TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TUESDAY, May 12, 2026 – 6:00 PM

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

MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT: R. Sickenberger, BOS Chair C. Lamica, BOS Vice Chair; H. Brogna, BOS Clerk; D. Moberg, Advisory Committee Co-Chair; T. Cofske, Town Administrator; J. Patch, Treasurer-Collector; N. Perault, Assistant Treasurer-Collector; T. Astrella, Accounting Assistant; Fire Chief Bessette, Police Chief Hagglund, Police Lieutenant Letendre, K. Hitt, Senior Center Director; K. Landry, Water Department Administrative Assistant; A. Garwood-Hampp, Highway Department Administrative Assistant; J. Borkowski, Highway Department; WCBTV Camera Operators J. Conway and R. Shepard

PUBLIC PRESENT: S. Duff, QRSD Superintendent; D. Piechota, M. Waugh, A. Wodyga, D. Pontbriand, M. Pontbriand, C. Taylor, J. Brooks, V. Beliveau, T. Docimo, J. Kuranda, J. Geyden, R. Kopacko, Warren Select Board Member; J. Tatro, M. Barnes, H. McKusick, C. Burgess, T. Mathieson, K. Roth

Roland Sickenberger opened the meeting at 6:00PM.

Executive Session

R. Sickenberger requested a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(3) to obtain legal advice regarding pending litigation between the Town of West Brookfield and AFSCME Council 93, Local 1364 (Fire Union) pertaining to an Unfair Labor Practice Charge filed with the Department of Labor Relations and docketed as MUP-25-11707, and pursuant to G.L. c .30A, s. 21(a)(7) "[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements," specifically the Public Records Law, G.L. c. 4, s. 7(26) (discuss privileged communication from Town Counsel).

MOTION: C. Lamica, so moved
SECOND: H. Brogna
ROLL CALL VOTE: H. Brogna - I, C. Lamica - I, R. Sickenberger – I

Executive Session

R. Sickenberger requested a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss a draft Community Benefits Agreement between the Town of West Brookfield and Agilitas Energy, LLC related to the proposed photovoltaic solar projects at 18 Beaman Road and Coy-Hill Road in West Brookfield, MA 01585, and , and pursuant to G.L. c .30A, s. 21(a)(7) "[t]o comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements," specifically the Public Records Law, G.L. c. 4, s. 7(26) (discuss privileged communication from Town Counsel).

MOTION: C. Lamica, so moved
SECOND: H. Brogna
ROLL CALL VOTE: H. Brogna - I, C. Lamica - I, R. Sickenberger – I

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Executive Session

R. Sickenberger requested a motion to enter into Executive Session Pursuant to G.L. 30A, §21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. (Accounting Department)

MOTION: C. Lamica, so moved
SECOND: H. Brogna
ROLL CALL VOTE: H. Brogna - I, C. Lamica - I, R. Sickenberger – I

Meeting Minutes of April 28th, 2026

MOTION: C. Lamica to accept the Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes of April 28th, 2026, as written.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2-0 in favor, R. Sickenberger abstained

Approve the Issuance and Details of the Mass Clean Water Trust Interim Bond Note and All Associated Items (Leland Road Pumpstation Upgrade Project)

Treasurer-Collector, J. Patch explained to the Board what the purpose is of an Interim Bond Note. This a short-term loan issued through the Mass Clean Water Trust. Towns use these interim notes to finance water or sewer infrastructure projects while the work is underway. Once the project is completed or reaches certain milestones, the interim loan is typically converted into a long-term, low-interest loan.
Approval by the Board is required and allows the town to officially borrow Clean Water Trust funds to pay for the Leland Road Pump Station upgrades and to approve all the associated financial documents.
The Mass Clean Water Trust administers the reimbursements.

MOTION: C. Lamica to approve the issuance and details of the Mass Clean Water Trust Interim Bond Note and all associated documents for Leland Road Pumpstation Upgrade Project.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

Clarification Needed for Tri-Valley, Inc. Nutrition Program (Meals on Wheels) Regarding Continued Use of Senior Center for Meal Preparation for Distribution (Contracted) if Senior Center is Closed FY2027

The Town Administrator gave a brief overview of the Tri-Valley, Inc. Nutrition Program and how the Senior Center is used to prepare the meals for distribution. She further explained that they are looking for clarification when it comes to their ability to continue using the space if the Senior Center is closed or their days of operations are reduced. She reminded the Board that there is a rental agreement that needs to be renewed.
Senior Center Director, K. Hitt, provided additional information to the board. She explained that it is not just West Brookfield Senior Citizens that rely on these meals, but also neighboring Towns. She had also explained that supervisor for the nutrition program and the center director work hand in hand. It may be difficult to do so if only open three days per week.

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H. Brogna asked if it would be possible to keep the center open five days per week by reducing the hours of operation each day. K. Hitt agreed to look at that possibility.
C. Lamica stated that there are too many things unknown at this time to make a final decision on the matter.

Last Cast Anglers Requesting Permission to Hold a Fishing Tournament for Seven (7) Boats on May 17th, 2026 from 7:00AM to 3:00PM (Club members will be parking at Gavit Wire)

The Last Cast Anglers Club has submitted a request to the Board to hold a fishing tournament on Lake Wickaboag on May 17th, 2026 from 7:00am to 3:00pm.

MOTION: C. Lamica, to approve the Last Cast Anglers Club's request to hold their fishing tournament on Lake Wickaboag on May 17th, 2026 from 7:00am to 3:00pm.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

FY2027 Budget Review to Recommend Additional Reductions to the Advisory Committee

Town Administrator informed the Board that at the last Advisory Committee they decided that the Board of Selectmen should decide the remaining reductions needed to balance the budget. Advisory Committee Co-Chair, D. Moberg confirmed that to be the case. He also stated that working with the Department Heads and cutting so much from the budgets already makes this so difficult. You cannot just unilaterally cut all across the board. He asked if the Department Heads should be asked to weigh in to see what they think. The Board of Selectmen generally didn't believe that would be a good idea because they have already been asked to make cuts and have done so. At this point the Board will have to make the necessary reductions.

Much discussion ensued throughout the remainder of this agenda item.

The Board of Selectmen decided the line items and amounts to be cut:

- Board of Selectmen stipends reduced by a total of $4,500 leaving a balance of zero
- Accounting Salaries reduced by $25,000 which replaces the initial reduction of $21,000 leaving the salary budgeted at $72,350.00
- Assessors' Salaries reduced by an additional $7,031.00 reducing the Assessing Administrative Assistant hours to 16 hours per week
- Advisory Clerk reduced $ $2,408.00 leaving a balance of zero
- Conservation Commission Clerk reduced $2,488.44 leaving a balance of zero
- Planning Board Clerk reduced $1,654.00 leaving a balance of zero
- Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk reduced $700.00 leaving a balance of zero
- Earth Removal Board Clerk reduced $226.00 leaving a balance of zero
- Stormwater Authority Clerk reduced $226.00 leaving a balance of zero
- Highway Department Administrative Assistant Salary reduced $11,527.21, reducing the hours to 24 hours per week
- Central Fuel Depot reduced $3,570.00

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- Library Salaries reduced $20,000.00
- Historical Commission reduced $650.00 leaving a balance of zero
- Lake Wickaboag reduced $10,000.00 leaving a balance of zero
- Common Committee reduced 1,000.00
- General Insurance reduced $4,000.00 because the Cabot Insurance Policy Quote came in lower by that amount

With all the above reductions, the budget remains $73,000.00 deficit.

Review and Approve the June 2nd, 2026 Special Town Meeting Warrant

The Board reviewed each article with the Town Administrator. Many of the articles will not be funded this year due to financial constraints. The Board has decided to keep those articles on the warrant; although it is probable that the articles will be postponed indefinitely at the Special Town Meeting.

MOTION: C. Lamica, to approve the June 2nd, 2026 Special Town Meeting Warrant as presented.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

Review and Approve the June 2nd, 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The Board reviewed each article with the Town Administrator. Article #6: Repairs to Private Ways Account will not be funded this year due to financial constraints. The Board has decided to keep this article on the warrant; although, it is probable that the article will be postponed indefinitely at the Annual Town Meeting.

MOTION: C. Lamica, to approve the June 2nd, 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant as presented.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

MIIA - Cabot Risk Strategies – FY2027 Police and Fire Accident Insurance Policy

MOTION: C. Lamica, to approve the quote from Cabot Risk Strategies for the FY2027 Police and Fire Accident Insurance Policy in the amount of $17,500.00.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

FY2026 AP Warrant #23 and FY2026 Payroll Warrant #23

MOTION: C. Lamica, to approve Fiscal Year 2026 Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants #23.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

Other Business

Garwood-Hampp met this morning with CERT, Police and Fire to review the plan for the Asparagus and Heritage Flower Festival that is happening this Saturday. During the review, she realized she had not requested permission from the Board to close School Street and restrict parking on the east side of Maple Street with no time limit.

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MOTION: C. Lamica, to allow closure of School Street and restrict parking on the east side of Maple Street with no time limit during the Asparagus and Heritage Flower Festival.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

Adjournment

MOTION: H. Brogna, to adjourn.
SECOND: C. Lamica
VOTE: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:47PM

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa A. Cofske
Town Administrator

Approved:

6-23-2026

Authorized Party for the BOS Date

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Steven Carroll
West Brookfield Board of Selectmen Hearing
May 26, 2026

Good evening, Mr. Chairman, members of the Select Board, and members of the public.

For those who may not know me, my name is Steven Carroll. I am a resident of West Brookfield and have lived in town for over 25 years. I currently serve on the West Brookfield Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Stormwater Authority, and Earth Removal Board.

Because I reside on one of the roads involved in this matter, I was advised by West Brookfield Town Counsel to recuse myself from participation in the hearings and abstain from voting throughout this process in order to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. I followed that advice accordingly.

I am speaking tonight solely in my capacity as an individual resident, abutter, taxpayer, and elected official expressing my own personal concerns regarding this matter.

My concern here is not whether this project may provide financial benefit to the Town. My concern is whether the statutory process established under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 15C is being properly followed.

The Town of West Brookfield adopted the Scenic Roads Act in 1973, and under that law the Planning Board, together with the Tree Warden, was given authority over scenic road tree removal matters.

The role of the Planning Board under the Scenic Roads Act is to protect the scenic, historic, and rural character of designated roads by carefully reviewing proposed alterations, tree removal, and roadway impacts through a public hearing process intended to balance infrastructure needs with preservation of community character and public resources.

In this case, multiple duly noticed public hearings were held. Evidence was reviewed, public input was heard, and unanimous decisions were made by the Planning Board with the Tree Warden present throughout the process.

Given the amount of testimony, evidence, and discussion that occurred during multiple Planning Board hearings, I believe it is important that any board considering action on this matter fully understand the record and deliberations that already took place through that public process.

My understanding is that this proposal involves substantially taller utility poles, the removal of multiple mature trees both public and private, and infrastructure expansion

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associated with providing service for a private commercial solar project, and that alternative routes exist that could lessen impacts to designated scenic roads.

My concern is that financial considerations being discussed after those hearings should not be used to bypass or weaken the statutory authority and public process already established under Massachusetts law.

My concern is that the Scenic Roads Act specifically places this jurisdiction with the Planning Board and Tree Warden, and I have not seen any statutory authority allowing those decisions to be overturned by the Select Board.

This is not intended as a political statement or a personal criticism of anyone involved. It is simply a request that all boards respect the legal framework, jurisdiction, and public hearing process that the Legislature and the Town established decades ago.

Public confidence in local government depends on boards respecting each other's statutory authority, especially after extensive public hearings and formal votes.

I would respectfully ask the Select Board to carefully reconsider any action that could be interpreted as overriding or bypassing the statutory authority established under the Scenic Roads Act before moving forward with a final decision in this matter.

If actions are ultimately taken that appear inconsistent with the Scenic Roads Act or the jurisdiction established under Chapter 40 Section 15C, then I would expect that any appropriate boards or parties would consider seeking further clarification or guidance through the proper legal or state oversight channels to ensure the process is being handled properly. As an individual resident, abutter, and taxpayer, I would also reserve the right to do the same independently if necessary.

I would also respectfully request that this written statement be included in full as part of the official record and meeting minutes for this hearing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Steven Carroll

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Chapter 40 Section 15C: Scenic Road designations; improvements; fines

Section 15C. Upon recommendation or request of the planning board, conservation commission or historical commission of any city or town, such city or town may designate any road in said city or town, other than a numbered route or state highway as a scenic road; provided, however, that a numbered route may be designated by a city or town as a scenic road if its entire length is contained within the boundaries of said city or town, and no part of said route is owned or maintained by the commonwealth.

After a road has been designated as a scenic road any repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or paving work done with respect thereto shall not involve or include the cutting or removal of trees, or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, or portions thereof, except with the prior written consent of the planning board, or if there is no planning board, the selectmen of a town, or the city council of a city, after a public hearing duly advertised twice in a newspaper of general circulation in the area, as to time, date, place and purpose, the last publication to occur at least seven days prior to such hearing; provided, however, that when a public hearing must be held under the provisions of this section and under section three of chapter eighty-seven prior to the cutting or removal of a tree, such hearings shall be consolidated into a single public hearing before the tree warden and the planning board, or if there is no planning board, the selectmen of a town, or the city council of a city, and notice of such consolidated public hearing shall be given by the tree warden or his deputy as provided in said section three of chapter eighty-seven. Any city or town making said scenic road designation may make an ordinance or by-law establishing that a violation of this paragraph shall be punished by a fine not to exceed three hundred dollars.

Designation of a road as a scenic road shall not affect the eligibility of a city or town to receive construction or reconstruction aid for such road pursuant to the provisions of chapter ninety.

