



**TOWN OF  
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
SELECTBOARD**

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*Minutes  
Selectboard  
Monday, August 31, 2020*

Selectboard members present: Brendan Denehy, Eddie Arnold, Ron Olsen, Dana Ketchen and Drew Kellner along with Town Administrator Tad Putney.  
Also present: North Branch representatives Roland Pothier and James Schwartzkopf, architect Kurt Lauer, Mike Wenrich, Cindy LaCroix, Brian Rater, Matt Mailloux, and Jan Watt.

**6:30pm Brendan** opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approve Minutes**

*Eddie moved, seconded by Drew, to approve the public minutes from the Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup> meeting as written; Voted Yes 5-0. Drew moved, seconded by Eddie, to approve 5 sets of non-public minutes from the Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup> meeting as written; Voted Yes 5-0.*

**Master Patrolman Retirement**

**Brendan** read the retirement letter from Master Patrolman **Bob Pelletier** following 20 years of service with the Brookline Police Department. His retirement will be effective on September 9, 2020.

**Election CARES Act Grant Agreement and Funding**

*Eddie moved, seconded by Dana, to authorize Brendan to sign the CARES Act Grant Agreement with the State of NH; Voted Yes 5-0. Drew moved, seconded by Dana, to accept up to \$12,461.45 in CARES Act funds from the State of NH for the elections; Voted Yes 5-0.*

**Finalize Election Schedule for the Primary**

The Board finalized scheduled coverage for Board members at the upcoming primary election on September 8<sup>th</sup> at Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

**North Branch Construction Management Role for New DPW Facility**

North Branch Construction members met with the Board to clarify that the proposal they submitted in 2019 includes “construction management” of the new DPW facility not just a “general contractor” role. **Roland** said North Branch works with the customer through the preliminary phase of design and cost estimates to come up with a “guaranteed maximum price” for the project. He said the fee for construction

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management of the project is 5% of the GMP. **James** said their approach is to guide the customer through all the preliminary planning, the construction phase, and through the one-year warranty period. **James** said partnering with a construction management firm will be important when presenting the project at town meeting and asking for approval of a bond. **Tad** said the town has used different models for construction oversight in the past, and asked North Branch to give us a sense of the level of experience the person working on the site will have. **James** said all of their people have at least thirty years of construction experience.

**Discuss Preliminary 2021 Budget Guidance with Finance Committee**

**Tad** said within the next two weeks he will be sending out the annual memo to department heads to start planning their budgets for 2021. He said at this time we look at two things: preliminary pay increases and assumed fuel prices. He said two general industry surveys project pay increases of 2.8% and 2.9% for 2021 and suggested a preliminary pay increase of 2.75% for Brookline employees. **Tad** said, based on EIA research of estimated fuel prices for 2021, he recommends using \$2.50 per gallon for gas and \$2.75 per gallon for diesel. **Eddie** said he would like to see preliminary pay increases set at 2.5% and then revisit after our peer town survey is completed. **Drew** said he agrees with **Eddie**. **Dana** said she would rather start at 2%. **Brian** said the Finance Committee agrees with 2.5% preliminary guidance for pay increases. **Drew moved, seconded by Eddie, to offer guidance of 2.5% for preliminary pay increases; Voted Yes 5-0.** **Eddie** said he likes the recommendation of \$2.50 per gallon for gas and \$2.75 per gallon for diesel. **Tad** asked if the board wants to advise department heads to keep budgets “flat to declining” or anything different. **Drew** said we need to take the DPW warrant article into consideration. **Eddie** said we don’t think the departments inflate anything. **Brian** said the Finance Committee is concerned about the potential impacts of COVID-19 on revenues for next year, so we need to be flexible in the event cuts are required.

**Discuss Oral Board Process for Ambulance Hiring Process**

**Tad** said based on consultations with our emergency services heads, he is recommending the following for the ambulance hiring process:

- MRI provides 6-8 qualified candidates by October 9<sup>th</sup>.
- A five-member Oral Board interviews the candidates the weeks of October 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Oral Board comprised of: Brian Duggan, from MRI, serving as Chair; two members from Brookline Ambulance Service; two TBD external individuals with significant NH EMS experience.
- Week of October 26<sup>th</sup> – Oral Board recommends 3-4 finalists to the Selectboard
- Week of November 2<sup>nd</sup> Emergency Service heads and **Tad** meet with finalists on the same day the Board interviews them. Chiefs provide input to the Board.
- November 6<sup>th</sup> – Conditional offer extended.

**Dana** said there might be value in having someone that has no experience be involved in the process, **Drew** said he wouldn’t object to it, but it would increase the number of members. **Eddie** said he is not sure that is the best use of resources and time. **Drew** suggested **Dennis Comeau** as a member with extensive staffing experience in place of

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one of the two members with NH EMS experience. **Eddie** said that fits with the “resident at large” approach and checks all the boxes. **Tad** will contact **Dennis**.

**Review Health Insurance Options for 2021**

**Tad** said we have provided our current plan to non-union employees for eight years and union members for five. Currently, our employees pay 20% of the premium, which has been the case since 2017. In 2015/2016 they paid 15% and 2014 they paid 10%. **Tad** said the HealthTrust representative is not doing in person visits at this time, but she is available to join us by phone at the September 21st meeting to discuss options. **Tad** noted that HealthTrust provides a slightly less expensive option, which requires employees to go to certain locations for things like labs and x-rays. He noted that SAU employees have been on this less expensive plan for about five years. Board members expressed interest in this option for 2021.

**Discuss Drought Information Received from the State**

The Board reviewed the weekly drought information and recommendations received from the State of NH and discussed whether restricting irrigation at town facilities was a good idea considering the investment we have made in the lawns. **Tad** said based on a conversation with **Rich Vertullo** of the Recreation Commission, they can eliminate the second daily watering at the Ball Park. **Drew** said he is hesitant to shut the system down at the Ball Park given its significant use at this time. **Eddie** suggested we reach out to Wilsons Ground Maintenance for advice on shutting the irrigation systems off at the Town Hall and Safety Complex. **Drew** said we should shut down the systems at these two locations unless **Travis** advises otherwise.

***8:11pm Brendan moved, seconded by Eddie, to move into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) reputation; Board may discuss additional non-public topics; Roll Call Vote Yes 5-0.***

***8:44pm Brendan moved, seconded by Eddie, to come out of non-public session and seal the minutes; Roll Call Vote 5-0.***

8:45pm 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