



**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
SELECTBOARD**

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*Minutes
Selectboard
Monday, January 25, 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: Eric Pauer, Peter Webb, Brian Rater, Dennis Comeau and Matt Mailloux.

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 said he wanted to address the amount of money that people think the town spent on the “Welcome Signs”. He said it has grown on social media from the actual expenditure of about \$7,500 to over \$17,000. **Drew** said people need to be aware of the much lower actual cost to the town, which was reduced due to donations from local businesses. **Brendan** read a statement from the Selectboard congratulating **Sergeant Douglas Barnett** for 20 years of service with the Brookline Police Department. **Brendan** read a thank you letter from the Selectboard to **Judy Cook** for her significant work on curating historical cemetery records.

Approve Minutes

Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve the public minutes from the Monday, January 11th, and Wednesday, January 13th meetings as written; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0. Drew moved, seconded by Ron, to approve five sets of non-public minutes from the Monday, January 11th meeting and one set of non-public minutes from the Wednesday, January 13th meeting as written; Roll Call Vote Yes 4-0-1, Eddie abstained.

Approve Warrants for Payment

Ron moved, seconded by Eddie, to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #3 in the amount of \$128,494.21, Payroll Warrant #4 in the amount of \$65,677.13, Police Detail in the amount of \$420.00, and Supplemental Warrant for Police Holiday Hours missed on the last warrant in the amount of \$420.40; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

Update on 2021 Annual Meetings

Tad said **Brendan** suggested this be a standing agenda item. He said we want to take every opportunity to inform the public on where things stand with the annual meetings

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for the town and school districts. **Tad** said all registered voters should have received a mailing last week announcing the Brookline School District will hold two different virtual meetings both beginning at 6:30pm on February 1st and February 8th with voting on the warrant articles during all-day voting on Tuesday, March 9th. He said information, including the Zoom links, can be found on the town website. **Tad** said the Selectboard recently decided to hold all-day voting for elected officers on Tuesday, March 9th but, at this point, has postponed the annual business portion of the meeting to Wednesday evening, March 24th, with the possibility of it being postponed further. **Tad** said last week the Governor issued Executive Order #83 which allows towns to postpone their official ballot voting day to the second Tuesday in April, May, June, or July, but we are going to stay with the March date at this point. **Tad** said the executive order also allows the governing body to postpone the business portion of the meeting to a date later in 2021 and also states that current elected officials with terms to end in March of 2021 will continue until the conclusion of the postponed business meeting. **Brendan** said we had received different guidance last week from NH Municipal Association and, based on that, he had stated at the last Planning Board meeting that elected official terms would expire one week after March 9th, but now, based on the Governor's new order, he stands corrected. **Brendan** said questions have been asked about how to spend money before a budget is approved. He said the order states that we can spend money at the rate we normally would for each specific month in the budget year. **Dana** asked if the postponement goes on longer, does the Selectboard have any latitude with moving to accept the newly elected official and dismissing the current elected official, if that is what everybody wanted. She said she was curious if the Board could act on that. **Brendan** said with the way that the order is worded, he would say no. **Tad** said the executive order states that "terms end at the completion of the business meeting".

Review Release Deed for Wright Road Cistern

Tad said the developer of this subdivision is asking the town to approve a "release deed" for the cistern easement location, so it can be relocated to avoid blasting. **Brendan** said the Planning Board approved this based on the Fire Department's approval. **Dana** said she's concerned about releasing the deed first without immediately securing the deed for the new location. **Tad** said the town has leverage as no certificates of occupancy will be issued until the cistern is approved and in place. **Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve the release of the deed for the cistern easement in conformance with the owner's agreement to relocate the area within the development and convey a new easement deed, to be recorded for that purpose; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.**

Bob Belanger - Warrant Article to Assist with Parking Changes at DECCO

Bob said DECCO is proposing a warrant article to ask the voters at town meeting to discontinue the old portion of Townsend Hill Road at the corner of Townsend Hill Road and NH Route 13 and give the Selectboard the authority to convey said land to DECCO Inc. as part of Lot K-76. **Bob** said DECCO would beautify the spot and bring it back into the tax base. **Dana** asked if there is a conveyance of funds or is it a gift. **Tad** said that can be worked out between the town and DECCO. **Bob** said DECCO

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will do whatever is in the best interest of the town. **Tad** said when a town discontinues a road, the land often reverts to the control of abutting landowners. He said he will seek legal advice on the process, review it with **Bob**, and have an update for the next Selectboard meeting.

Review Draft Letter to State Representatives re Annual Meetings

Due to Executive Order #83, the Board decided there was no need to send the letters.

Review Potential Annual Report Cover

The Board accepted the one submission for the cover of this year's annual report and said it captured the past year well.

Upcoming Selectboard Meeting Tasks

Tad reviewed upcoming items for Board meetings:

February 8th Meeting:

Mike Wenrich to discuss next steps for Hood Road
Potential continuation of budget hearing
Review Selectboard's report for 2020 town report

February 22nd Meeting:

Review non-public minutes for potential unsealing
Bond hearing for public works building
Sign town meeting warrant
Presentation by **Mike Davey** re building energy audits

March 1st Meeting:

Hold for potential off-cycle meeting

March 8th Meeting:

Brief meeting as it is the day before all-day voting

Budget Hearing

7:04pm **Brendan** recessed the Selectboard meeting, opened the budget hearing and reviewed the budget hearing process. Finance Committee members **Brian Rater**, **Matt Mailloux**, and **Dennis Comeau** joined the meeting and stated they were at their homes, alone in the room, and participating remotely due to COVID-19. **Tad** said preliminary 2021 town budget information packets are available on the town website. He said the preliminary 2021 budget, when added to the proposed warrant articles, is 1.7% above last year's operating budget plus approved warrant articles. **Tad** said if we look at the proposed operating budget for 2021, we have a 4.3% increase over 2020, however, it is important to note that 3.9% of that has to do with the addition of the new fire truck lease. **Tad** said we ended 2020 with a \$425,000 surplus which will be helpful in October when setting the tax rate. **Dana** said part of that savings included some of the grant money received. **Tad** said emergency services received first responder stipends from COVID funding. He said for tracking purposes, we included these expenses and the grant funds in their budgets, otherwise some would have gone over budget.

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Fire Department – Chief Charlie Corey

Proposed budget of \$600,676 - **Brendan** said we now own the command car after making the last lease payment in 2020 and we are looking to make a lease payment on the new fire truck in 2021. **Eric Pauer** of 12 Westview Road asked how many employees on the Fire Department are enrolled in the NH Retirement System and does the Fire Department proposed 2021 budget include the NH Retirement System increase taking effect in July 2021. **Charlie** said two employees are enrolled, but the NH Retirement System costs are covered in a separate portion of the budget. **Tad** said the NH Retirement System increase is captured in the Personnel Administration budget line item for all full-time employees. **Eric Pauer** said he is also concerned about making payments on a fire truck that we have not received yet. **Tad** said we will not be paying that until the end of 2021. **Charlie** said we made the first payment to the lease company, not to the fire truck manufacturer, so if we don't get the truck, we receive the money back from the lease company. **Drew** said the average cost over the lifetime of the pick-up truck is about \$4,000-\$5,000 annually if it lasts 15 years. **Mike Kimball** of Shady Rock Road asked if the current truck has a plow. **Charlie** said no. **Mike Kimball** asked what the purpose for a plow on the new truck is. **Charlie** said we assist the police, ambulance and ourselves in an emergency when someone is not plowed out. He said it will also enable us to plow our water holes through the winter, so we have access to water in the event of a fire. **Dana** asked about the proposed increase in the fire chief's pay. **David Santuccio** of the Board of Fire Engineers shared pay information that had been collected for the fire chief position in area towns. **Tad** asked that the information be forwarded to him, so he could share it with the Selectboard and Finance Committee members. **David** said he would have **Charlie** do so.

Police Department - Chief Bill Quigley

Proposed budget of \$946,963 - **Bill** said his department made a significant change since their part-time police prosecutor retired at the beginning of December. He said they have brought on an independent contractor who is a bar member attorney with 15-16 years of experience to take over prosecution for the department. **Bill** said the bottom line did not change, but we reduced the "Salaries" line item by \$40,000 and moved it to the new "Police Prosecutor" line item. He said the "Pest Control" proposed 2021 budget is level funded at \$200.

Ambulance Department - Chief Jeff Stewart

Proposed budget of \$255,389 – **Jeff** reviewed the highlights of the proposed budget.

Public Welfare & Health Agencies – Rebecca Purdin

General Assistance proposed budget of \$15,000 – **Rebecca** said that this is level funded from last year. **Tad** said if the budget becomes strained, we have the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Fund as a back-up. **Rebecca** noted the Health Agencies proposed budget for 2021 is \$24,640, which is down slightly from what was appropriated last year.

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Recreation Commission - Rich Vertullo

Proposed budget of \$41,350. **Rich** said the increase is due to an additional monthly dumpster pick-up due to more visitors at the ball field and the cost for portables has increased.

Conservation Commission – Drew Kellner

Proposed budget of \$43,940. **Drew** outlined the highlights of the proposed budget, which included a \$100 increase in “memberships” and everything else level funded.

Highways, Streets & Bridges – Director Mike Wenrich

Proposed budget of \$777,802 – **Mike** said some of the increase in “salaries” is due to our new employee, that was approved last year, working the full year in 2021. **Mike** also noted a \$20,000 increase in the line item for “resurfacing”. He said this line item was cut a few years ago and needs to be brought back up because our infrastructure is growing. He said the increase in “sidewalks” is due to new sidewalks on Mason Road and South Main Street being built this year. **Mike** said “Pierce Pond Dam engineering” represents funds for state required engineering work. **Eric Pauer** said the budget shows \$20,000 for Pierce Pond Dam and a Pierce Pond Dam Grant of \$13,000, what is this and what are we doing to it. **Tad** said Pierce Pond Dam is located at the intersection of Averill Road and Route 13. He said the state told us they would be reclassifying the dam to be a greater hazard classification, based on recent analysis they have done. He said they have not provided us with that analysis yet and it was expected by the end of 2020. **Tad** said, assuming it is reclassified, we will be responsible for conducting engineering analysis on what work needs to be done to that dam. **Tad** said we have a place holder, based on general guidance from the Dam Bureau, that it may be around \$20,000 for the engineering work. He said the state would provide funding for such work at the rate of 65% in a reimbursement grant, if the town applies, and is accepted. **Candice Cunya** of 1 Baldwin Drive asked why the “streetlight conversion project” is \$0 for 2021 and was overspent in 2020. **Mike** said the project was done last year and there were some streetlights that were missed because they were not on the Eversource master list and the additional lights resulted in additional project costs. **Eric Pauer** asked why the “street lighting” line item was \$12,000 in 2020 and \$6,000 in 2021 and what does that cover. **Mike** said it is the electric bill for the streetlights. **Tad** said we replaced all 75 streetlights with LEDs last year and it cut the bill in half. **Matt Mailloux** said when he looks at the 2020 budget, we did not spend a significant portion and now we are proposing a 6% increase for 2021. He asked if **Mike** is confident in the ability to spend these funds in 2021. **Mike** said he can comfortably say that out of all the other departments, his is the most weather-based, so there are uncertainties in the budget. He said the biggest line item that was underspent was “snow and ice management” and that is because it is completely unpredictable. **Brendan** noted this year the Selectboard has asked **Mike** to quantify the costs for cemetery burials and work at Melendy Pond and those figures have been added for 2021.

Sanitation – Mike Wenrich

Proposed budget of \$358,791. **Mike** said COVID played a larger part in this budget. Souhegan Regional Landfill District (SRLD), who we use cooperatively to get rid of

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our trash and recyclables, was a known increase for 2021 with the recycling market not doing well.

DPW Building Warrant Article - Mike said we are asking for a building that we desperately need and the bond cost is \$2.7 million. **Eddie** said we have a video and a PowerPoint presentation that is being finalized for the website and channel 192. **Tad** said we are looking at a 20-year bond and the last round of bond rates were at 1.58%, so we are looking at historically low rates, and we have two bonds being paid off in the next couple of years.

Highway Block Grant to DPW Equipment Cap Reserve Fund Warrant Article - Mike said we have a long way to go in building up the DPW and this warrant article would move \$144,871 in highway block grant funds the town received in 2020 into the DPW Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for future purchases.

Hood Road Improvements Warrant Article for \$60,000 - Mike said DES wetland requirements are significant and we now have a little over \$100,000 in funds for the project. He said he would be sharing engineering plans and other information with the Board at the February 8th meeting for further discussion on this article.

Legal - Tad Putney

Proposed budget of \$35,000. **Tad** recommended a level funded budget.

Building Inspection - Tad Putney

Proposed budget of \$39,075. **Tad** asked that the budget be increased by \$600 to allow for funds to repurpose a recent police cruiser that has come out of rotation and use it to replace the building inspector's car. The Board agreed to a proposed budget of \$39,675.

Regional Association - Tad Putney

Proposed budget of \$3,989.

Communications Tad Putney

Proposed budget of \$125,362. **Tad** noted the increase was largely due to a 3% increase in payments to Hollis for dispatching services.

Cemeteries - Tad Putney

Proposed Budget of \$18,000, which **Tad** noted was level funded.

9:27 **Brendan** recessed the Budget Hearing until Tuesday January 26th 7:00pm

Finance Committee adjourned its meeting; Roll Call Vote Yes 3-0.

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

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9:45pm meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Sharon Sturtevant.

Brendan Denehy

Eddie Arnold

Ron Olsen

Drew Kellner

Dana Ketchen