



**TOWN OF  
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
SELECTBOARD**

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*Minutes  
Selectboard  
Monday, January 11, 2021*

Selectboard members present via Zoom: Brendan Denehy, Eddie Arnold, Ron Olsen, Drew Kellner, and Dana Ketchen along with Town Administrator Tad Putney. Also present: Jan Watt, Jeffrey Stewart, Roy Wallen, Pat Leonard, Cindy LaCroix, Patti Howard-Barnett, and Peter Webb.

**6:30pm Brendan opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance** and said we are meeting under Executive Order #2020-04 and Emergency Meeting Orders #12 and #23, which allow for remote meetings. Selectboard members all stated they were at their homes, alone in the room, and participating remotely due to COVID-19.

**Public Input**

**Drew** noted his experience with the skating rink this year. He expressed a special thank you to **Tad's** son **Brian** who has been very kind with teaching some of the younger kids about hockey. He said it is greatly appreciated this year of all years.

**Brendan** acknowledged the recent passing of town attorney **Bill Drescher** and noted **Bill's** son **Chris** has been doing a great job taking over in his place. **Brendan** said for him personally, and on behalf of the Selectboard, **Bill** will be greatly missed.

**Other Business - 237 Route 13 Closing Extension**

**Tad** said due to the loss of our attorney, he asked that the Board extend the scheduled closing date for 237 Route 13 from January 15<sup>th</sup> to February 15<sup>th</sup>. **Eddie moved, seconded by Dana, to authorize Brendan to sign an extension of the closing date to February 15<sup>th</sup> for 237 Route 13; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.**

**Approve Minutes**

**Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve the public minutes from the Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup>, Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, January 5<sup>th</sup> meetings as written; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0. Drew moved, seconded by Dana, to approve one set of non-public minutes from the Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, and three sets of non-public minutes from the Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup> meeting as written; Roll Call Vote Yes 4-0-1, Eddie abstained.**

**Approve Warrants for Payment**

**Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve the final 2020 Accounts Payable Warrant #53 in the amount of \$217,086.55; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.**

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***Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve 2021 Accounts Payable Warrant #1 in the amount of \$1,034,168.42, Payroll Warrant #2 in the amount of \$65,382.71, and Police Detail in the amount of \$210.00; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.***

**Statement Regarding Brookline Library Parking Lease**

**Brendan** read the following statement from the Selectboard regarding the library parking lot lease: *Since 2005, the Town has leased additional parking space behind the Library from an abutting landowner. Three different leases, generally five years in duration, have been approved to obtain the additional parking space. The current lease runs out at the end of March 2021. The Selectboard has chosen not to renew the lease beyond March 2021. The primary reason for the decision is the proposed cost of \$10,000 per year. Since 2005, the Town has paid over \$125,000 for the parking area and the Board has opted not to continue with this annual cost to the taxpayers. The Board recognizes this will reduce available on-site parking at the Library. Steps will be taken to add a couple of spaces to the existing asphalt parking lot in the spring and residents are reminded that parking is available at the Annex (4 Main Street), Town Hall (1 Main Street) and Brookline Chapel (36 Main Street) – all of which are a short walk from the Library.*

**Notice of Annual Budget Hearings**

**Brendan** read the following public notice from the Selectboard: *In accordance with RSA 32:5, a public hearing will be held at 7:00pm Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to review the 2021 proposed budget and warrant articles for the Town of Brookline. Due to COVID-19, the meetings will be held via Zoom and the agenda and Zoom links will be available on the town website's Selectboard page, ([www.brooklineh.us](http://www.brooklineh.us)) no later than Friday, January 22, 2021. An additional public hearing will be held on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm, if necessary. Budget information will be available beginning Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at the Town Hall. It will also be posted on the town website.*

**Notice of Candidacy Filing Period**

**Brendan** said the following offices may be filed for with the Town Clerk's office from January 20<sup>th</sup> to January 29<sup>th</sup>. He noted a brief description of these positions can be found on the town website.

1 Selectboard Member	3 Yr Term	1 Town Treasurer	1 Yr Term
1 Board of Assessors	3 Yr Term	1 Fire Ward	3 Yr Term
1 Finance Committee	3 Yr Term	1 Library Trustee	3 Yr Term
1 Town Trustee	3 Yr Term	1 Cemetery Trustee	3 Yr Term
1 Supervisor of the Checklist	5 Yr Term		

**Petition Warrant Article Deadline – Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00pm**

**Brendan** announced the deadline for submitting petition warrant articles is February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00pm.

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**Appointment to the Conservation Commission**

*The Board appointed Roy Wallen as Alternate Member to the Conservation Commission with a term ending March 31, 2023.*

**Annual Agreement with Pepperell Community Media for Channel 192**

*Ron moved, seconded by Eddie, to sign the 2021 Licensing and Consulting Agreement with Pepperell Community Media; Roll Call Vote Yes 4-0-1, Drew abstained.*

**Review and Approve 2021 Pay Rates**

**Tad** said one of the recommendations from the auditors is to have the Selectboard formally review and approve the annual pay raises of each employee at the beginning of each year. **Tad** reviewed a document that had been prepared showing individual pay rates for 2020 and 2021 with the percentage change. **Tad** said the ambulance service followed the same pay rate increases of 2.28% for three of their four pay categories, except for the “stand-by” rate for on-call day coverage. Ambulance Chief **Jeffrey Stewart** said since this is his first Selectboard meeting as the new Ambulance Chief, he wanted to express thanks and appreciation to the Selectboard and the Ambulance Hiring Committee for the opportunity. He said he would like to publicly acknowledge and thank **Jan Watt** for the outstanding work she did as Interim Chief. **Jeff** said her dedication, knowledge, and capabilities in running the department are obvious and she has done an outstanding job. **Jeff** said since he was not part of the budgeting process, he is giving the floor to **Jan** to explain the request for the pay increase. **Jan** said they are seeking an increase from \$10.02 to \$12.00 for the hourly rate for “stand-by coverage”. She said there are 119 days in the year where we need call pay volunteer coverage. She said the 2.28% increase would have brought the current hourly rate to \$10.02. **Jan** said we wanted to incentivize the hourly coverage and increase it to \$12.00 to avoid the need to reach outside BAS for coverage or to add BAS staff at a much greater cost. She said the difference between \$10.02 and \$12.00 is a total cost of \$1,885 annually. *Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve the exception of the 2021 “stand-by” hourly rate increase to \$12.00 as well as the other 2021 pay rates included in the schedule; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.*

**Discuss Alternatives for Town Meeting - Peter Webb and Patti Howard-Barnett**

**Tad** said there are two alternatives for holding 2021 annual town meeting:

1. Traditional Town Meeting – Executive Order #74 applies, and masks would be required for those not maintaining at least a six-foot distance.
2. Drive-Thru Voting per HB1129 – He said the town mails a notice to all registered voters at least 7 days prior to the first of two virtual meetings (postage cost alone of about \$2,100). The Moderator or Selectboard Chair runs the meeting and reviews each individual warrant article. Questions and comments from the public are solicited and received between the two virtual sessions via email or text. Within seven days of the first virtual meeting, the Selectboard holds a second virtual meeting to consider and address public comments and discuss, debate, and finalize the town meeting warrant. Then a Sample Ballot is made available to the public with finalized town meeting

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warrant articles. The first article MUST ask whether voters approve of the optional meeting procedures (HB1129). Voters drive-up to CSDA, obtain ballots and vote.

**Peter** said, for these virtual meetings, the house bill says the Selectboard would decide what format we follow. He said we have the right to postpone the meeting if the Moderator feels use of the election location is unsafe on the day of the election. **Peter** said it is his personal feeling that it would be unsafe but, he said, he is closer to this, given his daughter's situation. He said it is up to the Board to determine if he is an outlier or if the Board agrees with him. **Drew** said he shares **Peter's** concern. He said he is also concerned with going forward with the virtual model because it would not have an adequate platform for which the process was intended. **Drew** said he is not comfortable receiving emails and having the Selectboard decide which warrant articles to amend or not. He said he is in favor of postponing town meeting until a time when it is safe to vote in public. **Eddie** and **Ron** said they agree with **Drew** not wanting the Board ultimately deciding on the warrant articles. **Eddie** suggested moving town meeting to the high school gym and auditorium where there is much more room. He said someone could run a Zoom meeting via projector with a chat box for comments from those who choose to stay at home. **Drew** said vaccines will be out soon, the numbers will decline, and more people will feel comfortable in public, maybe even an outside venue would be more attractive to people. **Patti** said her job will not change much either way; she just wants to keep everyone safe. **Dana moved, seconded by Drew, to hold all-day-voting elections on March 9<sup>th</sup> from 7:00am to 7:30pm, with the business of town meeting postponed until March 24<sup>th</sup> at this point; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.** **Tad** said he will keep in touch with SAU on what they are doing, but we are locked in with all-day-voting on March 9<sup>th</sup>. **Drew** said he would like to draft a letter from the Board to State Representatives **John Lewicke** and **Diane Pauer** advocating careful consideration of the passage of the pending bill, so the Board can have some flexibility concerning town meeting. He said the Board has taken steps to postpone the meeting, but would like more flexibility should it be required. **Tad** will draft a letter and share it with **Peter** for his input and the Board. **Eddie** said we may need to add funds to the budget for additional elections.

**Review of Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for New Public Works Facility**

**Tad** said the GMP most recently was \$2.711 million and at last week's building committee meeting we went through a list of potential savings with the architect and the construction manager and came away with a reduction of just under \$90,000 and the GMP is now at \$2.62 million.

**Review Draft 2021 Warrant Articles**

**Eddie** said he does not want to make any changes at this time. **Brendan** said this is the first pass at seeing the whole list. He said the Budget Hearings are in two weeks and it is then that the Selectboard and Finance Committee vote to recommend the warrant articles or not. **Tad** said we received a petition warrant article to increase the All-Veterans Tax Credit from \$500 to \$750, which the Selectboard had planned to include on the warrant, but will now remove as the petition warrant article is required to be included.

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**Discuss Whether all Budgets Will be Reviewed During Budget Hearings**

The Board agreed that all budgets will be reviewed during the annual Budget Hearings.

**Review 2019 Audit Report**

The Board reviewed the 2019 Audit Report. **Tad** noted the auditors have provided three recommendations that represent “best practices:” One, they recommend we have more written documentation of the processes used for year-end close-out of financial reports. Two, the town, rather than the auditors, should maintain the listing and age of capital assets. Three, and as discussed earlier in the meeting, pay rate changes at the beginning of each new year should be documented and approved by the Selectboard. He said they also recommend providing new pay levels in writing to each employee on a form that they sign acknowledging receipt.

**Review Invoices for Payment from DPW Equipment Capital Reserve Fund**

*Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve the timely payment of invoices totaling \$4,288.35 from the Public Works Capital Reserve Fund by the Trustees of the Trust Funds; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.*

**SRLD Update**

Eddie updated the Board on the last SRLD meeting.

**Review Mail Folder**

The Board reviewed the mail folder.

**Next Meeting Agenda**

**Tad** said the bulk of the next meeting will be taken up by the annual Budget Hearings.

*8:30pm Brendan moved, seconded by Eddie, to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) reputation; other matters may be discussed, and immediately upon coming out of non-public session, to seal the minutes and adjourn; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.*

8:53pm meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Sharon Sturtevant.

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Brendan Denehy

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Eddie Arnold

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Ron Olsen

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Drew Kellner

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Dana Ketchen