TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN Meeting

Tuesday, December 9, 2025 – 6:00 PM

West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, West Brookfield

MINUTES

STAFF PRESENT: Roland Sickenberger, Chair; Catherine Lamica, Vice Chair; Brad Merkel, Clerk; Theresa Cofske, Town Administrator; Beth Gobeille, Exec. Asst. to TA/BOS; Diane Vayda, Common Committee; Chief Nate Hagglund; Melanie Waugh, Heather Gough, Amanda Wodyga: White Christmas Committee; Anne Garwood-Hampp, Highway Admin.

GUESTS: Residents: Alice Simmoneau, Evelyn Kwasniewski, Anthony Simmoneau, Mike Maroney, John Carrier, Henry Brogna, Stephen Piechota; New Braintree Fire Chief Dennis Letendre.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

6:00pm: Meeting called to order.

MINUTES FOR November 25th BOS Open meeting for approval -
Motion to approve the minutes of November 25th BOS Open Session for approval with corrections made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS –

1. West Brookfield Fire Chief - Richard Lapierre
   Motion to accept the resignation of West Brookfield Fire Chief, Richard Lapierre made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
2. West Brookfield Fire Department Lieutenant – Kenneth Collette
   Motion to accept the resignation of West Brookfield Department Lieutenant, Kenneth Collette made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
3. West Brookfield Fire Department on-call member – Michael Martel
   Motion to accept the resignation of West Brookfield Fire Department on-call member Michael Martel made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
4. West Brookfield Fire Department Member – Holly Collette
   Motion to accept the resignation of West Brookfield Fire Department member Holly Collette made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
5. Emergency Management Director – Richard Lapierre
   Motion to accept the resignation of Emergency Management Director, Richard Lapierre made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
6. Emergency Management Assistant Director – Steve Piechota
   Motion to accept the resignation of Emergency Management Assistant Director Steve Piechota made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
7. Emergency Management Assistant Director – Richard (Dick) Lapierre Sr.

Motion to accept the resignation of Emergency Management Assistant Director Richard (Dick) Lapierre Sr. made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

8. Emergency Management Volunteer – William Milewski
   Motion to accept the resignation of Emergency Management Volunteer William Milewski made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
9. Emergency Management Volunteer – James Lapierre
   Motion to accept the resignation of Emergency Management Volunteer James Lapierre made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
10. Emergency Management Volunteer – Henry Brogna
    Motion to accept the resignation of Emergency Management Volunteer Henry Brogna made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).
11. Emergency Management Volunteer – Jenny Davis
    Motion to accept the resignation of Emergency Management Volunteer Jenny Davis made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Mr. Sickenberger thanked everyone from the Fire Department and Emergency Management for their time and effort to fulfill these positions.

FIRE DEPT. OPERATIONS and FIRE CHIEF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR POSITIONS –

Day time coverage is an issue, area Fire Depts. are helping New Braintree, Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield and Warren stations are providing mutual aid when needed. Ms. Cofske indicated that dispatch will call Brookfield and Warren for coverage (2 trucks) or 4 (additional Towns) depending on the emergency of the situation. Ms. Cofske wanted to reassure all town residents, business owners are covered and safe. Everyone is willing to help. Chief Letendre added that 11 people on Fire Department are planning on staying. It's a busy time of the year as well with inspections, grants, so he will help where he can. Reports for the state need to be submitted. Possible shared services.

Chief Letendre explained Hardwick and New Braintree have automatic mutual aid agreement. They train together, purchase materials together and share equipment if needed. West Brookfield is in NW portion of District 7. West Brookfield could do something with another Town as well (Warren?). Requested meeting Monday night. Chief Letendre has experience in Mass. Flood Authority, was a Union President and on Management side. Currently works in New Braintree 10 hours/week. Chief Letendre recommended a meeting with other Chiefs Martel (Brookfield) and Lavoie (Warren) on Monday with the current Fire personnel. New Braintree has a part-time chief in charge and others who carry out inspections, complete reports, etc. and feels that this system would also work for West Brookfield.

If the Town wished to hire an Interim Fire Chief from the District, District 7 could provide Chief Coleman from Auburn at a cost. He feels that once posting the position, we should get interested parties for the Fire Chief position.

Fire Chief position needs to be posted soon. Former Fire chief position was a benefited 28-hour week position. Possible rollback to a 19-hour position, potentially adding a second person in charge.
Motion to post the Fire Chief position as a 19-hour per week position and post as soon as possible at the same pay rate of $27.85 per hour made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Discussions for the Monday meetings to be posted – 6pm in Fire Station meeting room with Fire station staff, followed by a Chiefs meeting in the Town Administrator's office. Ms. Cofske to reach out to the other Chiefs for Monday's meeting.

6:35pm – *Motion to move to Executive Session.*
Meeting with Town Counsel pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(3) to discuss several agency litigation proceedings between the Town of West Brookfield and AFSCME Council 93 Local 1364 (Fire Union) pending at the Department of Labor Relations and docketed as MUP-25-11382, MUP-25-11453, MUP-25-11519, MUP-25-11707, and CAS-25-11602
Roll call vote: Roland Sickenberger – aye. Brad Merkel – aye. Camie Lamica – aye.

Back in Open session.

Mr. Sickenberger confirmed that we are set on the posting of the job description, and its posting meeting agendas for Monday.

DONATIONS FOR ACCEPTANCE -

ANONYMOUS DONATION FOR COMMON COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL –

Ms. Gobeille explained that the Common Committee has received an anonymous donation of $20,000 for the Common Committee's gift account to be used towards the Common and Fountain.

Motion to accept the anonymous donation of $20,000 to go into the Common Committee's gift account to be used towards the Common and the Fountain made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Mr. Sickenberger thanked the anonymous donor. It's greatly appreciated.

POLICE DEPT. DONATION –

Chief Hagglund explained that Pamela Searah has gifted the West Brookfield with $1000 as a legacy donation with no restriction.
Motion to accept the $1000 donation to the Police Dept. made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Mr. Sickenberger added the donation is accepted with gratitude.

TRAFFIC CONSTABLE APPOINTMENT FOR APPROVAL –

Chief Hagglund in 2023 we had 53/54 details for the whole year. 14 details the in January we're averaging 120 details/month. Really overwhelmed. Need help. Doug is qualified and can help in January. It doesn't cost the Town anything. Private contractors who hire the traffic constables directly through the Town. 10% administrative fee to the Town for State jobs, if applicable.

Motion to appoint Doug Blood as Traffic Constable made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

2026 WEST BROOKFIELD HOLIDAY SCHEDULE REVISITED - West Brookfield Holiday Schedule revisited –

FY2026 Holiday schedule previously approved has conflicts with the current Employee Handbook regarding holidays/dates observed, Union holiday schedules and other Town employee contracts. Ms. Gobeille to gather information together. To be revisited again in the new year.

WHITE CHRISTMAS VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION –

Mr. Sickenberger recognized and thanked Gary/APR Towing in addition to John Bonin/Bonin's Wood Products and Landscape Supply, ACS other Town residents who stepped up and generously donated their time to get the lights on the tree on Town Common. Ms. Paolucci/Common Committee had also purchased the lights for the tree. White Christmas expressed frustration and disappointment in having backlash from the public on not being able to light the tree. Ms. Lamica stated that we need committees working together in the Town instead of blaming each other, so we would like to

Ms. Gough recommended Jim Rust be recognized for his last 18 years of working on the Town's Christmas tree on Town Common. The Board of Selectmen agreed that we are very appreciative of Jim's work for the Town. Mr. Merkel is very grateful that all came together to get the Tree lit.

FY2026 BUDGET HIRING/PURCHASING FREEZE DOCUMENT FOR DEPARTMENTS –

Ms. Cofske's has developed a budget freeze document for departments. The Board of Selectmen had no concerns. Budget preparation schedules have been prepared by Ms. Cofske and a Proposition 2 ½ schedule to be developed soon. Can come up with a dollar amount and vote on the ballot question on January 23rd/February. Financial working group to come up with a number for the Board of Selectmen, which they would recommend.

Motion to institute the Hiring and purchasing Freeze policy for the remainder of FY2026 made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

TREASURY WARRANTS –

Motion to approve FY26 AP Warrant #12 and FY26 Payroll Warrant #12, as presented made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

2026 LICENSES FOR APPROVAL:

Motion to approve the 2026 ABCC Retail Licenses for:
Jayvisat Corp dba Spirit Shoppe
Country Corner Citgo Inc. dba Country Corner
Salem Cross Inn
Adams Coney Frew American Legion Post #244
Shri Sai Ram dba Main Street Liquors
Jenz Inc. dba Northeast Pizza
Hitchcock Tavern Inc. dba Hitchcock Tavern
made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Motion to approve the 2026 Common Victualler licenses for:
Salem Cross Inn
Country Corner Citgo Inc. dba Country Corner
Adams Coney Frew American Legion Post #244
Jenz Inc. dba Northeast Pizza
Hitchcock Tavern Inc. dba Hitchcock Tavern
Keith Arsenault dba Ragged Hill Orchards
Dugas Drive-In dba Howard's Drive-In
Central Mass Donuts LLC dba Dunkin Donuts
Sip Happens
Joy Hinton dba Joy of Beans
made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Motion to approve the 2026 Entertainment licenses for:
Salem Cross Inn *Monday - Saturday*
Hitchcock Tavern dba Hitchcock Tavern *Monday – Sunday*
Adams Coney Frew American Legion Post #244 *Monday - Sunday*
made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Motion to approve 2026 Devices licenses for:
Adams Coney Frew American Legion Post #244, 2 devices: pool table, juke box
made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Motion to approve 2026 Raffle license for:
Adams Coney Frew American Legion Post #244
made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

TA REPORT –

Schedules for Budget Development Calendar: to be sent to Departments and Advisory. Also working on Proposition 2 ½ preparations.

Fire Dept.: a lot of focus and changes taking place in Fire Dept.

CMRPC/Highway Superintendent/Water Commissioner; CDBG funding – Need survey on Central Street and Front Street. May be able to water line replacement and highway project they applied for initially in that area with Senior Center. Will go forward if it is favorable. Deadline coming up. No financial obligation on the Town. CDBG awards can be used for grant applications, which would require a Town share for matching.

MASTER Plan: implementation will happen soon with help from CMRPC and economic development/corridor study.

COMMENTS/CONCERNS –

Mr. Merkel announced he would be stepping down as a Select Board member on December 27th as he has accepted a position in Viriginia. Mr. Sickenberger thanked him for his service.

Beach Dr. – Snowplowing/sanding on Beach Dr. residents would like the road to be plowed. Currently, the end of the road cannot be plowed as the vehicles cannot turn around safely. The residents are concerned for emergency vehicle access to the road and access to a hydrant, located on private property of a seasonal resident, if needed. They are asking for the Town to send a letter to the owners of that property for access to their driveway for highway vehicles to turn around in. This will be discussed again at the next BOS meeting on Dec. 23, 2025 with Mr. Daley/Superintendent in attendance. Possible option of using different vehicles for plowing or plowing a different day.

Next BOS Regular Meeting Date: December 23rd, 2025 – 6PM.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:00pm made by Ms. Lamica. Second made by Mr. Merkel. All in favor, aye (3 yes).

Respectfully submitted,

12/22/2025 — 12/23/25

Authorized Party for the BOS — Date — BOS Clerk — Date