TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TUESDAY, May 26, 2026 – 5:45 PM

West Brookfield Elementary School (Cafeteria), 89 North Main Street, West Brookfield

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; WCBTV Camera Operators J. Conway and R. Shepard

PUBLIC PRESENT: P. Lalli, T. McGuigan, A. McGuigan, C. Czub, M. Barnes, R. Nichols, J. Nichols, A Snay, K. Snay, P. Skowyra, J. Sporbert, D. Wisniewski, E. Leasca, B. Henrichon, D. Henrichon, D. Blanton, K. Begin, M. Kearney, S. Demis, A. Garwood-Hampp, T. Kularski, C. Partucci, H. Murray, K. Prouty , J. Braconia, K. Ela, M. Carter

Roland Sickenberger opened the meeting at 5:45 PM.

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

Returned to Open Session at 6:17 PM.

Meeting Minutes of May 12th, 2026

Minutes have not been completed and therefore tabled.

Public Hearing before the Tree Warden re National Grid request to remove Public Shade Trees which include 42 non-Hazard Trees and 40 Hazard Trees.

R. Sickenberger opened the Public Shade Tree hearing.
Tree Warden, J. Daley attested to the hazardous trees that were identified for removal and stated that there are many live trees to be trimmed that are on private property.

P. Skowya stated that the issue is taking trees down on a scenic road. She asked what happened to the Scenic Road Act.

RECEIVED
JUN 24 2026
BY: KRose

J. Bracconia, a Pierce Road resident, received a letter one year ago stating that she could not disseminate stone walls or trees on her property line because it is a scenic road. She also referred to a 10-year plan that the town approved where the scenic roads were named as important to the tourism aspect of the town. She urged the importance of scenic roads be considered.

Town Counsel, C. Petrini explained that all parties present would rather the project not go down the scenic roads. He further stated that National Grid will explain why Route 9 is not a viable option.

National Grid Engineer P. Curn explained that they had looked at Route 9 for a good couple of years and found that the space to place the poles is not safe. Additionally, the ledge along Route 9 makes it very difficult to get the poles in and the grade would not accommodate maintenance of the poles. There is a stretch of approximately 1.5 miles that makes using the Route 9 option not viable, then at the bottom of Route 9 there would be a sharp turn onto Route 32 and then the need to cross Route 32 to get to the National Grid substation.

H. Brogna stated that he understands the difficulties of going west on Rout 9, but there are seventeen poles and wonders why National Grid can't just continue.

Mr. Curn stated that the section H. Brogna is referring to is a different section. Those seventeen poles are a different landscape, so it is not just a matter of continuing the same.

P. Skowya informed the board that National Grid is not a United States company and has a lot of money. It is the Town's job to protect our scenic roads.

K. Ela of Ragged Hill Road said that National Grids website shows a significant upgrade project within a the area and wonders why it would be done at the same time?

Mr. Curn stated that National Grid had looked at that, but the other project is a transmission ROW and not a distribution line or service. It does not eliminate the work needed on Pierce Road. Transmission ROW's are used for larger transmission impact and it would improve transmission for the entire state.

M. Hagseth stated that perhaps it's time this should be done (piggybacking transmission and distribution) as there will be similar situations throughout the state going forward.

K. Begin of Pierce Road stated that in 1973 the Scenic Road Act was passed. He said that he pays good money to live up here and informed the Board that the Planning Board held three meetings and it was clear the residents don't want it.

A question was asked as to why this hearing is with the Board of Selectmen and not the Planning Board.

Attorney D. Fixler who represents Agilitas Energy, LLC read aloud a portion of the Scenic Roads Act and summarized it by saying the predicate is "Work done on the road". The West Brookfield Scenic Road Bylaw has

RECEIVED
JUN 24 2026
BY: KRose

been reviewed by Attorney Fixler and it states repairs, maintenance, reconstruction or paving done to a roadway. He further stated that tree removal is not related to roadwork and the statute is clear. Therefore it is not the jurisdiction of the Planning Board. There is nothing going on in the road which would require Planning Board jurisdiction.

S. Carol informed everyone that he is a member of the Planning Board, Stormwater Board, Conservation Commission and the Earth Removal Committee. He read a lengthy statement that he prepared for this hearing and requested it be included in this record (statement attached).

Planning Board Chair, T. Morell stated he wanted to make a few points:

1. It is not Agilitas at issue, it's National Grid.
2. A lot of community input over three meetings with Planning Board.
3. During the Route 9 walk he asked National Grid why you can build all over the country, but not along Route 9? Route 9 had power in the 1930's-40's.
4. During same walk along Route 9, I was asked if I would change my vote.

Further discussion ensued.

MOTION: C. Lamica, to approve National Grid's request to remove public shade trees pursuant to the BOS's authority under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 87, Section 4.
SECOND: H. Brogna
DISCUSSION: H. Brogna would like to say National Grid has options. There is no problem with the solar project, it is getting the power that is the issue. I want National Grid to come back with a better option.
VOTE: 2-1 Not in favor

Community Benefits Agreement between the Town of West Brookfield and Agilitas Energy LLC
R. Sickenberger stated they should skip over the Community Benefits Agreement because the Public Shade Tree Hearing did not pass.

Pole Installation Hearing: Pole Petition No. 30727619 Coy Hill Rd. - National Grid to install 13 JO Poles on Coy Hill Rd., beginning at a point approximately 12.5 feet west of the centerline of the intersection of Coy Hill Rd and W. Main St. and continue approximately 1,615 feet in a southeast direction. Install 13 Poles P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P12-84. (noticed for 6:15 p.m.)
Town Counsel, C. Petrini recommended tabling the Pole hearings as well as the Community Benefits Agreement, due to the Public Shade Tree Hearing not passing.

Pole Installation Hearing: Petition No. 30727619 West Main St. - National Grid to install 1 JO Pole on W. Main St. beginning at a point approximately 200 feet north of the centerline of the intersection of Coy Hill Rd and W. Main St. Install Pole #51-50 W. Main St. ~94' SE of existing Pole P51 W. Main St. towards P52 W. Main St. (noticed for 6:30 p.m.)

RECEIVED
JUN 24 2026
BY: KRose

Pole Installation Hearing: Petition No. 30851105 Pierce Rd.. - National Grid to install 5 JO Poles on Pierce Rd and relocate 2 JO Poles on Pierce Rd beginning at a point approximately 90 feet south of the centerline of the intersection of Pierce Rd and Ragged Hill Rd and continuing approximately 7,200 feet in a south direction. Install P5-50 Pierce Road ~ 115' SE of P6 Pierce Rd. Relocate Pole P5 Pierce Rd ~ 30' SE towards existing P4 Pierce Rd. Install P21-84 ~40' from existing Pole P21 Pierce Rd. Install Pole P32-50 ~100' south of existing P33 Pierce Rd. Install anchor and down guy on P32-50 Pierce Rd. Install P33-50 Pierce Rd ~ 140' north of existing P33 Pierce Rd. Relocate P34 ~43' north of existing location. Install P49 Pierce Rd ~106' from existing pole P56 Ragged Hill Rd.

MOTION: C. Lamica, to table Pole Installation Hearing: Pole Petition No. 30727619 Coy Hill Rd.; Pole Installation Hearing: Petition No. 30727619 West Main St.; Pole Installation Hearing: Petition No. 30851105 Pierce Rd. and Pole Installation Hearing: Petition No. 30851105 Pierce Rd.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

MOTION: C. Lamica, to table the Community Benefits Agreement between the Town of West Brookfield and Agilitas Energy LLC
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

Fire Fighters Relief Association – To Discuss Potential Agreement for the Boat Owned by the Association for Permitted Use by the West Brookfield Fire Department and Insurance Needed

Fire Chief Bessette explained that the Fire Fighter's Relief Association would like to discuss how the Fire Department can utilize the boat as it is not officially town property and needs to be insured by the town in order for it to be used by the Fire Department.

The Town Administrator was under the impression that the Association does not want any other department to use the boat and that is the reason it has not been officially donated to the town. Association Representative, B. Ash confirmed that to be the case.

Association Representative, B. Ash stated the goals are making sure there is no liability to the association or the town and getting it insured. Need direction on how to achieve those goals.

There was brief discussion of a possible lease agreement or a conditional donation. The association will discuss it and return to the board.

Recommendation of Respondent to Request for Proposals (RFP) for IT Management Services

The Board reviewed the proposals from Northeast IT Systems, Inc. and Ayacht Technology Services for IT Management Services along with the recommendations made by the RFP Review Committee member D. Brown. Both proposals are for a 3-year term.

MOTION: C. Lamica, to approve the Northeast IT Systems, Inc. proposal for IT Services.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

RECEIVED
JUN 24 2026
BY: KRose

Rescind the May 12, 2026 Board of Selectmen's vote to approve the Cabot Risk Strategies Police and Fire Accident Insurance Quote

A question of why the Board is rescinding the vote approving the Cabot Risk Strategies Police and Fire Accident insurance quote was asked.

The Town Administrator explained that Berry Insurance has provided a package inclusive of this type of policy as well as general property and liability insurance with savings of $24,000.00.

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

Final Review of FY2027 Town Operating Budget

The Town Administrator explained that the budget for FY2027 should come in under the levy limit between $100,000.00 to $150,000.00 if the Town was in a good financial situation. However given the current state of the town's finances, a prudent number would be between $25,000.00 to $50,000.00.

M. Haesche made a case for the various boards, commissions, and committees to save their clerk positions from being eliminated as part of the budget cuts. She expects the board members will quit if not. She pleaded unfair to having these volunteer board members work as clerks. She fears there will be lawsuits against the towns if the work isn't done correctly. She asked if it is possible to make a motion at town meeting to reduce another department's budget to give the money to these clerk positions. She stated that the Senior Center budget could be used. C. Lamica stated that a motion could be made at Town Meeting.

Final review of the FY2027 budget ensued with additional adjustments including elimination of the part-time highway laborer and an additional reduction in the Vocational Education line item, bringing the total amount of the operating budget under the levy limit by $31,000.00.

Appointments/Resignations: Donna Allard, Town Accountant (Retirement Notice)

MOTION: C. Lamica, to unfortunately accept the retirement notice of Town Accountant, D. Allard.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: All in favor

R. Sickenberger reiterated the acceptance of her retirement is met with regret, but with thankfulness for her years of service.

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

RECEIVED
JUN 24 2026
BY: KRose

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

Returned to Open Session at 6:17 PM.
R. Sickenberger announced the results of the votes taken in the executive session the board just returned from.

The board voted to appoint Trista Astrella as Interim Town Accountant at 32 hours per week, effective July 1, 2026 with an annual salary of $56,750.00 for FY2027.

The board also voted to appoint D. Allard as consultant to the Interim Town Accountant effective July 1. 2026 at the rate of $150.00 per hour for 4 hours per week for a period of 26 weeks for a total of $15,600.00.

Comments and Concerns
M. Carter stated that with the override not passing, she doesn't believe that people realized how bad things really are. She asked if the town could put another vote out to the people and hope that more people will understand that we need to pitch in during this time? She believes that more people would be willing to contribute if there was another vote taken for the override.

R. Sickenberger replied that it is something that the board can discuss, but the voters have spoken.

Next Meeting of the Board of Selectmen
The next meetings of the Board of Selectmen will be June 2nd, 2026 (at 6:15 PM before the Annual Town Meeting) and June 9th, 2026 Regular Meeting

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa A. Cofske
Town Administrator

Approved:

6-23-2026
Authorized Party for the BOS Date

RECEIVED
JUN 24 2026
BY: KRose