



**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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**Brookline Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 25, 2021**

1 *Meeting Held Virtually Under Emergency Order #12*

2
3 Committee Attendance: Brian Rater, Matthew Mailloux, Dennis Comeau
4 Public in attendance: none

5
6 **Meeting called to order: 6:33pm**

7
8 Brian Rater (BR) – Welcomed finance committee members to the January meeting. BR
9 announced that the meeting was being held under the provisions of Emergency Order #12. Under
10 this emergency order each member in attendance is required to announce the reason for attending
11 virtually, their location, and if anyone other than themselves is in the room.

12
13 BR- Attended virtually due to social distancing guidance, BR is the only person in the room.
14 Matthew Mailloux (MM) - Attended virtually due to social distancing guidance, MM is the only
15 person in the room. Dennis Comeau (DC) Attended virtually due to social distancing guidance,
16 MM is the only person in the room.

17
18 BR reiterated the requirement that all votes must be recorded by roll call under the emergency
19 order provisions.

20
21 BR asked if there was any public input at this time.

22
23 **There was no public input.**

24
25 BR reviewed the meeting agenda and asked if there were any adjustments to the published
26 agenda.

27
28 **BR stated that he would add approval of the Annual Town Finance Committee Report to**
29 **the agenda. There were no other adjustments.**

31 MM asked for an update on unapproved minutes, given his absence at the previous meeting. BR
32 stated that the minutes from the November 16 meeting were approved 2-0-1 and that he would
33 send the committee minutes from the previous meeting.

34
35 MM asked if the Committee would accept the Brookline School Board Minutes from the public
36 hearing.

37
38 **DC moved to accept the School Board minutes as written. MM seconded. BR entered the**
39 **voting mode and voted yes. MM voted yes. DC voted yes. The motion carried 3-0-0.**

40
41 BR advanced the agenda to review the Annual Town Report from the finance committee. BR
42 stated that he had provided the committee a draft to review. BR asked if there were any
43 amendments to the report.

44
45 MM requested to make one edit to the word “dramatic” in the school funding description, but
46 overall supported the narrative of the state education funding support.

47
48 **DC motioned to approve the annual report as amended. MM seconded. BR entered the**
49 **voting mode and voted yes. MM voted yes. DC voted yes. The motion carried 3-0-0.**

50
51 BR advanced the agenda to review relevant budget dates for the town and school district. BR
52 mentioned that with the on-going impacts of COVID-19, the Town, Brookline School District,
53 and Hollis Brookline COOP all have adopted different plans for their respective annual meetings.

54
55 BR stated that the Finance Committee will meet in joint session with the Brookline School Board
56 on Monday 2/1 and Monday 2/8. Both meetings will be virtual due to COVID-19. The School
57 Board will accept written public comment for their consideration to make amendments to the
58 warrant.

59
60 BR stated the next regular Finance Committee meeting is Wednesday 2/17. BR stated that Town
61 Elections are scheduled for Tuesday 3/9.

62
63 BR stated that the town is tentatively scheduled to hold Town Meeting in person on Wednesday
64 March 24 in person. The date may be further delayed due to COVID-19.

65
66 DC asked when elected terms will end as a result of the delayed Town meeting. BR stated that
67 terms will be held over until Town Meeting certifies the results of Town Elections and newly
68 elected officers would be seated after Town Meeting.

69
70 **There was no further discussion of upcoming budget dates.**

71
72 BR advanced the agenda to provide an update from the DPW committee. BR stated that the
73 DPW Committee will bring forward a warrant article this year for \$2.7 million to fund the costs
74 of the new DPW building. MM asked if that was the total financed cost. BR stated that yes that
75 was the cost of the proposed 20-year bond. Given that bond rates are low, the town will save

76 money interest, even though the total cost is higher than some initial estimates. BR stated that
77 some of the total represents contingency costs that may lapse at the conclusion of the project.
78

79 **There was no further discussion on the DPW committee.**
80

81 BR advanced the agenda to discuss the warrant article to establish a Budget Committee. BR
82 stated that traditionally the Finance Committee does not weigh in on warrant articles that do not
83 have a fiscal appropriation, nor does the committee weigh in on warrants by petition. However,
84 in light of this precedent and decisions of the Selectboard and Brookline School Board to weigh-
85 in, the committee should consider doing the same.
86

87 MM stated that he would have preferred none of the town committees weigh in but seeing that
88 both the Brookline School Board and the Selectboard plan to do so, the Finance Committee
89 should regretfully do the same. MM stated that after having served on the study committee this
90 summer, he still struggled to see a data-driven reason to make this change. MM stated he was
91 leaning toward voting against the warrant article.
92

93 DC stated that he was also leaning against supporting the warrant article and commended the
94 study committee for its work last year. DC said that he feels the new structure would be unlikely
95 to be an improvement and does not see a governance issue with the current structure.
96 DC also raised the concerns of functional issues with the new structure.
97

98 BR stated that this was a unique situation as he serves on both the finance committee and the
99 Hollis Brookline COOP Budget Committee, so he has seen both governance structures in
100 process. BR also stated that voters in town tend to elect people who support the school system
101 and changing the governance structure would be unlikely to yield different results.
102

103 BR also stated concerns of administratively constraints with the SAU administration given their
104 numerous duties to several other boards. This new Budget Committee would potentially
105 overburden the district's current resources. On the other hand, BR stated that sometimes the
106 finance committee struggles to be taken seriously or be included in relevant conversations.
107 Albeit, BR says he is still not convinced for the need for change.
108

109 **There was no further discussion on the budget committee warrant article.**
110

111 BR asked if there were reports from any other committees. There were no other reports.
112

113 BR asked for a motion to recess the committee hearing to join the joint budget hearing with the
114 Selectboard beginning at 7pm.
115

116 **MM motioned to recess the meeting. DC seconded. BR entered the voting mode and voted**
117 **yes. MM voted yes. DC voted yes. The motion carried 3-0-0.**
118

119 **The committee reconvened at 7:03pm with the Selectboard for public hearing on the**
120 **proposed town budget.**
121

122 *See Selectboard meeting minutes for Budget Hearing Minutes*
123
124 **BR asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. MM moved to adjourn; BR seconded.**
125
126 **BR entered the voting mode and voted yes. MM voted yes. The motion carried 2-0-0.**
127
128 **The meeting was adjourned at 9:28pm**

DRAFT