TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TUESDAY, April 28, 2026 – 6:00 PM

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

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT: Catherine Lamica, BOS Vice Chair; Brad Merkel, BOS Clerk(virtual); Theresa Cofske, Town Administrator; Jillian Patch, Treasurer-Collector; Jacob Conway, WCBTV Camera Operator

GUESTS: Henry Brogna, resident; Anne Garwood-Hamp, Ragged Hill Cider; D. Piechota; resident, Melanie Waugh, resident; Amanda Wodyga, resident; D. Pontbriand, resident

ABSENT: Roland Sickenberger, BOS Chair

C. Lamica opened the meeting at 6:00PM.

Appointments and Resignations

MOTION: B. Merkel, to accept the resignation of Beth Gobeille as an Insurance Advisory Committee non-union member.
SECOND: C. Lamica
VOTE: All in favor

Proposed West Brookfield Health Insurance Opt-Out Program

Treasurer-Collector, J. Patch presented the proposed Health Insurance Opt-Out Program for town employees that if approved by the Board of Selectmen could be implemented during the FY2027 open enrollment period that starts in May 2026.

The program is offered to all eligible subscribers. Participation is voluntary and subject to terms and conditions. Subscribers who are eligible to participate in the Opt-Out Program will receive a financial incentive of $2,500 per plan year for an individual plan or $5,000 per plan year for a family plan, if they voluntarily waive their right to health insurance offered by the Town and certify they are receiving health insurance elsewhere.

Treasurer-Collector, J. Patch informed the board that the Town pays 75% of employee health insurance and this program could provide significant savings to the town should several employees participate. The Town would save $18,000 on a family plan and $6,335 savings for a single plan. She also disclosed that at the beginning of the program there could be additional cost should new employees sign up for insurance and only a small number of current employees participate in this program.

RECEIVED
MAY 13 2026
BY: K Rose

This program was reviewed and voted for by the Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) and the Public Employee Committee (PEC) to recommend to the Board of Selectmen.

The board members took the information into consideration prior to voting.

MOTION: B. Merkel, to approve the proposed Health Insurance Opt-Out Program for fiscal year 2027.
SECOND: C. Lamica
Vote: All in favor

White Christmas Event (December 6, 2026) – Request Use of Great Hall, Town Common and School Street

MOTION: B. Merkel, to approve the request to use the Great Hall, Town Common and School Street for the White Christmas Event on December 6, 2026.
SECOND: C. Lamica
Vote: All in favor

Hardwick Winery, Ragged Hill Cider and Agronomy Vineyard and Farm One-Day Farmer's Pour Licenses (Asparagus and Heritage Flower Festival, May 16, 2026)

MOTION: B. Merkel, to approve the Hardwick Winery's One-Day Farmer's Pour License for the Asparagus and Heritage Flower Festival, May 16, 2026.
SECOND: C. Lamica
VOTE: All in favor

MOTION: B. Merkel, to approve Ragged Hill Cider's One-Day Farmer's Pour License for the Asparagus and Heritage Flower Festival, May 16, 2026.
SECOND: C. Lamica
VOTE: All in favor

MOTION: B. Merkel, to approve Agronomy Vineyard and Farm One-Day Farmer's Pour License for the Asparagus and Heritage Flower Festival, May 16, 2026, contingent upon receipt of license fee.
SECOND: C. Lamica
VOTE: All in favor

FY2026 AP Warrant #22 and FY2026 Payroll Warrant #22

MOTION: B. Merkel, to approve Fiscal Year 2026 Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants #22.
SECOND: C. Lamica
VOTE: All in favor

RECEIVED
MAY 13 2026
BY: KRose

Comments and Concerns

T. Cofske shared concern regarding other departments having access to the Board of Health office and offering to allow the public to go through the Board of Health files. She recommends changing the lock on that door so that this does not occur in the future as there are highly confidential records maintained by that office. The Selectmen agreed that changing the lock should be done.

D. Piechota, D. Pontbriand, Melanie Waugh and Amanda Wodyga spoke about their concerns with the West Brookfield Elementary School potentially closing and how that will impact the community. They also wish the Selectmen would advocate for keeping the school open to the School Committee and School District. Lengthy discussion ensued, which included the districts budget being excessive and the town should be pushing back on that budget harder as it has been done in the past. They also stated that years ago, the Town of Warren asked West Brookfield for help because they could not afford the assessment and they believe West Brookfield should ask Warren to assist this time.

C. Lamica stated that she understands wanting to keep the school open and is willing to speak with the Town of Warren Selectmen, School Committee and the School Superintendent.

Adjournment

MOTION: B. Merkel, to adjourn.
SECOND: C. Lamica
VOTE: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 6:48PM

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa A. Cofske
Town Administrator

Approved:

Authorized Party for the BOS Date

RECEIVED
MAY 13 2026
BY: