TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Monday, July 29th, 2025 – 6:00 PM

West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, Conf. Room (1st floor).

MINUTES

PRESENT: Roland Sickenberger, Chair; Catherine Lamica, Vice Chair; Theresa Cofske, Town Administrator; Beth Gobeille, Exec. Asst. to TA/BOS; Fire Chief Rich Lapierre; Paul Lapenas, CAC; Mike Drolet, Recreation.

GUEST: Doreen Piechota, resident.

ABSENT: Brad Merkel, Clerk

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

6:01pm: Meeting called to order.

MINUTES FOR April 29th (Open and Executive Sessions), May 29th and July 8th Open Sessions moved to the August 19th BOS meeting agenda for Approval.

Motion to approve the June 15th minutes made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye – 2 yes.

US 250th CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE FORMATION –

Chief Lapierre explained that next year will be the Nation's 250th Anniversary. He would like to form a 250th Celebration Committee for the Town Community and the event would include fireworks. He'd like it to be held the same night of the bonfire. He has spoken with an orchard nearby and they would be able to shoot the fireworks from there, so they can be seen from the Common. He explained further that the committee would raise all the money to hold the event. Funds received would be deposited into a donation account set up with the Town. He will work with the Town Accountant on this.

Mr. Sickenberger asked how many members would be on the committee. Chief Lapierre would like to have 5. Ms. Piechota added that she'd like to be involved in the committee as well, along with her husband, Steve Piechota (Emergency Mgmt. Committee). Committee appointments will be made for this one-time event and the committee will be dissolved when all is done.

Ms. Lamica asked about the structure of the committee. Would it involve/work with Town depts/committees. We will need certifications from organizations to set off the fireworks display. Chief Lapierre would like to get the fireworks company booked soon. This will most likely cost roughly $20,000 to put on. Chief Lapierre added that the Town had raised $26,000 for a rescue boat and sees no issue raising money for this important event through sponsoring through local Businesses, etc. Ms. Lamica would like to see a process be put in place. Chief Lapierre will run the committee formation and minutes of their meetings back to the BOS.

Mr. Lapenas added that West Brookfield Community TV would be able to air the promotion of the event on Channel 191 and on their You Tube channel.

Ms. Lamica stated that they will need committee members who have strong organizational skills.

Motion to form a 5-person 250th Celebration Committee for the Town, which will disband once the event and any related activities have ended made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye – 2 yes.

It was noted that all appointments to this committee will be sworn in by the Select Board.

FURTHER FY2026 APPOINTMENTS FOR APPROVAL –

Ms. Gobeille explained that Conservation Commission have indicated the specific terms for their members' appointments after locating the charge/formation terms of the commission.

Motion to approve the following appointments for FY26 made by Ms. Lamica.

Steve Carroll for a 2-year term to the Conservation Committee, expiring 6/30/2027
Wayne Claybourne for a 2-year term to the Conservation Committee, expiring 6/30/2027
Rich Provencher for a 3-year term to the Conservation Committee, expiring 6/30/2028
Paul Lussier for a 3-year term to the Conservation Committee, expiring 6/30/2028
Keith Tytula for a 1-year term as the Board of Health Representative to the Stormwater Committee, expiring 6/30/2026
Ian Dubord for a 1-year term to the Emergency Management Committee, term expiring 6/30/2026
Arico Bellizzi for a 1-year term to the Emergency Management Committee, term expiring 6/30/2026
Richard Lapierre for a 1-year term to the Emergency Management Committee, term expiring 6/30/2026
Alex Price for a 3-year term to the Advisory Committee, term expiring 6/30/2028

Second by: Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye – 2 yes.

WEST BROOKFIELD COMMUNITY TV STATION MANAGER JOB DESCRIPTION FOR APPROVAL -

Paul Lapenas, WB Community TV/Cable Advisory Committee explained that the WBTV will be broadcasting Select Board meetings, have a running bulletin board of events on Channel 191 to Spectrum TV subscribers in Town and posting to their You Tube page. They are looking for a Station Manager for the station, a position which is 15 hours/week and would ideally like someone with 3-5 years of experience with a 52-week/year commitment. Mr. Lapenas further explained that CAC is currently receiving current franchise fees from Spectrum, which equates to around $19,000/year and have accrued around $144,00 to date over the last 7 years. This position of running the studio is a 1-person job and this individual would report to the Cable Advisory Committee.

They would like to have Ryan (RyGuyDigital) to run the studio temporarily as interim Station Manager until a part-time person is hired. The job description presented to the Select Board is for the future, but works for today. If Ryan was hired for the Station Manager position this would create some compliance issues. It was agreed that he would step down from the CAC, but could still advise/consult them on matters.

Mr. Lapenas stated that the Committee has another enthusiastic individual, Sean Carroll, who they would like to join CAC shortly.

Ms. Cofske asked if the position is really an Access TV Coordinator, rather than a Studio Manager.

It was agreed that the position would be called Studio Coordinator, rather than Studio Manager. The position would be appointed by Board of Selectmen, with direct supervision provided by CAC. Ms. Cofske would work out the job description details with Mr. Lapenas.

Mr. Lapenas added that Travis Baker/Station Manager from Warren has been very helpful to CAC and could have input re: the functionality of WBTV. He also stated that Warren has students working at their Station and they receive yearly stipends, which is something that could be an option for West Brookfield.

Motion to approve the Job Description with the position as Station Coordinator and with a revision to the reporting structure made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye – 2 yes.

TREASURY WARRANTS –

Motion to ratify the approval of FY26 AP Warrant #2 and FY26 Payroll Warrant #2, as presented made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye – 2 yes.

OTHER BUSINESS –

WBTV continued: Mr. Lapenas commented that WBTV would be prepared to record meetings as soon as August 5th, which could be a dry run and should be able to start recording meetings from September 2nd. The dry run recording can be sent to the Select Board to see if they are happy with that type of recording. WBTV is focusing on giving the live feed to Spectrum, then over to CAC, and back to Spectrum for the 800+ subscribers.

In addition, CAC is currently not looking at pursuing participation from folks at home (virtual participants). They would like to automate the recording for other Committee meetings, including Advisory and could have remote control of the meetings up and running, with using engineering services from Ocker Technologies.

CAC will investigate current setup/wires in the Town Administrator's office (previous Select Board conference room).

Trash/Junk, ZEO Nick Thomo: Ms. Cofske described that there are various properties with trash/junk on site. ZEO Nick Thomo will be at the next Select Board meeting with the citations he's issued with photos of those properties. He is asking to use Town Counsel to bring the owners to court if they do not resolve their situations. Ms. Cofske said that Mr. Thomo had wanted to obtain legal counsel last Fiscal Year, but was told that it would be addressed in FY26. There will be an open discussion on the properties. Additionally, a

lawyer, representing an abutter to one of the properties cited is citing the Town's bylaw, Ch12, Section 3, which he feels does not give clear direction. Mr. Thomo stated to Ms. Cofske that the fees issued to owners of those properties cited are handled by the court.

Fire Dept. Grant/CPR: Ms. Cofske closed out the FY25 Grant for the automatic CPR Machine.

Green Communities Weatherization Grant: Ms. Cofske indicated 2 invoices have been received. Projects at the Highway Dept. and West Brookfield Elementary School have been fully completed. Gloria/CMRPC will circle back in October re: the 2025 final report and will work with Ms. Cofske to complete.

Town Counsel: Ms. Cofske explained that there has been lots of communication recently with Town Counsel. She will send out an email to the Board with specifics tomorrow.

USDA Filing: Ms. Cofske explained that Water Dept. have submitted their filing for a grant and that the "Team," (Water Dept., Financial Team, Legal, Engineers and RCAP Solutions) pulled together to get this done.

STAM: HCIS/GIC rates for Health Insurance have gone up for many municipalities/schools. Ms. Lamica explained that there will be a 20% increase for GIC insurance in October 2025, which is a 2nd increase this year. Reserves were too low for some Towns and they don't have the money to pay this 2nd increase. Ms. Cofske explained that Health Insurance will be discussed at an MMA forum in Wrentham in September, which she would like to be at. There is the potential to get together with other Towns and support legislation regarding health insurance cost increases. Ms. Lamica may attend as well.

Highway Superintendent contract: This will most likely be included in the August 19th BOS meeting.

Recreation/Issue on Beach/Lake Wickaboag: Mr. Drolet explained that they had an issue at the beach where a company was filling a tank with water from the lake. He believes the company was from Athol. There were questions if there is anything in our bylaws preventing this from happening. Mr. Drolet has reached out to the Conservation Commission and is waiting to see if they had any information on this company or any regulations regarding withdrawal of water from local ponds/lakes.

NEXT regular BOS MEETING will be scheduled for August 5th, although it will be determined if the meeting needs to be moved to August 19th as there may not be a quorum.

7:11pm - Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye – 2 yes.

8/11/25 3:32pm

Authorized Party for the BOS Date/Time

BOS Clerk Date/Time