



TOWN OF BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE SELECTBOARD

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Minutes Selectboard Monday, August 22, 2022

Selectboard members present: Eddie Arnold, Brendan Denehy, Dana Ketchen, Steve Russo, and Ed Perry along with Town Administrator Scott Butcher. Also present: Rich Vertullo, Tom Larochelle and Yvonne Gutierrez.

6:30pm Eddie opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and read the ground rules for hybrid meetings.

Public Input and Announcements

On behalf of the Selectboard, **Eddie** thanked Transfer Station attendants for their efforts to keep things going these past few weeks in the heat and noted they do have the public works building now for water and AC breaks. He said **Mike** said he is hoping to use ARPA funds to make working conditions more comfortable for them. **Ed** said thank you to our Fire Department and all the surrounding Fire Departments who helped with battling the brush fire last week and thanked all the town's people who dropped off snacks and water, it was much appreciated by everyone. **Scott** announced an off cycle meeting on Monday, September 12th for the opening of the TAP 2 project bids.

Approve Minutes

Brendan moved, seconded by Steve, to approve the public minutes from the Monday, July 25th meeting as amended; Voted Yes 5-0. Dana moved, seconded by Brendan, to approve the public minutes from the Monday, August 8th and Saturday, August 13th meetings as written; Voted Yes 5-0. Dana moved, seconded by Steve to approve set 2 of the non-public minutes from the Monday, July 25th meeting as amended; Voted Yes 5-0. Brendan moved, seconded by Steve, to approve sets 1, 3 & 4 of the non-public minutes from the Monday, August 8th meeting as written; Voted Yes 5-0. Dana moved, seconded by Steve, to approve the non-public minutes from the Saturday, August 13th meeting as written; Voted Yes 5-0.

Sign Warrants for Payment

Steve moved, seconded by Ed, to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #33 in the amount of \$146,077.87, Payroll Warrant #34 in the amount of \$68,652.87, and Police Detail in the amount of \$210; Voted Yes 5-0.

Approve Bond Street Bridge Project Warrant for \$4,109.94

Dana moved, seconded by Steve, for payment to be made to Hoyle Tanner from the Bond Street Bridge Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$4,109.94; Voted Yes 5-0.

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Credit Cards for Dept Heads and Policy Review

Scott said there are times when we need to make purchases for the town in a timely manner like signing up for training courses, ordering special equipment, etc. He said all departments would have separate accounts with cards that would roll up into one master account. He said he spoke with TD Bank and feels it would be worthwhile to hear about their program. **Scott** said the Fire Dept already has one and the Police Dept is not interested at this time. He said all other departments should have a \$5,000 limit. **Brendan** said he supports the idea but would add that card holders must be required to follow the town's purchasing policy. **Eddie** said the Selectboard's office would oversee the master account. **Scott** said he will have more details once he meets with TD Bank.

BK Systems Quote to Replace Fire Alarm Control Panel

Eddie said we received a quote from BK Systems for \$4,615 to replace the fire control panel downstairs that was damaged in the electrical storm. **Brendan moved, seconded by Steve, to waive the purchasing policy and approve up to \$5,000 from the Town Facilities Capital Reserve Fund for the replacement of the fire alarm control panel in the lower level of the Town Hall by BK Systems, if it is not covered by insurance; Voted Yes 5-0.** **Scott** will call Primex to inquire about insurance coverage.

Discuss Additional Block Grant Revenue Hearing on Sept 6th

Eddie read "Per RSA 31:95-b, a public hearing will be held at 7:00pm on Tuesday September 6, 2022, in the Town Hall meeting room at 1 Main Street to accept and spend unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$123,147.68 from the State of NH Special Highway Block Grant Program. The agenda, including Zoom link, will be posted on the town website under the Selectboard page on Friday September 2nd."

Review ARPA Fund Requests

Scott said the notice went out to additional departments and committees to submit ARPA fund requests by Friday, September 2nd. **Brendan** said he did not know why this was on the agenda and would like more context in preparing for meetings in the future.

7:00pm Recreation Commission Chair – To Discuss Use of Grove

Rich Vertullo, Recreation Commission Chair, said when he came on the Recreation Board in 2009, there was a Grove manager who handled everything. He said Recreation oversaw the monthly bills, but the manager handled everything else. He said the membership fees covered the expenses with no real gains or losses until the 2019 season when the Grove lost \$10,000 and Recreation was asked by the Town Administrator and Selectboard to take over. He said we identified problems, created a business model, backed it up with a budget and a plan to execute, but the 2019 manager amicably decided to move on. So we placed an ad for a manager but by February had received no applicants. **Rich** said Recreation member **Yvonne Gutierrez** agreed to step in and manage the Grove with the other Recreation Board members. He said by the end of 2020, the Grove gained back the \$10,000 lost the year before. In 2021 we invested \$15,000 in tree removal and parking lot expansion improvements to the Grove. That same year we were asked by a resident to do yoga classes somewhere in town for a fee. It was decided the Grove was the best place for a 1 hour once a week class after all

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membership commitments were met, with a 1.5 hour buffer between Grove closing and class beginning. **Rich** said people are always saying there is nothing to do here in Brookline so we thought this will add an activity, and secondly, maybe make a few bucks. **Rich** said in 2022 a resident complained to the Selectboard about the beach being closed for the 1 hour. There have also been comments made that the Recreation Commission was meeting in secret and not disclosing financial records. He said what difference does it make where we meet as a Board and our financial reports are public record reported by the town treasurer, so he has no idea what that was all about but as a 13 year volunteer, these comments really bothered him and he doesn't feel like Recreation got any backing from the Selectboard, it was a lukewarm response. He said Recreation was good enough to take over in 2019 and turn things around but now a resident can dictate how the Recreation Commission runs the Grove. **Rich** said we are volunteers, it is not our job to dictate to a resident from an authority standpoint. We manage the Grove just as we manage the Ball Park and he feels a dangerous precedent is being set here, when a resident can tell us how to do our job. He said the Selectboard is our boss, we work for who appointed us. There is nothing worse than going to work every day and knowing that your boss doesn't have your back. If we were out of line and doing something egregious then by all means put us in our place, but 1 hour once a week for an activity is not egregious. And the precedent that was set at the last Selectboard meeting is for 2 consecutive weeks now, you've had people on the beach during the yoga class that are not listening, that same resident said, "you can't tell us to leave the beach, and neither can the police". He said what are we, as recreation members, going to do about it, that's not our job. Last night the yoga class had to be cancelled because the resident said, "this is a public beach, and we are not leaving". **Rich** said we need to have rules, or this is madness. If we are not able to run the Grove with reasonable rules and get the backing of the Selectboard, if it is above our purview to handle it, then we are giving the Grove back to the Selectboard politely. We will finish out 2022 but going into 2023 we will not manage it. This is a dangerous precedent you're setting, volunteers are dwindling, and you are not going to find people like us, nobody wants to come out of their house to deal with unnecessary aggravation. **Eddie** apologized and said he is sorry that Recreation didn't get the support they needed. He said when the complaint came to the Selectboard his reaction was we don't manage the Grove, not to put more on your plate, but more from the standpoint that you are the people that know the ins and outs. **Rich** said and after that, the resident sent the email directly to Recreation and we replied, as a Board, with a very brief and to the point response. **Rich** said all we needed was for the Selectboard to say, "the Recreation Commission manages the Grove, if you have a problem, attend a meeting, volunteer, do whatever you want but, we appointed them, and it is their call. But that didn't happen and because of that we have no authority, and we look like clowns, it's beyond aggravating. **Dana** said we are obligated to look out for the residents of Brookline and hear their concerns, it went to you then came back to us. **Rich** said but nothing was done. **Dana** said she has a problem with it being an activity with someone who has a business for profit. **Rich** said and we are getting a piece of that. You have no problem with volleyball bringing in tens of thousands of dollars at the ballfield, the only difference is that is taxpayer money, and the Grove is not. **Dana** asked **Rich** to take it down, and he said I'm sorry, but this is what you get. **Ed** said this shouldn't be what we get, when a person from the town comes to us they are our boss too, and even if it's just

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one person, he is going to listen to them every single time, they pay taxes here. He said no one wants anyone being harassed and when this was brought to us we did not set a precedent, before you guys walked out of the room, we said this is still in your hands 100%. Nobody took anything away from you that night, in that instance we represented two parties, a member of our town and the people who handle the Grove and we have to look at them equally, when people have concerns it has to be addressed and people have to come here. **Ed** said he loves the way Recreation runs the Grove, he is there all the time. If there is a complaint, we have to bring it to you, it is not a knock on you guys to address a complaint and at the end of it we left it in your hands, we all agreed that this is something you guys should handle, but what message would we be sending to the community if the Selectboard heard a complaint and said we have a Board that handles that, we don't want to hear your opinion, get lost. **Ed** said he also said in that meeting that although the police have no authority to make people leave the beach, people react to their presence differently and 9 out of 10 people would leave if the police politely asked, the one person who doesn't could be a problem. **Ed** said if people refuse to leave then call the police to come and calm things down. **Rich** said if Recreation says the beach is closed people need to leave, **Ed** said, and we stated that. **Rich** said but was it said to the resident, **Eddie** said it was not. **Ed** said we did not suggest to anyone that Recreation did anything wrong, please don't walk away thinking that we don't support you. **Rich** said this group will not walk into another season without 100% backing from the Selectboard. **Scott** said what history do we have that says the police can't make people leave. **Eddie** said there is no ordinance giving the police the authority to enforce that the beach is closed. **Tom** said we listen to everyone's complaints. and we do something about it. He said the Grove is closed at 6pm and we would close the gates, but someone ran their truck into them. **Tom** said cleaning the beach is important in the morning because you wouldn't believe what we find left behind. He also said he found someone living in their camper in the parking lot this past winter. **Dana** said she really doesn't want to talk about this anymore. She said you can't say the beach is closed and leave it wide open. **Rich** said when the town hall is closed, he can't come down here at midnight and say he wants to come in and watch TV because this is my room, you would say to me the Town Hall is closed come back tomorrow, because there are rules. **Dana** said please don't talk in that condescending point of view, we don't deserve to be spoken to that way. **Rich** said I'm sorry, but **Dana** just said she doesn't want to talk about this anymore, and he feels it's because it is not important to her, but it is important to us. **Eddie** said if we can't find a balance than he would rather have the yoga class for one hour once a week then lose Recreation. He said he will tell the resident himself if the Board agrees. **Yvonne** reviewed the way the Grove operates since Recreation took over. She said she runs everything by the Recreation Board, and everyone is informed before decisions are made. She said last year they dealt with racial issues when a resident asked and expected them to remove a Spanish family that joined the Grove, and even called the police because she didn't do it. **Yvonne** said employees from Camp Tevya were allowed there anytime they wanted but every morning she would have to go and clean up needles, heroin spoons, condoms and wine bottles before employees and members arrived. She said once she spoke with the Camp Tevya Manager and set rules and then suggested a curfew for Camp Tevya employees, the drug paraphernalia and alcohol

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bottles stopped showing up. **Yvonne** said also we used to close the beach for swimming lessons, no one was allowed in the water except swim lesson students, that was the rule. She said vandalism has gone way down since she has been communicating with **Chief Quigley**. **Yvonne** said it's important for you to know, it is not just one person making these decisions, it is the entire Recreation Board running the Grove. **Eddie, Steve, Brendan** and **Ed** are in support of the Recreation Commission in this matter. **Dana** said she is disappointed and feels a little bit bullied, she feels that the discussion could have been more civilized tonight. She said she doesn't like how **Rich's** voice was raised towards her, we see things differently and that is all it is. **Rich** said it's nothing personal but there is a history here, 2 years ago **Dana** reached out to him personally to complain that Recreation wasn't providing meeting minutes, no mention about anything else that we do, just where are your meeting minutes, like we were doing something in secret, so if you're wondering why I'm the way I am there is a reason, my apologies respectfully to you as a Selectboard member. **Eddie** said he will take some of the blame for that because the Selectboard has not reached out to Recreation as often as we should. **Rich** said we don't need a pat on the back, but in the rare instance we reach out to you guys, like with the parking lot, we needed your help, we worked together, and it worked, it was amazing. **Dana** said she is not going to sit here and be spoken to that way, she will not put up with it. **Rich** said he apologized to her, what does she want him to do, bow. **Dana** said she doesn't want him to speak in that tone of voice period, it's unacceptable. **Rich** said I'm sorry, I'm emotional. **Scott** suggested an ordinance not specific to the Grove to give the Police the ability to enforce whatever the towns wishes are. He said other towns have rules from dawn to dusk no trespassing on town property if you are not a town official and do not have business on the premises otherwise, the police can ask you to leave and if you don't they can arrest you for trespassing. **Eddie** said he doesn't want to restrict the ability for people to go to the Grove outside of membership hours or special events. **Dana** said when she was elected to the Selectboard she spent countless hours reviewing all town department meeting minutes in preparation to sit here and when she got to Recreation there were no minutes. **Eddie moved, seconded by Brendan, to give the Recreation Commission the authority to close Max Cohen Memorial Grove for special events, regular or irregular, and maintenance, and further to give the Recreation Commission the ability to have other persons removed from the Grove during these times; Voted Yes 4-1, Dana voted no.** **Rich** apologized again to **Dana**, he said he meant no disrespect he was just representing his people. **Brendan** said it used to be, when the Grove was closed it was closed, now that has changed. He said moving forward, the Planning Board is getting ready to update the masterplan and asked Recreation to envision how to incorporate the Grove into the masterplan. **Yvonne** said she has already started the process.

Discuss Draught Conditions Per RSA 41-11 B

Brendan suggested the town stop irrigating the Town Hall and Safety Complex lawns due to draught conditions. He said the lawns are pretty established now and should recover if we stop watering. **Dana moved, seconded by Brendan, to shut off the irrigation systems at the Town Hall and Safety Complex; Voted Yes 4-1, Eddie voted no.** The Board strongly suggests that residents limit their water use where they can and encourages them not to water their lawns with their well water.

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Department Head Communication to Selectboard

Eddie said **Brendan** and **Dana** reached out to **Chief Stewart** regarding the radio equipment purchase that was relayed to **Scott** but had not yet reached the Selectboard. **Eddie** said **Scott's** feeling is that he has a lot on his plate right now so if the department heads can copy the Selectboard Chair on emails, the Chair can then distribute them to the other Board members and solve the communication problem. The Board agreed.

Set Date EM Tabletop Exercise

Scott said no date has been set yet.

Review 2022-2023 Calendar of Events

Scott reviewed the calendar of events up to and beyond town meeting in March 2023. **Dana** said for this year's budget is there any guidance that the Board wants to consider moving toward the end of the year concerning utility cost increases. **Brendan** said at the September department head meeting it can be mentioned if the town needs money for something can the departments hold off on certain line items until next year. **Scott** said next meeting we will review YTD expenses and revenues. **Steve** said ask **Patti** about the tax and motor vehicle revenue status.

Review Mail Folder

The Board reviewed the mail folder.

Discuss Energy Committee's Town Hall HVAC Recommendation

Brendan said the Energy Committee is recommending bids for a propane furnace or possibly two depending on the recommendation, with the option of an electric water heater. **Brendan** said also we need to determine if the Fire Station propane tank is large enough to accommodate both the Town Hall and the Fire Station. **Brendan** said the Energy Committee will be putting in a request for ARPA funding.

Structural Analysis Quote

Scott said **Steve Goan** proposed a charge of \$1,000 for conducting a site visit at the Town Hall to generate a proposal for the structural analysis.

Notice to Appoint Open Government Implementation Group Members

Scott said he has received two interested parties **Puneet Mangal** and **Kate Elkins** for at-large resident members. ***Brendan moved, seconded by Dana, for the Board to give notice to appoint Puneet Mangal and Kate Elkins as Resident At-Large Members to the Open Government Implementation Group at the next meeting; Voted Yes 5-0.***

Board and Committee Updates.

EDC Advisory Committee - **Steve** updated the Board.

Planning Board Meeting - **Steve** said the Board will now be meeting twice a month.

SRLD - **Eddie** updated the Board.

Voting Schedule

The Board set their schedule for voting day.

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Building Inspector Vehicle Repairs

Scott said the Building Inspector's car needs new tires and brakes and the check engine light is on, so we need to get it in for maintenance. **Eddie** said there are left over tires from the PD stored at the Annex that may fit, they don't fit any police vehicles.

Review Next Agenda

It was agreed the following topics will be discussed at the next meeting:

YTD Revenue & Expense

2023 Budget Parameters

Warrant Article Ideas

Meet with Election Officials

Furnace Bids

Propane Bids

ARPA Fund Requests

Finalize CIP

Special Highway Block Grant Hearing

Credit Card Policy

9:15pm Eddie moved, seconded by Steve, to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c)reputation and (l)legal and potentially others; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

9:52pm Eddie moved, second by Brendan, to come out of non-public session and seal the minutes; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.

9:52 pm meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Sharon Sturtevant.

Eddie Arnold

Brendan Denehy

Dana Ketchen

Steve Russo

Ed Perry