TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Monday, November 10, 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; Jacob Conway and Ryan Shepard/CAC.; Diane Vayda, Bob Richard/Common Committee; Madalyne Chamberlain, Amanda Wodyga, Melannie Waugh, Heather Gough/White Christmas Committee; Matt Schlegal, WB Officer; Melinda Barnes/Advisory Committee; Leah Shattuck, Animal Control Officer; David/RRG; Renee Adams-White, Assessors.

ABSENT: Brad Merkel, Clerk

GUEST: Residents for Dog Hearing: Arthur Gervais, Diane Gervais, Andrew Lamoureux, Candy Spencer, Louise Chase, Marc Chase, Carol Slater, Susan Nelson, Mr. Nelson, Mai Grover, Eileen Sykes; Mr. Gough; Bob Haveles, Architectural Insights.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

6:00pm: Meeting called to order.

MINUTES FOR October 14, October 28th BOS Open Session meetings for approval -
Motion to approve the minutes of the October 14th Open BOS Session for approval made by Ms. Lamica with a couple of corrections. Second by Roland Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).
Corrections indicated on pages 3 and 4 by Ms. Lamica to Ms. Gobeille.
Motion to approve the minutes of the October 28th Open BOS Session for approval made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Roland Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

TREASURY WARRANTS FOR APPROVAL –
Motion to approve FY26 Accounts Payable Warrant #10 and FY26 Payroll Warrant #10, as presented made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

Ms. Cofske indicated that agenda items #6 and #8, Set date for Special Town Meeting will not be discussed. Mr. Sickenberger stated that we will be skipping over these.

6:05PM TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING – Mr. Burgess/Regional Resource Group indicated they would like to do a split tax, vs. 1 single tax rate. The would lower the residential taxes and to raise the commercial property and at the low end a single family would save $49 and a commercial property would pay $238 more. At the high end a single family would save $256 and high-end commercial/industrial/personal property would pay $1800 or so.

Department of Revenue will sign off on Recap sheet and the Select Board will need to sign off on the LA5 if they approve this. Mr. Sickenberger felt that as the Town had always had a single tax rate this should be discussed. Ms. Cofske added that the Town didn't have enough to warrant a split in the tax rate, but would default to David Burgess to explain further. Mr. Burgess indicated that the farmers would also fall into the commercial property category. If the split was 60/40 he would never recommend a split tax rate, but as the split is 90/10 in the Town he feels it's appropriate. It was noted that local farmers may be eligible for Chapter 90 or other tax rebates, etc. Mr. Sickenberger added that he would not want to personally do anything to damage the farmers in the community as they have a hard enough time as it is, so he would prefer that we leave it as a single tax rate. Ms. Lamica feels that it's worth looking at each year, making a determination. She would also be in favor of leaving it at one rate.

Motion: The West Brookfield Select Board votes in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 40, Sec. 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be born by each class of real estate and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2026 tax rates and set the Residential Factor at 1.0, which a corresponding CIP shift of 1.0, pending approval of the Town's tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2-yes).

Motion to authorize Town Administrator, Theresa Cofske to sign on behalf of the Select Board made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2-yes).

6:10PM DOG HEARING –
Mr. Sickenberger read the following:
We are here pursuant to MGL Section 157 to investigate a complaint brought against Goose, owned by Ms. Mai Grover by Candy Spencer for the following:

Mr. Sickenberger asked everyone who would speak at the Dog Hearing to stand for their Oath.
Raise your right hand:
"Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give us is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?"
Everyone: "I do." *Everyone sat down.*

First step: **Complainant's testimony** - Ms. Candy Spencer

One afternoon (October 14th, 2025) I let her "Kenzie" out on her own. I have an electric fence in the yard, so I let her out on her own. I heard her yelping. Went out to the back, found a dog on top of her shaking her. Grabbed cover for a plastic tote (all I had) hitting the dog to get it off my dog. The dog then turned to me. The dog went back to my dog, biting her neck and ears. I kept hitting it, screaming at it and it finally ran into the neighbor's yard. I ran into the house to get my cell phone. I couldn't find my dog at this point and then the dog came back again. I grabbed my cell phone, called 911 while dog was coming back. I was screaming because I could not find my dog and was afraid he was going to get her again. I ran to my neighbor's yard. He followed me there. They weren't home. I ran to another neighbor's yard and he continued to follow me. My neighbor came out with a leash and tried to chase the dog to get it away from me. Some people stopped with cars, trying to help. The dog ran back to my house, assumed it was still looking for my dog. I didn't

want to go inside. I wanted to make sure she was alright. Finally, police came and then the dog officer. They were chasing the dog. I live on O'Day Lane. It ran into Ware St. The owner showed up. I never met the owner. She never approached me or came to me or anything. The police officer went down to the owner, who was putting the dog in her car and asked for her name and phone number. They came back to me and gave me her information, but she never came to me to see how the dog was or I was. I never met her.

I. **Supporting witness**/Animal Control Officer – Ms. Leah Shattuck

I didn't see it. I got there afterwards, so I'm only going on what she said. Officer Cassidy Culver was there before me. *Ms. Spencer indicated that she came while everyone was chasing the dog. Officer Culver was there and told me what happened.

Mr. Sickenberger asked if there were any other supporting witnesses. He asked if the dog hearing was about this one specific attack. Ms. Gobeille indicated that there are 3 attacks, by the same dog, which are included in this hearing.

Ms. Shattuck explained that the first attack was on February 13, 2025. She tried to contact the owner of the dog who was involved in this attack, but was unable to contact them for this meeting. It was determined that the owner has now moved out of Town.

Ms. Nelson – This attack happened in front of her house.

Mr. Sickenberger – Did you see the attack?

Ms. Nelson – I heard it, but was unable to see it as the dogs were on the ground. My neighbor had come out and they took the dog who was being attacked in their house. The report was wrong, stating that the dog was put in her (Ms. Nelson's house). It was not, it was put in her neighbor's house.

Ms. Shattuck – I had come to this incident after being contacted by police as West Brookfield's previous ACO had not been reached.

Mr. Sickenberger clarified the attacks from February, that Ms. Spencer's dog was involved in the 2nd attack. Mr. Sickenberger asked if the owner of the dog who was attacked on October 23 here.

<u>3rd dog attack witness</u> - Mr. Lamoureux

On the evening of October 23rd I was walking our cavachon. I was 3 houses from our home and my dog was about to meet another person's dog. They were both on leashes and this third dog came out between two houses and went right after our cavachon. It latched on. The other lady got her dog to safety. I separated them and attempted to pick up Cece the cavachon and rush home. The dog snatched her away from me.

Mr. Sickenberger – The attacking dog?

Mr. Lamoureux – Yes. I separated them again and held her up over my head and then the dog jumped up in the air and snatched it like it was performing a trick. Finally, the third time I separated them. I just held the collar and wrapped my arm around the chest of the attacking dog, holding it up on its hind legs, while my dog got away and called for help. Neighbors came out to assist. I believe that the lady who got away with her dog called the police as well as one of the neighbors that came out I believe also called. Officer responded. I explained what happened and turned the dog over to the custody of the officer. By then the neighbor who called the police offered me one of her leashes, which I snapped onto the dog's collar.

Mr. Sickenberger – The attacking dog?
Mr. Lamoureux – Yes. I had the attacking dog by the leash. Once my dog got away he was relatively docile, but it was a hell of an attack.
Ms. Gervais - He (attacking dog) went after his neck. I had to take him to an emergency hospital in West Springfield. He had puncture marks on the neck, on the back, on the leg, all the way down to the muscle on the leg. She had sutures on all those areas. She had 3 drains in. It was really horrible. It was a nightmare.

Ms. Spencer - (referring to her dog's attack) stated that she had spent the night in the ER as well. We had to go the next day. Mine wasn't as bad. Mine is a bigger dog, it's a English Springer Spaniel and is about 45 pounds. She had all wounds. He did the same thing. Neck and ears had blood coming out of her ear, so we did bring her to the ER.

Mr. Sickenberger asked if there was anyone else here to speak about the 3rd dog attack. Ms. Gobeille indicated that there was a letter from a witness who could not be there.
(Letter was from Ms. Carol Santos, dated November 9th, 2025) *Mr. Sickenberger read the letter in its entirety.*

Mr. Gervais (owner of Cece, the dog's father) asked to speak. He indicated that he did not know who the dog belonged to, but from heresay, we nailed it down that the dog came from Mechanic St. and my stepson thought he knew who the dog belonged to. I found them on Facebook, I texted her and she got right back to me. Cece, so far, her bills have amounted to $2178. We don't know if that's done, as she's had the stitches out and she's still kind of limping. She doesn't have all her strength back, so we don't know if that's the end of it. The owner said she would pay it. Firstly, talked about installments, but she came over Saturday and gave me a check for the full amount. She also told us she fixed her fence. It doesn't really solve the problem with the dog because it's a vicious dog, but I'm just wondering, I don't know what the laws are.

Mr. Sickenberger added that the laws are what we're going through right now with this hearing.

Ms. Spencer – I never heard from her (Ms. Grover) and I had submitted my bills to you, but. I know where they the Select Board and contemplated on going to their house. (I know where they live).

Ms. Grover – May I say something?

Mr. Sickenberger told Ms. Grover that they were almost at their side. Mr. Sickenberger asked if Ms. Lamica had any questions. She said she did not at this point. Mr. Sickenberger had no further questions regarding their dogs (Ms. Spencer and Mr./Mrs. Gervais) and their attacks.

I. **Dog Owner's Testimony** – Ms. Mai Grover

(Directing to Ms. Spencer), I would have apologized profusely for not responding to you. I would have gotten in touch with you if you had gotten in touch with me, like they had done (referring to Mr. and Mrs. Gervais). I personally reached out the police officer and ACO if everything was ok and they should contact me if they needed me. I would have gotten in touch with you (referring to Ms. Spencer). I'm that type of person. I even asked the ACO twice and they had to reach out to me on social media to contact me and I had immediately got in touch and called them and did all the right steps to make sure. I am trying to do everything right. I was told that it was a nip on the ear and that was it. I had no idea there was an attack like that. I swear on my children's life that I would have contacted you. I'm that type of person. Ms. Spencer stated that she wanted to work with her, but she didn't know that. Ms. Grover indicated that she had contacted the ACO twice and the other owner contacted her through social media to contact me and I immediately got in contact with them and called them to do the right steps to make sure. I am trying to do everything right. I was told that it was just a nip on the ear.

Mr. Sickenberger – So, Mai let's not cross-talk. With respect, it's been three attacks from your dog. You're not denying it's your dog, right?

Ms. Grover – No. I am not denying it's my dog. I wanted to apologize to her (Ms. Spencer) for not contacting her or having that communication, but there is communication between the Town.

Mr. Sickenberger asked if the dog ever bit a person. *Ms. Sykes raised her hand.*

Ms. Grover - Her dog had nipped her when she walked by and put her hand out.

Mr. Sickenberger asked for her to state her name. She stated that her name was Eileen Sykes and that she and Mai were next door neighbors.

Ms. Sykes – I was walking down her driveway and her daughter was walking the dog on a leash. I said hello to them and everything. I put my hand out for the dog to sniff me and say hello and it grabbed my hand.

Mr. Sickenberger – Did he break your skin?

Ms. Sykes – Yes. I had an infection and had to be put on an antibiotic. My hand swelled up. Of course, I blame myself for putting my hand out, but still a dog shouldn't just bite you.

Mr. Sickenberger – So, was the dog.. It looks like the dog is roaming freely.

Ms. Grover – We don't let our dogs just roam freely. She continued to say that when she moved into the neighborhood, and had put a fence in her backyard. The dogs did damage the bottom of the fence and I did have to repair it.

Mr. Sickenberger – So, the dog did tear open the bottom of the fence to get out.

Ms. Grover - So, I did repair it, but the dogs dig under the fence and things like that. I try really hard to make sure my dogs stay in the yard. I just got a shock collar to make sure any time they get near the fence line... You know, he is afraid of his own shadow. So, putting your hand right in front of him. He barks at the branches and the leaves because he's scared of them. You can walk in my house and lay on the couch and get up. I am taking precautions, so if I hear he gets out and if there's a hole under the fence or anything like that. I even considered getting stone and digging a foot down and putting stone under there and burying the fence that way.

Mr. Sickenberger - What type of fence it is?

Ms. Grover – It's mostly three different fences. On their side (neighbor), they have a deteriorating stockade fence, so I had to put chicken wire on the inside of the fence.
Mr. Nelson – It's not our fence.
Ms. Grover – I'd replace it if it fell over and that's fine. I'm not going to argue about it. There's a black chain link fence, brand new in the backyard and then on the other side there's a vinyl white fence.
Mr. Sickenberger - How high was the chain link fence?
Ms. Grover - It is 5 foot and that the dogs don't jump over the fence.
Mr. Sickenberger - Ms. Nelson, do you want to comment?
Ms. Nelson – After this attack on Feb. 13th, I talked to someone in the Town and the person stated that if you see that dog loose again, you call. I called twice 911 and reported that dog racing through her yard – that's twice, so her fence isn't working. And these two attacks could have been prevented if someone had done something after this first attack and my two calls and I think Eileen (Ms. Sykes) called in the meantime, because I came up and got the reports of the call-ins about that dog and chicken wire won't hold in a dog like that. That dog is not being contained and it's going through my yard. It's going out her backyard and down my yard on Central.
Mr. Sickenberger – Do you have anybody supporting you on your behalf?
Ms. Nelson – Didn't your dog (to Ms. Grover) dog dig a hole under the fence?
Mr. Nelson – It ripped a chain link fence up.
Ms. Grover – I go out every day with him now when he goes to the bathroom. My daughter...at that time when he ripped the chain link fence we got him back in. I told her don't let the dogs out because I have to fix the fence. Accidently, with the change in the weather the door didn't shut tightly. So, the dogs got out, got under the fence while she was in the shower. I was at work. Unfortunately, that incident did happen. I did repair the fence for the time and then I was going to stake it on the bottom.
Mr. Sickenberger – Did you bring photos of the fence or the repaired fencing?
Ms. Grover - No Sir. And I go out there and he has a shock collar, so anytime he goes near the fence, he gets alerted to not go near.
Mr. Sickenberger – So, did you put invisible fence under. So, how does the shock collar work, a clicker?
Ms. Grover - Yes
Mr. Sickenberger - So if you're not out there to see the dog.
Ms. Grover - Every time he goes near the fence he's alerted. He does not go outside at all.
Ms. Gervais - What about when you're at work or if another incident happens.
Mr. Sickenberger – I understand. I understand how you feel.
Ms. Lamica - So, where is the dog right now.
Ms. Grover - Locked in my house.
Ms. Lamica - So it's still at the house.
Ms. Nelson – Does that dog have a collar?
Ms. Grover – Has it fallen off?

Ms. Nelson - Because this dog runs with a black and white dog that doesn't have a collar. The two of them are racing around. I didn't know if the black and white one was hers also.
Ms. Grover – I have a black one and there is a black and white across the street.
Mr. Sickenberger - Were any of the other dogs involved in any of the attacks? He added that they are not the subject of this hearing unfortunately, so we can't do anything about those.
Mr. Sickenberger – Are there were any questions for the ACO or Police Officer in this case. Officer Schlegel are you at the meeting about this case?
Officer Schlegel – I was at the third attack.
Mr. Sickenberger – Can I tell us your side?
Officer Schlegel – My Sergeant got there first and had the dog in question on a leash. I then took the dog from him while he checked on their small dog. The owners, I believe daughter and neighbor took the dog. At that point I wanted to get to their house and check on their small dog and it was bleeding from the rear leg from what he could see. They were getting in a vehicle to go to the vet.
Mr. Sickenberger – Candy do you have the dollar amount of your vet bills?
Ms. Spencer – I think we were assuming the $500 and change.
Mr. Sickenberger - Camie, do you have any questions?
Ms. Lamica - So, I have a couple. So, the first dog attack was February 13th, from what I understand. So, at that point, you fixed the fence? I'm trying to think of what steps you've taken here.
Ms. Grover – I don't remember how we got on that.
Ms. Lamica - And we don't know if there were any vet bills because the owner is now out of Town.
Ms. Shattuck - I was not the ACO at that time, so I don't know the dog's injuries at that attack.
Ms. Lamica - So the second attack was October 14th and you were aware of that, but understood it was just a nipped ear.
Ms. Grover – Yes. They said, Oh, he had a nipped ear and was that was when I think I spoke to a police officer. They said the dog's fine. I would have contacted her right had I known it was any damage or any...if her dog was hurt at all.
Ms. Lamica – And that's when the dog got out by the wind blowing the door open.
Ms. Grover – Which one?
Ms. Lamica – the 14th.
Ms. Grover - No, it was the last one.
Ms. Lamica - So you don't know how the dog got out the second time?
Ms. Grover – No.
Ms. Lamica - And, the third time was when the door blew open so the dog got out. So, it was after the third time that the fence got fixed.
Ms. Grover - The fence got damaged that week, and so I told my daughter that the fence had a hole in it. I put something in front to hold it. That's when my daughter went to take a shower and the door blew open. Since then, we've locked the back door anytime we don't use it.
Ms. Lamica – So, you knew the dog had attacked 3 other times at least, that you're aware of. previously.
Ms. Grover – Only 2, it was 2 times.

Ms. Lamica – There was the one in February and the two in October you knew of and the one. In February there was also an attack and you didn't know about that one?
Ms. Grover - You mean the one with the guy who moved? I was aware of that one. It was just a nip and that was it. He ran up, nipped and walked away.
A resident, Ms. Nelson (?) indicated it bit the owner also.
Mr. Sickenberger, asked it bit the owner?
Ms. Nelson – That's right.
Ms. Grover – And I talked to a police officer and he said there was no damage. He was just kind of scared.
Ms. Lamica – Ok.
Ms. Grover – I am not making excuses. I take it very seriously that my dog attacked other dogs. I don't want you to think I'm not taking this seriously. Please don't.
Ms. Lamica – So, you knew your dog had attacked a number of times.
Ms. Grover – So, like to me, a nip is a whole different than an attack. So, obviously If I had known her dog was attacked, I immediately would have contacted her. As soon as I knew the Gervais' dog was attacked I immediately would have contacted her... I spoke to both ACOs and asked for her information to be forwarded. They never forwarded the information to them and I even asked one of the officers how that dog was. He said, oh, I really don't know. So, as soon as they contacted me, I contacted them immediately.
Ms. Lamica – Have you ever taken your dog to the vet to find out if there's anything going on that's making it attack?
Ms. Grover – My dog was attacked by several dogs trying to acclimate it to other dogs. Bit his head, bit his stomach, bit his ears. Anytime I try to acclimate this dog to other dogs they just attack him. So, I stopped trying to acclimate him to other dogs because of that situation. So, he is defensive against other dogs, being attacked by other dogs, them barking at him, biting him.
Mr. Sickenberger – Is he a rescue dog?
Ms. Grover – Yes, but he was a puppy when he got him. And, when I tried to acclimate him as a puppy the big dogs would just bite him. They did give me a number of a trainer who might be able to acclimate him to, because he is still young enough to try to correct that. I will contact them and work with them.
Ms. Lamica – asked Ms. Shattuck if her information (Ms. Grover's) had been forwarded to the owners?
Ms. Shattuck – No. I only spoke with her one time and she... I'm trying to remember how the conversation went, but I can't just give someone, someone else's information.
Ms. Grover – I did ask her to forward my information.
Ms. Shattuck- I don't remember. How would I have done that for you?
Ms. Gervais – You (Ms. Shattuck) did ask for our information and asked if it would be ok to forward it. You said yes.
Ms. Shattuck – Ok, I didn't do it. I remember you (Ms. Grover) were at the airport.
Ms. Grover – Yes, I may have been at the airport that day.
Ms. Shattuck – So, if that did happen then I was remised and I didn't follow through with that part.
Ms. Lamica – That's all the questions I have.

Ms. Spencer – May I ask a question? With the veterinarian you bring your dog into the veterinarian, and they know that there was an attack, aren't they not responsible for reporting it to the Town afterward?
Mr. Sickenberger – The veterinarians? I don't think so.
Ms. Shattuck – Yes, they do, 100% I had asked where the quarantines were for these dogs and we haven't received them. They should have been quarantines on both those dogs.
Mr. Sickenberger – For the dogs who were attacked?
Ms. Shattuck – Yes.
Mr. Nelson – What exactly does a quarantine consist of?
Ms. Shattuck – Usually it's 10 days in-house quarantine
Mr. Nelson - In their own home?
Ms. Shattuck - Or it can be walked. It has to be under their control at all times. I had asked Officer Culver if she had hadn't seen the quarantine and she didn't (referring to Ms. Spencer) receive a quarantine.
Ms. Grover - I was verbally told on that one to do a 10-day quarantine and I definitely did.
Ms. Shattuck – This isn't about you, it's about vets are not sending information.
Mr. Sickenberger – What vet did you bring it to? (referring to Ms. Spencer)
Ms. Spencer – We went to Deerfield that evening and then we went to Canterbury Tails the next day.
Ms. Shattuck – It's a state law for vets to send them.
Mr. Sickenberger – Anybody have any other.
Mr. Nelson – Excuse me. I am just concerned. I'm sure the dog is so loving with her family. I approach the fence. I have the wood pile right next to the fence and if I was on the other side of the fence, I would have been tore up. The dog is very aggressive through the fence. When the fence is there the dog doesn't seem to have an issue, but when you're on the other side of the fence, it is wanting to attack. And I kind of make jokes about it, but we have to kinda clear our yard before we walk our dog just cause we know that's that dog ever got a hold of our dog there'd be nothing left. All the times that the dog gets out, there isn't an issue. Maybe no one's walking their dog, but it's not isolated to the three incidents. The dog has gotten out I can't count how many times. It's a lot. It's not a handful, I can tell you that. We're just. We like Mai. Mai is our friend, but that dog is not well.
Ms. Spencer – I'm just worried that there is so much lack of communication with everybody through this whole thing. The other towns have systems in place.
Mr. Sickenberger – I can't speak to other towns. I can only speak to other Towns and we're doing.
Ms. Spencer – Maybe it's something it could be looked into.
Mr. Sickenberger – We could, but that's not really within the scope of this particular hearing. If you'd like to bring this up to the Select Board we'd be happy to talk to you, but the scope of this hearing is these three attacks. Next step in this hearing is, I will accept a motion to close the hearing so we can deliberate.
Ms. Grover – Only thing I wanted to add is that the dog is not outside. Again, I used to let him roam freely in the back yard. He's not allowed to be out there without anyone. Again, I talked to the

Gervais's. They have recommended a trainer to work with him acclimating him to other dogs. The fence line is the property line. I apologize about that Dan. His dog barks left and right at my dogs. My dog barks back. It's back and forth. They bark between the neighborhood. It's not just our dogs. It's all the dogs in the neighborhood. The only thing I can promise you is that I'm out there ever time they're out there. Every time they're going to the bathroom, somebody's in the yard with them.
Mr. Gervais – I'd like to say that we've been affected too. We have two dogs and the other one is a golden retriever. So, he can run away real fast. Cece is only 15 pounds. We don't leave the house without pepper spray now. We're afraid to walk in our own neighborhood now. We're all armed with pepper spray when we go outside.
Mr. Sickenberger – I understand.
Ms. Gervais – We walk our dogs twice a day. I'm petrified since that happened. I'm not sure whether it was somebody, spring or winter someone on Central Street, when I was walking my dog and she warned me about a pitbull attack and I don't know if it was Mai's dog, but she thought it was on Mechanic St. and she was just warning me saying be careful because I just saw this attack the other day and it was horrible. So, I was like for a long time I wouldn't go down that street. I was so afraid especially with my little dog. Then I forgot about it, then this happened. I'm scared to death.
Mr. Sickenberger – I understand and these hearings tend to be really emotional.
Ms. Gervais - If I weren't walking my dog, my dog would be dead.
Ms. Nelson – Pepper spray will not work. That dog is so fast. If I'm out working back in the garden and if that dog attacked me, I'm gone because I can't get my pepper spray out quickly.
Ms. Lamica – Any other before we close the hearing? (directed to Mr. Sickenberger)
Mr. Sickenberger – No.

6:48pm – Motion to close the dog hearing made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2 yes).

Mr. Sickenberger – So, the board is now going to deliberate. Any findings should be made in the form of a motion and voted on. So, we're to deliberate about the specific facts of the case. Since this is really concerning three separate cases, do you think we should handle them as three separate votes or do you think we should handle this as one vote? *(directed to Ms. Lamica)*
Ms. Lamica – I think it's one. I think it's the same set of circumstances. I think it's just different dogs, different dates. Different extents, but almost the same circumstances.
Mr. Sickenberger – So, I will accept a motion that as a matter of fact that on date, we have three dates, February 13th, October 14th and October 23rd 2025 Goose, who is a pitbull, 18 months, owned by Mai Grover.

Motion stating that on February 13, October 14th and October 23rd, dog named Goose, pitbull breed, 18 months and is owned by Mai Grover, attacked three other dogs by three different owners, leading to the following consequences of at least 2 of the owners on the October 14th and October 23rd required veterinary care of their dogs that we are aware of. They needed medical attention. There were financial costs involved. The owners in the neighborhood are afraid for their safety when they're walking their pets or even being in their yard. We have heard information from both the Animal Control Officer and the Police Department. These are the specific facts of the case made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2 yes).

Mr. Sickenberger – We now need to come up with a determination status. With respect to the determination status, we will determine whether this is a nuisance dog or a dangerous dog. There are certain things we can do with respect to these findings.

Ms. Lamica – The definition of a nuisance dog as defined – Is the dog:

(i) by excessive barking or other disturbance, a source of annoyance to a sick person residing in the vicinity; or

(ii) by excessive barking, causing damage or other interference, a reasonable person would find such behavior disruptive to one's quiet and peaceful enjoyment; or

(iii) has (the dog) threatened or attacked livestock, a domestic animal or a person, but such threat or attack was not a grossly disproportionate reaction under all the circumstances.

Mr. Sickenberger – The definition of a dangerous dog is described, after credible evidence; if the hearing authority deems the dog more than a nuisance dog - the dog either:

(i) without justification, attacks a person or domestic animal causing physical injury or death; or

(ii) behaves in a manner that a reasonable person would believe poses an unjustified imminent threat or physical injury or death to a person or to a domestic or owned animal.

Mr. Sickenberger – Personally, I feel it is a dangerous dog.

Ms. Lamica – I agree.

Motion to enter a finding that I consider the dog to be dangerous made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2 yes).

Mr. Sickenberger – As we determine the dog to be dangerous we have to figure out what we can do. Some of the possible steps are:

(i) that a dog be humanely restrained

(ii) that the dog be confined to the premises of the keeper of the dog

(iii) that when removed from the premises of the owner or the premises of the person keeping the dog, the dog shall be securely and humanely muzzled
(iv) that the owner or keeper of the dog provide proof of insurance
(v) or the dog be humanely euthanized

Ms. Lamica - My concern is that a restraint at this point up to now is not something which has seemed to work. I know lately that you're trying to make sure the dog is now on a leash when someone is out there with it. I am concerned that this is not going to continue. It hasn't up until now for the last 8 months. That concerns me. I would hate to bypass this and just leave it as is only to have another attack that could be more severe or involve a person. And, that is my concern.

Mr. Sickenberger – I tend to have a very low threshold for attacking dogs. I think once a dog attacks it tends to get a taste for it, so to speak. And if this was for only one attack I would probably feel differently, but given that the dog is..there are three attacks in front of us and some attacks on persons where they were bit and there are some other attacks, that we may not be aware of, I regrettably say that I would be in favor of humanely euthanizing this dog.

Ms. Lamica – I would agree.

Motion to recommend that the dog be euthanized made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2 yes).

Mr. Sickenberger – So, that is the Board of Selectmen's order. (directed at Ms. Grover) However, you have the right, within ten days of the Selectmen's order, to bring a petition to the district court within the judicial district of which the dog is kept (Worcester District Court), addressed to the justice of the court, praying that the order may be reviewed by the court, or magistrate thereof, and after such notice to the officer or officers involved as the magistrate deems necessary. The magistrate shall review such action, hear the witnesses, and affirm such order unless it shall appear that it was made without proper cause or in bad faith, in which case such order shall be reversed. You or any party shall have the right to request a de novo hearing on the petition before a justice of the court. The decision of the court shall be final and conclusive upon the parties.

Ms. Grover – May I have a copy of that?

Mr. Sickenberger – Absolutely (gave Ms. Grover his form) and other page outlining the process.

Ms. Grover – Am I done?

Mr. Sickenberger – That concludes the dog hearing.

A resident asked what the actual finding was. Mr. Sickenberger answered that they determined that the dog was a dangerous dog and that the dog be euthanized.

Resident – And, then what is the outcome then?
Mr. Sickenberger – She is able to appeal that ruling.
Resident – And then what? The dangerous dog is removed from West Brookfield?
Ms. Shattuck – You cannot remove a dog from a Town.
Mr. Sickenberger – We cannot remove a dog from the Town.
Resident – The Select Board said that other Selectmen did when I got bit. They had said to her if that dog isn't removed it will be removed.
Mr. Sickenberger – We are not allowed to remove a dog from the Town.
Resident – Right, so our dogs are in danger now.
Mr. Sickenberger – No. Your dogs are not in danger. We ordered the dog to be humanely euthanized. She is allowed to appeal the ruling. She has 10 days to do so. If she does not appeal it, she will have to do what the Board of Selectman have ordered. I do not know how long it will take the court to appeal these things. We have to follow due process, I'm sorry.
Resident – And, she's going to have to do what? What is she going to have to do?
Mr. Nelson – Go through the Court System in Worcester and ask for an appeal, but I can tell you that she's not getting it.
Resident – And, then what?
Mr. Sickenberger - She will be heard, but I do not know how long that will take.
Same resident - I have 2 small dogs and I walk on the Common and I thought I was safe with my mace and this young lady said, no.
Mr. Nelson – We are really concerned that that dog...
Mr. Sickenberger – I understand that.
Ms. Spencer – Am I able to get her name, address and phone number at all? I've never contacted her, but would like to talk to her.
Mr. Sickenberger – I don't know if that's appropriate.
Ms. Spencer – You mean me talking to her?
Mr. Sickenberger – Meaning us giving you permission. We have to follow the rules as well. As much as I'd like to say to her...go to the vet tomorrow. We can't.
Ms. Nelson – Regarding these quarantines. For someone with a dangerous dog who gets loose to have them quarantine that dog for ten days, we aren't guaranteed that that dog's being quarantined. Why aren't they taken to the dog pound and quarantined there with a responsible person instead of being kept with the attacking dog's owner.
Ms. Shattuck – That's not how it's done. Throughout the state, that's not how it's done. However, if the dog had been properly quarantined after the second time attack, that's a criminal offense on her part.
Mr. Sickenberger – But, how do you prove it.
Ms. Shattuck – But it wasn't quarantined.
Ms. Nelson – Because the attack was in the 10 days?
Ms. Shattuck – Yea.
Mr. Sickenberger – Yes, it was 9 days later.
Mr. Sickenberger thanked everyone for attending the hearing. They're very emotional hearings.
Mr. Sickenberger - moving on to the next agenda item

ARCHITECTURAL INSIGHTS, INC. TOWN HALL STRUCTURAL REPAIRS AND ROOF RECOMMENDATIONS - Architectural Insights, Inc. Bob Halves indicated that he had gone up on a lift w/ the general contractor, taking a look at some of the areas we knew were affected. East/West walls have water damage and rot, affecting the eaves and rafters as well. Worked with Structural engineer and contractor, Larochelle on supplying 4 options: 1) Roof framing structural repairs 2) Slate removal and reinstallation for structural repairs 3) Full roof replacement option w/ asphalt shingles including cupola apron (not cupola itself) 4) New sheathing for entire roof area if required.
Existing roof condition – original boards are base sheathing, on top of wood shingles, then slate. So, lots of layers there. Existing concerns, slate is loose, not properly fastened to the sheathing. Nails to secure slate are short and only penetrate the wood shingle and not into the sheathing.

Summary: Evidence of leaks over the years, has led to rot, sag and given distortion to the eave lines (east/west). Protection of areas below is needed around building. Slate has fallen off. Some emergency repairs have been carried out. Roof structure requires immediate work to prevent future deterioration. Snow guards and gutters need to be replaced. If items are not unattended, possible 5 years left of the roof life.

Recommended approach – Remove first 8 feet of slate and wood shingles, for length of east and west walls, front to rear (can review structure and identify other areas we need to correct), execute repairs on both sides of building to about 13 feet on each side of the building (costing roughly $57,500), then replace entire roof with slate-like asphalt shingles (costing roughly $81,000, but can vary). Approvals needed from State and Town Historical commissions. We would also have to follow National Parks Service for preservation briefs for historical structures for roof replacements. Asphalt shingles will save a lot of money vs. replacing slate. Also, adding plywood sheathing over roof sheathing, which would give a more reliable surface for installing ice and water shield and provide a nailing base for the asphalt shingles (costing toughly $24,300) and additional funds for potential miscellaneous repairs while investigating the structure ($10,000/side). Architectural and structural engineering fees (estimated at $20,000). Grand estimated total = $202,300. Mr. Halves added that slate would cost much more than installing asphalt shingles.

Mr. Halves also mentioned that he would stay within what the covenant requires, so you stay in compliance for the state. Mr. Halves also indicated that for the public bidding, the would treat this as an emergency. Questions are under the public procurement laws whether they can use the current contractor who came on board to do the siding, as part of his work was to address and look at the eaves. Since then, the scope has expanded, so we have to make sure we're not in violation and don't have to put this work out to bid.

Ms. Lamica asked about the timeline to working with the local historical commission and the state for approvals. Mr. Halves indicated he will get on it quickly. Ms. Cofske indicated that once DCAMM has received the paperwork, they should be able to respond quickly. Mr. Halves also added that we will check and see if it's on the state and federal registers. Ms. Lamica asked if we are taking the slate off and putting on plywood, are we adding weight? Mr. Halves indicated you're actually making it lighter. Mr. Sickenberger asked what the expected life would be for the asphalt shingles.
Mr. Halves answered that it would be 25/30 years or could potentially be up to 45 years, depending on which ones were chosen. Mr. Sickenberger added that unfortunately, we're paying the price for deferred maintenance on the building now. Mr. Sickenberger asked how we fund this project. Ms. Cofske indicated

that we could use potentially use borrowing, capital stabilization. Regardless, whatever way we will go, we will need Special Town Meeting approval. We also need to set the tax rate, so don't want to upset that apple cart. Ms. Lamica asked why this would change. Ms. Cofske explained that the state is setting the tax rate, so if we are adding any additional borrowing this year prior to them setting the rate, this would change the numbers for Fiscal 2026 already entered into the Gateway. It's better to set the tax rate and get the bills out first.

Mr. Halves also noted that the cupola also needs work. Some of the columns need replacing, but he adds that they are not structural. Wood trim (ornamental) needs to be done. Mr. Halves recommended putting up snow fence 8 feet out from the building on Cottage Street. The other side needs addressing as well. It is not a failure, but we need to keep them aware.

Mr. Sickenberger asked for Mr. Halves to find out how much it would cost to fix the cupola while they're up there. He will speak with Dan Larochelle. Ms. Lamica asked Ms. Cofske to ask Jillian Patch, Treasurer Collector what borrowing options we would have, what terms they would be and the dollar amount. Ms. Cofske said they met with Uni Bank last week and this was one of the projects discussed. They were just waiting for estimates. Now that we have them, they can come back to us.

TREE LIGHTING ON TOWN COMMON (continued from last BOS meeting on 11/3/25) – Ms. Wodyga stated that they'd like to hear from the Common Committee if the smaller tree can be decorated. Ms. Vayda answered that we would not be able to decorate it as it's just too young. White Christmas doesn't feel that they should continue pumping money into the current tree as many lights are not working on the tree. They also don't have the means to check the connections, etc. and do all the things they need to do to make it look good. Mr. Sickenberger feels that unfortunately the cost of $7000 to use light/take down lights on the tree, the Town does not have it. Mr. Sickenberger stressed that although folks will be disappointed in not having a tree lit on the common, that's what we might be forced to do. Ms. Gough showed a picture of the tree lit with lights currently on it. (Some of lights purchased in 2021 are on, although most of the 2019 ones appear to be out.) Ms. Wodyga felt it's just not worth putting money towards buying more lights, fixing lights already there and hiring someone to inspect/install/remove them. Ms. Lamica stated that it's late in the season. Mr. Rust had volunteered for so many years as well. Ms. Wodyga had also reached out to Arsenault in Spencer to see if they had any structural lit trees, which they could put on the Common. They felt it was just too late in the season. Arsenault will meet with them after the Holiday season. Ms. Wodyga also discussed an idea of having a candlelight vigil around the Bandstand, singing carols before going to the concert upstairs in the Great Hall. Mr. Sickenberger liked the idea of the candlelight vigil. It was reinforced to use West Brookfield's Community TV to publicize the need for funds to light the Christmas Tree/s on the Common in December 2026. Donations could be collected and put into an account for this purpose, starting now, giving donors a tax deductible form. Additional idea was to have paper light wishes hung on the tree. It was determined that the larger Christmas Tree on the common and the smaller tree will not be lit this year. A letter will be drafted by Ms. Gobeille on behalf of the Select Board, White Christmas Committee and Common Committee.

TA REPORT –

Master Planning Grant – Attended CMRP award ceremony for grant that was awarded for the Master plan. Met with Janet Pierce @ CMRPC. Staff has reached out and there is a process for receiving the funds, including a class. After that, the State will come back with a contract for us to sign. Ms. Cofske reiterated to Mr. Sickenberger that this is for updating the previous Master Plan by further inclusion of economic development and corridor. Additionally, there is a Zoom meeting re: transportation in rural communities.

Green Communities – We've done everything we need to do. Final inspections are next week. DOER coming out.

Town Hall Restoration project – Have been working with Mr. Haveles and Dan Larochelle and have started the draft Warrant with Articles.

Water Dept. – Had a Zoom Meeting with water commissioners to go over the time frame for going out to bid. It's looking like SRF would be the best way to go. 2% interest over 20 years. Loan forgiveness up to $800,000/$850,000. USDA interest rate was 3%. If we go with 30-year with SRF, the interest is 2.2%, so still a pretty good rate. Tata Howard indicated another avenue for additional funding, a grant. Application was sent over to Water Dept. to fill out and send in. Will need an article at Special Town Meeting from the Water Commissioners for the "soft costs" (legal costs) associated with the project, not included in the grant and loan funding. Bids can then go out, which is a requirement and enter into contract before June 30th as long as costs are under what was authorized at Town Meeting. If costs are higher, we will need to go back for additional funding. Ms. Lamica asked if we could add an alternates clause into the bid for additional work to be completed, so if there are additional pieces, which needed to be done and we have the funding, they could be included. Ms. Lamica asked further who would be paying for the loan, taxpayers or users. Ms. Cofske indicated at this point, it's users. Ms. Cofske asked Tata Howard if the same metrics used by USDA would be used by SRF. Contacts at SRF were given by Tata Howard. Mr. Phil Guerin, Water Commissioner Chairperson is reaching out to them.

Next scheduled BOS meeting is Joint meeting with Advisory Committee, November 12th at 6:00pm at the Senior Center.

Next BOS regular meeting is November 25th at 6pm.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:42pm made by Ms. Lamica. Second made by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor, aye (2 yes).

Respectfully submitted,

11/25/2025

Authorized Party for the BOS Date BOS Clerk Date