TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 – 6:00 PM

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

MINUTES

STAFF PRESENT: Roland Sickenberger, Chair; Catherine Lamica, Vice Chair; Theresa Cofske, Town Administrator; Beth Gobeille, Exec. Asst. to TA/BOS; Ryan Shepard, CAC.

ABSENT: Brad Merkel, Clerk

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

6:00pm: Meeting called to order.

MINUTES FOR September 2nd BOS Open Session meeting approval.
Motion to approve the minutes of the September 2nd Open BOS Session for approval made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

LAKE WICKABOAG SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR EAGLE HILL SCHOOL'S FALL REGATTA –
Motion to approve a Special Use Permit on Lake Wickaboag for Eagle Hill School to use the beach and parking lot for their Fall Regatta on Saturday, October 25th from 9am-3pm made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

TRANSFER OF 27 WELCOME RD. FROM TOWN TO CONSERVATION – Ms. Gobeille explained that for the Rt. 9 project needed D20 (part of 543 West Main Street) as an easement. D20, owned by the Conservation Commission will be swapped with 27 Welcome Road, currently owned by the Town. Conservation has agreed to the swap.
Motion to transfer the care, custody and control of 27 Welcome Road, West Brookfield to the Conservation Commission made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2 yes).

GAS & PLUMBING RATES INCREASE – Ms. Gobeille explained that the rates had not been updated from 2012 and were quite low compared to other nearby Towns. Both the Gas & Plumbing Inspectors are in agreement with the price increase.
Motion to approve the increase in the Gas & Plumbing rates as presented (attached) made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

SRF LOAN APPLICATION AUTHORIZATION TO FILE AND CERTIFY AUTHORITY TO FILE – Ms. Cofske explained that this is another opportunity for a loan for the Leland Road Water project. These documents are required by SRF prior to any possible loan information can be discussed and will allow Kathleen Landry to be the

contact for the Town filing applications, etc. Many steps will need to be taken in this process of achieving a loan.

Motion for West Broofield Water Department's Administrative Assistant, Kathleen Landry to be authorized on behalf of the Town of West Brookfield to file applications and execute agreements for grant and/or loan assistance as well as furnishing such information, data and documents per the application made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

TREASURY WARRANTS -

Motion to approve FY26 AP Warrant #6 and FY26 Payroll Warrant #6, as presented made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

TA REPORT –

Green Communities – In the process of closing this out. Final report to be submitted this Friday to DOR. Will look at eligibility for next year's grants. Possible inclusions: HVAC system. Grants could be up to 250k. Police Chief is looking for a new cruiser, possible electric vehicle w/ charging station.

Town Hall Restoration project – Priming/painting this week. Approval of doors soon, submitted by architect. Roof investigation and structural engineer to assess structural integrity of the far wall. It's bowing due to water damage, possibly from roof. No numbers yet.

Library exterior – Town approved $25K for soft wash years ago for the back exterior wall and its repointing. New contractor (specializing in historic brick) gave current quote of $55-$60k to do the same wash/repointing. Library Chair of Trustees is aware of the issue and will discuss at next meeting. Money in reserves could be possibly put towards getting this done. The contractor indicated that the majority of walls need to be repointed. This would cost $700,000. Contractor says if we don't, that's a problem.

Solar project – Harold/RRG is reviewing all documents from Bishop & Associated, prior property inspection services for the Board of Assessors re: Pure Sky Pilot Agreement. RRG wants to be more involved in Pilot agreement process.

Leland Road Water Project – 2 options. Negative factors to application impacted grant % as we have no associated debt. Grant funding would be higher because of this. Ms. Cofske indicated we have 2 scenarios: 1st: $6,604,000 loan over 37 period @ 3.125% rate. Annual payment about $303,000 /year. Loan funding available. Can commit in October. 2nd: Wait for grant funding. Just under 1 million with a $5,616,000 loan. $258,000 annual payment at same interest rate. This requires successful exclusion. We have commercial user, Concrete, which comprises 30% of the water and it makes it a tough sell. Joe/USDA helping to pitch to D.C.

Elementary School – applied for MSDA funding for all new doors and windows. Town would have to contribute $1.5-2 million to this project. Concerns raised about other schools and their needs. Schools will participate more with sharing financials with the Town. WBES to support proposition 2 ½.

Budget FY27 – Town Accountant has reviewed FY25 spending and we have used over 90% of budget. Budget concerns with using free cash each year and the amount of line items in budget, which the Town has no control over. Preparation of an override. Be prepared for significant cuts in the Town. The Town should know numbers in free cash soon. Budget issues will be revisited each BOS meeting. Get all Town Depts. involved as well.

Highway - Rt. 9 cost for Phase III. Total cost is $1.1 million (FY27-FY30). FY27 - $500,000; FY28 - $280,000; FY29 - $200,000; FY30 - $120,000. Had meeting with Highway w/ John Morgan/CHA and discussed defraying portion of Town's payments in FY27 to FY28. Jim Daley applied for MassWorks grant for work at Senior Center. Waiting to hear. Question raised if we can cancel Phase III of this project. Ms. Cofske to inquire.

Personnel Work Group – Sept. 23rd at 12:30pm. Identifying priorities, what they're working on first.

Arrest Jail Diversion Program Grant – Had meeting with Lieutenant Letendre and Chief Police in Hardwick. Upload needed to the CommBuys portal. Supplier diversity is required for goods/services over $150,000. Working with provider they want to use to get them qualified/certified.

Heath Ins. Cost Forum – Sept. 30th, being put on by MIIA. Discussions re: health care costs in the future. Attending with Jillian Patch, Treasurer Collector.

Central Mass. Regional Director of Business Development– Meeting on Oct. 2nd with Kevin Kuros. Introduction meeting to understand West Brookfield's Economic Development or lack thereof. What we're looking at, where we are, financials, assistance to the Town, for applications, etc.

Ms. Lamica added that prior to discussing ways to make cuts for FY27, we should look at ways to bring in revenue, MIAs, shared services, etc. Ms. Cofske added that items like updating fees, RRG capturing new growth, will add up and help. Ideas re: building up stabilization bank is essential. Good data needs to be presented to the public.

Next scheduled meeting is September 30th at 6:00pm.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:57pm made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2 yes).

Respectfully submitted,

10/14/2025 10/14/25

Authorized Party for the BOS Date BOS Clerk Date