly reflect this as a unique situation, allowing the DPW to perform winter maintenance on a private road with formal acceptance planned for 2026, emphasizing that he does not want to set a precedent. Scott raised concern that this could lead other unaccepted roads to request similar treatment, referencing a prior situation on Countryside where winter maintenance was denied. Eddie stated he was uncomfortable allowing implied acceptance during the blackout period and reiterated that the Town has consistently maintained a policy of not maintaining private roads.

Brian made a motion to expend the remaining bond money ($55,600) to finish Wright oad and any further work to be done by the DPW. Further to waive the Purchasing Policy and allow the DPW Director to determine award of contract, seconded by Jerry. Vote: 5 yes

Brian made a motion to have the DPW do winter maintenance and allow implied acceptance of road during the winter road acceptance blackout period, no second. Motion failed.

Bill Atkinson comments that the town should plow Wright Road because it is better for emergency vehicles and because it will avoid litigation.

Eddie replies that there is risk of litigation in anything. You cannot mitigate all risk. This matter is closed.

Fire Escape Proposal

The Board reviewed a proposal from A+ Fire Escape Repair for installation of a new fire escape, with two options presented: a galvanized metal fire escape at a cost of $74,965 and a carbon steel fire escape at $57,950. Installation would likely occur after completion of required structural repairs to the building.

Eddie stated that a decision should be deferred until the scope and cost of the structural repairs are known, noting that the third floor is currently closed and therefore a fire escape is not immediately necessary. He recommended retaining the estimates and revisiting the issue once the overall condition of the building is clearer. Brian disagreed, emphasizing that the fire escape represents a significant life-safety concern and arguing that the work could proceed in parallel with structural repairs. He expressed concern that someone could access the closed area despite restrictions and felt the issue should not be delayed. Ed noted that fire experts had previously advised the fire escape is only required if the space is occupied, and since the third floor is closed, repairs are not urgent. Jerry and Steve agreed that waiting was appropriate.

Bill Atkinson stated that NFPA guidelines requires fire escapes to be maintained at all times, regardless of whether the floor is closed. Despite this, Eddie reiterated that the Selectboard decided not to move forward with the fire escape project until additional information about the building and structural repairs is received.

Exterior Lighting Proposal

Andrea did a walk around Town Hall with Statewide Electrical Solutions, which resulted in a proposal to upgrade exterior lighting around the entire perimeter of the building. The improvements are intended to enhance safety and security for evening meetings and nighttime use of Town Hall and the Food Pantry. The total cost of the proposal is $8,050. Eddie reviewed the details of the quote, outlining the proposed lighting for each side of the building.

Eddie expressed concern about making improvements to a building that is expected to undergo major renovations but acknowledged the current safety and security issues. Brian suggested that the proposal be reviewed by Team Engineering before moving forward. Eddie agreed, noting that such a review would take time and the work would not occur until the new year anyway. He recommended budgeting for the project now and deferring approval until after consultation with Team Engineering, with the decision postponed for a few weeks.

Town Hall Asbestos Testing

Gina from GMS was here on Monday, Dec 15 to take samples at Town Hall to be tested for asbestos. This is to be sure we are not disturbing anything dangerous when we do the laser scanning and potential renovations. She will have results this week.

Financials as of Dec 10

Sharon provided the year-to-date budget information as of December 10. We were 94.2% through 2025 and had spent 85.19% of the budget.

Warrant Articles

The Board discussed options for a warrant article related to authority to demolish Town buildings. It was noted that approval under the applicable RSA cannot be granted in part and must be accepted in full. The options outlined included proceeding on a case-by-case basis, such as seeking approval specifically for abandoned structures at Melendy Pond; seeking blanket approval for Lot B-55; or requesting broader authority from voters to allow the Selectboard, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission to acquire, sell, and demolish real estate following proper hearings. Eddie favored seeking this broader authority and suggested preparing a backup article limited to Lot B-55 in case the broader request fails.

Brian raised a prior request for a warrant article to discontinue Class VI roads, but Michele Decoteau had told him that a Town ordinance already requires houses to be built only on Class V roads, making such an article unnecessary. In response to concerns about Wright Road, Brian clarified that private roads and Class VI roads are treated differently, and that the Town maintains roads where houses may be built, except for private roads.

Peter Webb asked whether current leases require structures to become Town property at the end of the lease. Eddie explained that older leases do, but newer leases require the lessees to demolish the buildings themselves. If they do not, the Town would need to take the property by tax deed in order to demolish it. Peter added that if a lease ends and the building is not removed, the occupant would be trespassing on Town property.

The Board then reviewed a submitted petition warrant article from Eric Pauer proposing the creation of a committee to draft a charter for official ballot town meeting under RSA 49-D:3, II-a, which would allow all-day voting on warrant articles on election day. Patti confirmed that the petition signatures are from registered voters. The Board agreed that the article must be reviewed with the Department of Revenue Administration to confirm it is an acceptable petition warrant article. The proposal was described as an alternative to SB2, which has failed in prior votes.

It was noted that public budget hearings are scheduled for January 12, 13, and 14, and that warrant articles are typically discussed at the conclusion of those hearings.

Buddy Dougherty asserted that warrant articles, particularly those raised by petition, are required to have public hearings beforehand, and Peter Webb agreed, noting that residents requested it. Eddie agreed that hearings would be held. Peter also raised the question of whether certain articles must appear on the ballot by statute and suggested further research with DRA.

Buddy then stated that we are being manipulated so people just check it off on the ballots without hearing information at Town meeting and that it's not patriotic.

Voter's Guide

Lisa drafted an example voter's guide, including an example article and sample explanations with pros and cons for three current warrant articles. She noted limited feedback from those asked to contribute and added sample content where none was provided. The Board debated whether to proceed, with concerns raised about workload, usefulness, and whether voters would read it. Some members supported providing clearer background information for ballot articles, while others opposed including pros and cons or any guide at all. There was general acknowledgment that voters often lack context for warrant articles, but no consensus on approach. Andrea will share an example voter's guide from another town for review, and the Board agreed to revisit the idea, noting that any guide would need to be completed in January.

Boards, Committees, & Commissions Handbook

The Board discussed that volunteers who serve on committees have an obligation to understand and fulfill the responsibilities of their roles.

Lisa created a draft document, but Brian felt the draft was too long and overwhelming, recommending a much simpler approach that clearly outlines what committee members must do. Eddie agreed, suggesting that only the most relevant portions of RSA 91-A be summarized rather than included in full. The goal is to ensure committee members understand their responsibilities.

The Board agreed to streamline the document by removing full policy texts and instead providing a concise, bullet-style checklist with citations and links to applicable policies and RSAs. This approach would allow the document to remain current even as underlying rules change. Suggestions included posting the information on the Town website and referencing NHMA guidance materials. Chief Stewart supported the concept, and the Board agreed the document should be edited and reviewed on 1/5/26.

Ground Rules for Hybrid Meetings

Eddie proposed minor amendments to the meeting rules, including renaming them "Ground Rules for Meetings" and removing all references to hybrid meetings. He emphasized that business meetings of local boards and committees are open to the public but are not the public's meetings, and that public comment is permitted only during designated public input sessions or when recognized by the Chair. He explained that while anyone may attend, speaking outside those times is at the discretion of the Board, and frequent interruptions can significantly disrupt meetings. Eddie shared an example from another committee where unmanaged interruptions made it difficult to conduct business and suggested that these rules be read aloud at the start of every meeting. The Board supported the proposed changes.

Steve made a motion to accept the amended "Ground Rules for Meetings," seconded by Brian. Vote: 5 yes.

Old/New Business

Pierce Pond Dam/SLR/DES Update

Eddie reported that he received a December 18 response from Steve Doyon at NH DES outlining the project status and expectations, noting concern that the grant period is ending. Andrea explained that the DES permit has been under review for about a month after being submitted late and with incorrect fee information, causing further delays, and that SLR would not intervene. Because grant reimbursement is limited to work completed before year end, the Board noted the need to consider next steps with PPD and SLR. Andrea will follow up with another email to DES for clarification.

Brightly Contract

Scott Leard has submitted the Brightly Asset Management Contract.
The subscription term is listed as 12/1/25-12/31/26, but we have not started it yet. Can we amend the dates to begin January 1, 2026?
The total first year cost is $10,041.40.
The cloud services cost for year 2 (as of 1/1/26) is $4,564.56 annually.
Jerry made a motion to authorize Eddie Arnold to sign the contract with Brightly beginning Jan 1, 2026, seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes.

Ambulance Service Job Descriptions

Chief Stewart submitted job descriptions for his staff.
Brian made a motion to approve the job descriptions for EMS providers and the Ambulance Service Department Head, seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes

Conservation Commission (CC) vs. Town Authority Over Land Managed by the CC

The Board discussed a request from Drew Kellner related to the CC's interest in drafting an ordinance. It was noted that the Selectboard has authority to adopt ordinances and enforce violations only on lands under its jurisdiction, not on lands controlled by other boards, and that current RSA language does not clearly grant the CC enforcement or fining authority, with no case law to clarify the issue. NHMA recommends adopting an RSA-based administrative enforcement system through Town Meeting if enforcement authority is desired. The Board agreed this should be discussed further with the CC, with Steve raising the issue as the Selectboard liaison. Drew is already aware of the situation, and any warrant article would need to be submitted by January 12.

Old/New Business

The new fire truck got scraped up, but there isn't significant damage.
Brian wants to see if Melendy Pond Management Committee (MPMC) can use their funds to pay legal costs associated with Melendy Pond (MP) lawsuits? Eddie says it's for the purpose of maintaining the land and leases. They have used the MP Revolving fund for legal expenses relating to leases. *Look up the warrant article that established it to see if that's an allowed use.*
The Board discussed the sidewalk shoveling contract with CL Farwell, focusing on concerns about an indemnification clause that the Selectboard was unaware of until this year. Andrea shared guidance from Primex but remained uncomfortable with the contract. Eddie argued that not proceeding would increase the Town's risk of injury claims and recommended approving the contract for this winter while reviewing it earlier next year to correct any issues or consider bidding or in-house work. Scott noted

DPW could potentially handle sidewalks in the future but their equipment for this is currently broken. After discussion of insurance coverage and liability, the Board approved amending the contract.
Brian made a motion to allow the Chair to sign the contract between the town and CL Farwell for snow removal, seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes.

Board and Committee Updates

Library Study met and has narrowed to 3 architectural firms. Rebecca Purdin has resigned from the Library Trustees. Casey Hoenstine will be the new Chair. Eddie is looking for a replacement for him and an additional Selectboard member to sit in on the meeting to review the proposals. The Board will send their available dates to Eddie. Rebecca Purdin was also writing the Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the Town and the Library, so that's on hold.

Mail Folder

- We received a letter from Milford asking if we want to collaborate with other Souhegan Valley towns for the 250th celebrations. Ed will review this and advise.
- Cory Kaufold, Civics teacher at HBHS wrote to invite Selectboard members to participate in Project Citizen.
- NHDES regarding a restoration plan approval for a property at 280 Route 13.

Planning Board Folder

Decisions on parking at Brookline Woods
Lot line adjustment for Powell and Bingham was approved.
Lot line adjustment for Mason Road was approved.
Minor subdivision at C-107 was approved.
Notice of hearing Jan 14 for variance to allow garage in setbacks on Peterson Road.
The Planning Board reviewed information from the from Town Engineer about road completion and site visits and voted to approve $110K bond for completion of Countryside Rd, phase 3.

Items for Jan 5 SB Meeting

- Countryside Road bond
- Primex on antique fire truck coverage
- PAF from all depts for new pay rates
- Voter's Guide
- Committee Responsibilities Document
- Asbestos update
- Exterior Lighting decision
- Annex: make decisions about how to use the space.

Eddie made a motion to enter non-public session: pursuant to RSA 91-A:2 II (a) compensation, (c) reputation, (l) legal, and potentially others at 9:42 pm, seconded by Ed. Roll call vote: 5 yes
Eddie made a motion to come out of non-public session at 10:36 pm and seal the minutes, seconded by Brian. Roll call vote: 5 yes
Brian makes a motion to adjourn at 10:36 pm seconded by Ed. Vote: 5 yes

Minutes submitted by Lisa Scalia Date Approved: _____

X	X	X
Eddie Arnold Selectboard Chair	Brian Rater Selectboard Vice Chair	Ed Perry Selectboard Member

X	X
Jerry Roche Selectboard Member	Stephen Dolfini Selectboard Member