TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN JOINT

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 – 6:00 PM

West Brookfield Town Hall, 2 East Main Street, Conference Room, 1st Floor

MINUTES

STAFF PRESENT: Roland Sickenberger, Chair; Catherine Lamica, Vice Chair (virtual); Brad Merkel, Clerk (virtual); Theresa Cofske/Town Administrator (virtual); Beth Gobeille, Exec. Asst. to TA/BOS; Police Chief Nathan Hagglund; Paul Lapenas, WBCTV.

GUEST: Robert Williams/National Grid

CALL MEETING TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION

6:00pm: Meeting called to order.

MINUTES FOR DEC. 23RD, 2025 AND JANUARY 6, 2026 BOS OPEN MEETINGS FOR APPROVAL –
Motion to approve the minutes for the December 23rd BOS Open Meeting made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).
Motion to approve the minutes for the January 6th 2026 BOS Open Meeting made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

POLICE DEPT. MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIAL GRANT - Working with Hardwick and New Braintree, Brookfield, East Brookfield and possibly more communities for this grant. Aided by Sarah Abbot and supported by the District Attorney and Chief Probation offices this grant (1 year or 3-year term) will hire a co-response clinician to work with all Towns in the agreement providing support for local communities and making referrals with treatment during mental health calls with Police, where warranted. Clinician salary of $115,000 will be covered by the reimbursable grant with no cost to the Town. West Brookfield to take the lead with this grant and will be applying on behalf of the other Towns.
Motion to approve and support the Department of Mental Health Grant application made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

6:15pm – POLE HEARING – KENNEDY RD., #31101668 – Questions to National Grid if this is for the widening project of Rt. 9. National Grid indicated with the widening of the road, there is a need for an additional pole between 17 and 16.

Motion to approve for National Grid to install 1 JO Pole on Kennedy Rd. beginning at a point approximately 4,550 feet north of the centerline of the intersection of Lyon Rd. @ Kennedy Rd. National Grid to install new Pole # 16-50 on Kennedy Rd., West Brookfield made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

INTERVIEW COMMITTEE FOR FIRE CHIEF POSITION – The committee will have 3 x on-call Fire Chiefs from Brimfield, Wales and Petersham on it, as they would have a good understanding of the role of Fire Chief in West Brookfield. Additional members to this committee will be the Union Steward and a member of the West Brookfield Fire Department (to be identified soon). Interviews will be expected to start February 11th. We have 4 applicants so far and the 2 finalists will be interviewed by the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator.

Motion to form the Fire Chief Interview Committee made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

Ms. Cofske and Interim Fire Chief Letendre to go over interview questions prior.

Motion to appoint Jonathan Bonin to the Fire Chief Interview Committee made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

Motion to appoint Robert Legare to the Fire Chief Interview Committee made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

Motion to appoint John Croke to the Fire Chief Interview Committee made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

Motion to appoint Don Contois to the Fire Chief Interview Committee made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Sickenberger. All in favor – aye (2 yes).

OUTDOOR EVIDENCE STORAGE – Chief Hagglund had new size options for the evidence storage unit and thought costs would be approximately $5000 including a fence surrounding the unit. The Select Board felt that after discussions with other departments, the budget line initially identified to be used to pay for the CONEX box and fence wouldn't be appropriate. A better option would be to create a specific Article for Annual Town Meeting for the evidence storage unit and fence to be paid out of. Vote from last meeting re: the Evidence Storage room to be rescinded.

Motion to rescind the past vote at the January 6th, 2026 BOS meeting re: supporting the Police Chief's plan for the CONEX box and fence made by Mr. Merkel. Second by Ms. Lamica. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Ms. Cofske indicated that she would help to develop an Article for Annual Town meeting in June for the Outdoor Evidence Storage and fence, then could transfer unused funds from Article 10 for Town Hall Security/Evidence Room remodel to the new budget line for this purpose. Chief Hagglund indicated that the approximate cost of the 8x8 or 8x4 size container (Conex box) and fence would be $5000.

BUDGETING FOR SPECIAL EVENT POLICE DETAIL FOR TOWN (MEMORIAL DAY/BONFIRE/CONCERT SERIES) – With current budget freeze Chief Hagglund wanted to have clarification on FY26 budgeted events for police presence at Town events like Memorial Day/Bonfire/Concert Series. For Memorial Day Parade, all officers

would be used at detail rate (mandatory overtime). For concert series, 1 officer would be used (special assignment rate). For the bonfire, 2 police officers would be used. Chief Hagglund would like support for Police presence for these Town events as the cost were included in the current budget.

It was noted that the Asparagus Festival Committees pays for private detail for police for their festival. Chief Hagglund questioned if this cost should be taken over by the Town for police coverage as it's an annual Town event. It was questioned that if the Committees, which hold Town Events are capable of covering (fully/partially) the cost of Police detail if they can't be covered in the Police Dept. budgets going forward. Mr. Merkel asked if the Town could use Southeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (SEMLEC) for some Town events.

Motion to approve the overtime, that's specified by the Chief of Police, which is needed for the Memorial Day Parade, the Bonfire event, the summer concert series through June 2026 (at least) for the current Fiscal Year 26 and also knowing that the police coverage for the Asparagus Festival is paid for by that group made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3).

Mr. Merkel asked if the Bandstand Committee could be contacted to see if they would be able to chip in to help with the police dept. costs to detail their concert series.

Chief Hagglund asked to be included in the next BOS agenda to present his FY27 budgets to the Select Board.

MOTORCYCLE PROCLAMATION – The Town was reached out to to help support the Motorcycle Proclamation for the period March 23 2026 – April 30, 2026.

Motion to accept the following proclamation: (read by Mr. Sickenberger)

Town of West Brookfield, Massachusetts Board of Selectmen
PROCLAMATION
Motorcycle Safety Awareness Period

WHEREAS, The motorcycle is a popular means of transportation, for commuting as well as for touring and recreation; and
WHEREAS, There is a growing need for cooperation among drivers of automobiles and trucks, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians who use our streets and highways to reduce injuries and fatalities; and
WHEREAS, It is critical for all to increase their knowledge of the rules of the road and the rights and responsibilities of all roadway users; and
WHEREAS, For the benefit of all citizen bikers, riders and owners of registered motorcycles residing in West Brookfield and our surrounding communities, aimed at increasing awareness and reducing accidents;
WHEREAS, Numerous departments and organizations are committed to making our streets and highways safe for all motor vehicle-related transportation, urging and reminding drivers to "Check Twice – Save a Life, Motorcycles Are Everywhere"; "Check Twice" when pulling out and backing out from parked positions; "Check Twice" when making left turns; "Check Twice" when changing traffic lanes; "Check Twice" for our fellow bikers of West Brookfield and visitors to our Town on motorcycles.
NOW, THEREFORE: We, the Town of West Brookfield Select Board hereby proclaim March 23, 2026 to April 30, 2026, to be Motorcycle Safety Awareness Period in the Town of West Brookfield and wish all who ride an enjoyable and safe riding season.
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and caused the seal of the Town of West Brookfield to be affixed this 20th day of January in the year two thousand twenty-six.

made by Mr. Merkel. Second by Ms. Lamica. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

LAKE WICKABOAG SPECIAL USE PERMITS FOR APPROVAL -

Motion to approve a Lake Wickaboag Special Use Permit for the Boy Scout Troop 118 Ice Fishing Derby on February 15th 2026 made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Motion to approve a Lake Wickaboag Special Use Permit for the Wickaboag Sportsmans Club Ice Fishing event February 8th, 2026 made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Motion to approve a Lake Wickaboag Special Use Permit for the Josh Kemp Memorial Ice Fishing Derby event February 1st, 2026 made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY –

Ms. Cofske ran through the changes made to the drafted policy and questioned the need for a phone tree, etc. The Town will follow Quaboag Regional School District's school closure and delay procedures. It was discussed that we remove the "work from home" sections from the draft inclement weather policy, post the inclement policy as is and that we draw up a formal "work from home policy" to be implemented at a later date.

Motion to approve the Inclement Weather Policy as amended made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

TREASURY WARRANTS – Votes Expected

Motion to approve FY26 AP Warrant #15 and FY26 Payroll Warrant #15 as presented made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

TA REPORT –

Charter Communications – Letter drafted by Cable Access Committee's legal counsel will be sent to Charter to help facilitate moving forward with our contract renewals.

Master Planning Grant – Received contract package. Signed and submitted. Waiting for countersignature and CMRPC proposal to review.

Green Communities Grant – Considering the Fall grants submissions timeline. HVAC system in attic and HVAC system software may qualify for Spring grant submissions. Tom and Travis/ECI and Chris Collins/Collins Ctr. will come out to meet and discuss options.

Leland Rd. – Loan documents coming over. Project is currently out to bid. Waiting to hear if federal funding, which was originally awarded will now come through (over $1 million). Additional funding from Water Trust awarded ($500,000) to go towards planning and engineering.

Quaboag Regional School District – Meeting with the district next week to discuss budget process and 2 ½ override.

FY27 Budgets – Departments sending these in. Will have sit-downs with departments and the Financial Consultant John Madden to discuss.

Next BOS Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 – 6:15PM before Special Town Meeting at West Brookfield Elementary School. The next regular BOS meeting will be Tuesday, February 3rd at 6pm in Town Hall in the BOS Conference Room.

7:22pm – Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Ms. Lamica. Second by Mr. Merkel. All in favor – aye (3 yes).

Respectfully submitted,

2/12/2026

Authorized Party for the BOS Date BOS Clerk Date