TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

June 23, 2026

MEETING MINUTES

Members and Staff Present: R. Sickenberger-BOS Chair, H. Brogna -BOS member, T. Cofske-Town Administrator, Police Chief Hagglund, Police Lieutenant Letendre, Police Officer C. Charron, ACO – L. Shattuck, Sr. Center Director - K. Hitt, Highway Department Admin Asst. – A. Garwood-Hampp, WCBTV Camera Operators J. Conway and R. Shepard

Public Present: Mr. & Mrs. Jankins, G. Simeone, D. Root, M. Clayborne, W. Clayborne, M. Drolet, Z. Froskiawokis, R. Drago, D. Pontbriand, G. Peterson, H. Peterson, J. Brooks, C. Sposatulalhance, D. Bachard, M. Waugh, T. Mathieson, T. Dontknow, A. Wodyga, J. Price

Board of Selectmen Chair, R. Sickenberger opened the meeting at 6:00PM.

Meeting Minutes of May 12th, 2026, May 26th, and June 2nd, 2026

MOTION: H. Brogna, to approve the May 12, 2026 meeting minutes.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to approve the May 26, 2026 meeting minutes.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to approve the June 2, 2026 meeting minutes.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

Appointments/Resignations

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Henry Brogna as the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission Alternate Member.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to accept the resignation of Assistant Animal Control Officer, Ali Ritzer.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

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MOTION: H. Brogna, to accept the resignation of Animal Inspector, Ali Ritzer.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to accept the resignation of Recreation Committee member, Micheal Drolet.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to accept the resignation of full-time Police Officer Alexander A. Green.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

MOTION: MOTION: H. Brogna, to accept the resignation of full-time Police Officer Matthew Shlegel.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

The Board of Selectmen acknowledged the resignation of Board of Selectmen Vice-Chair, Catherine Lamica with appreciation of her years of service to the Town.

Nuisance/Dangerous Dog Hearing – 23 Cottage Street

R. Sickenberger opened the hearing by reading the following into record "Pursuant to MGL Chapter 140, section 157 to receive testimony and evidence regarding a dog attack from a dog owned by Glen and Heather Peterson of 23 Cottage Street, West Brookfield and to determine if the dog is found to be a nuisance or dangerous dog and, if so found, what action shall be ordered or taken".

All persons present that were to give witnessing testimony during the hearing took the following oath led by R. Sickenberger, "I swear that the testimony I am about to give is the whole truth and nothing but the truth".

W. Clayborne recalled the dog attack by a German Sheppard from 23 Cottage Street, that occurred on May 6th while he and his wife were out on a morning walk at approximately 7:45AM. During the attack, Mr. Clayborne was bitten on his left hand and had sustained a torn right hamstring because of the injuries and is currently in physical therapy for. Police and ambulance responded and he sought treatment that day.

Mr. Clayborne informed the board of an incident with another dog from the same house about ten (10) days before this attack.

An owner of the dog, G. Peterson, provided his recollection of what had happened, which began by showing the board pictures of their back porch door that is normally secured by a

small bungee cord. He explained that the small dog was outside on a leash and someone hadn't re-secured the bungee cord. As they walked by the small dog started barking and the German Sheppard went out. Mr. Peterson stated that he went outside immediately when the German Sheppard started barking and got the dog back inside the house. He further stated that the dog nips and if it had been an attack, it would not have been a pinky and it would have been something more than that. He is not vicious. Mr. Peterson believes the dog was playing and going after the papers in Mr. Clayborne's hand.

Lt. Letendre summarized what was happening when he arrived at the scene. Mr. Clayborne was being treated by EMS. Lt. Letendre and Officer Charron went down to speak with the dog owner and called Animal Control. The dog was already inside the house at that time. Animal Control arrived and quarantined the dog.

Mrs. Clayborne provided further information on the injuries, stating that there were three (3) fingers that had been pierced by the dog's teeth. She further described issues with the medical treatment went through.

Discussion and questioning ensued. Other residents gave their accounts of the incident and other incidents they have experienced or witnessed.

R. Sickenberger asked if anyone had any further comments. Being there were none, the board went into deliberation. The first action the board needed to take was to decide whether the dog should be deemed a nuisance or a dangerous dog. T. Cofske advised the board to review the definitions of both in order to make a determination.

MOTION: H. Brogna, to determine the dog meets the definition of a dangerous dog.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

Further comments were made by Clayborne's, the Petersons and others present.

The board then voted the following orders:

i. that the dog be humanely restrained at all times;
ii. that the dog be confined to your home/property; provided, however, that "confined" shall mean securely (a) confined indoors or (b) confined outdoors for no more than 4 hours per day in a securely enclosed and locked pen or dog run area upon the premises; that meets the Massachusetts General Law Chapter 140 Section 174E and Section 157 (securely (a) confined indoors or (b) confined outdoors for no more than 4 hours per day in a securely enclosed and locked pen or dog run area upon the premises; provided further, that such pen or dog run shall have a secure roof and, if such enclosure has no floor secured to the sides thereof, the sides shall be embedded into the ground for not less than 2 feet; and provided further, that within the confines of such pen or dog run, a dog house or proper shelter from the elements shall be provided to protect the dog);
iii. that when removed from the premises of the owner or the keeper of the dog, the dog shall be securely and humanely muzzled;

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iv. that the owner or keeper of the dog provides proof of insurance in the amount of not less than $100,000.00, ensuring the owner or keeper against any claim;
v. that the owner or keeper of the dog installs a self-closing gate at the top of the stairs to the porch that meets the height of the top porch/deck railings.

The motion was made by H. Brogna, seconded by R. Sickenberger and the vote in favor was 2 – 0.

Acceptance of an Anonymous Donation in the amount of $45,000.00 to the Council on Aging to Keep the Senior Center Open Five (5) Days per Week

R. Sickenberger announced that the Town has received this generous donation and stated that the Town thanks the donor.

Sr. Center Director, K. Hitt expressed sincere gratitude and stated that the seniors will be so happy.

MOTION: H. Brogna, to accept the anonymous donation in the amount of $45,000.00 to the Council on Aging to Keep the Senior Center open five (5) days per week.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2 – 0

Year-End Appropriation Transfer Requests

Fire Department – The Board reviewed the end-of-year transfer requests from the Fire Department.

MOTION: H. Brogna, to approve the sum of $4,853.00 to be transferred from the Fire Department Training Wages account #1-220-5192 to the Fire Department Equipment account #1-220-5580.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to approve the sum of $4,367.00 to be transferred from the Fire Chief's Wages account #01-220-5110 to the Fire Department's Uniforms account #01-220-5582.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to approve the sum of $8,422.00 to be transferred from the Fire Fighters Salary Wages account #01-220-5192 to the Fire Department's Uniforms account #01-220-5582.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

Recreation Committee - The Board reviewed the end-of-year transfer requests from the Recreation Committee.

MOTION: H. Brogna, to transfer the amount of $3,571.00 from account #01-630-5580 to account #01-630-5190.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger

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Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to transfer $735.00 to be transferred from the Recreation Committee Salary Wages account #01-630-5580 to account #01-630-5190.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

Fire Chief Requesting the Board of Selectmen Deem Fire Department Equipment as Surplus Inventory

MOTION: H. Brogna, to deem the following as surplus inventory:

- 100 ft section of 1" booster hose- QTY 1
- 50 ft section of 2" hose- QTY 6
- 50 ft sections of 3" hose- QTY 40
- 50 ft sections of 1.5" hose- QTY 5
- 100 ft sections of 4" supply hose- QTY 12
- 2500-gallon tanker bag- QTY 1
- 6" Storz suction- QTY 2
- Assorted rescue tools and lights (old jaws and air chisel)- QTY 1 Package

SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

Garrett Piermarini – Quaboag Youth Sports Complex (QYS) Proposal

G. Piermarini representing Quaboag Youth Sports, Inc. was in attendance to discuss the QYS complex proposal that was submitted to the Board of Selectmen.

The proposal will be sent over to Town Counsel for review.

G. Piermarini gave an overview of the proposal. He informed the Board and public that they would like to utilize the Elementary School fields for youth sports programs. QYS has offered to manage the fields to include mowing and maintaining. They would also like to incorporate the outdoor basketball and tennis courts as well as the playground area so that it can be used by the children in town. He further explained that they would prioritize youth sports programs during the season, but also that the areas would be open to the public for use.

He further explained that each sports group carries it's own insurance and that they could include the town on those policies.

They are hoping to have at least a year that they could have an agreement for at least a year and then next year a renewable lease for a long-term vision that would turn it into the Quaboag Youth Sports Complex and keep it going. The time would allow them to obtain funds. A long-term lease/agreement would be more appealing to those that may be willing to invest or donate.

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G. Piermarini stated that they would also want to include the use of the gymnasium because there are not enough courts available for the programs.

M. Astrella informed the Board that the Youth Sports have used the gymnasium all year long and they have for the last nine (9) years, had insurance in place and coordinated their programs with the school. M. Astrella indicated that he is willing (on his own time) to continue assisting with the coordination.

M. Drolet asked if all this should be done through the Recreation Committee. R. Sickenberger wonders the same, but it is a different organization, and the Town is unsure of what they are going to do with the building.

A. Garwood-Hamp asked the Highway Department to plow, sand, and salt, if basketball falls in the winter? R. Sickenberger indicated that Highway would have to plow regardless. T. Cofske explained that funds were set aside in the budget in part for the plowing, etc.

H. Brogna asked that the youth sports programs keep Recreation Committee informed.

PTO - Discuss Playground at West Brookfield Elementary School

The PTO has purchased a playground and has funds set aside for the underlayment for a total of $110,000.00. It is currently stored in a Conex box on the school property, and they need to figure out what to do with it. The PTO wants the playground equipment to be installed in this community as it was funded by families in town.

There was concern about the possibility of the Town selling the school and if the playground was there, then what would happen to it. R. Sickenberger explained that if that were to happen or there's a lease on it, the Town could include a right of way.

The Connex box can stay in place until there's a decision on the playground's location.

Denise Pontbriand – Discuss Potential for a Charter School in West Brookfield

D. Pontbriand, has been doing a lot of research since school closing. She stated that the Quaboag Regional School District fell to the bottom ten percentile on the MCAS testing. That results in putting Ware, West Brookfield, and Warren in a category that is highest ranked for a charter school. She continued speaking to the Board about MCAS percentiles and other communities within those percentiles.

She spoke about DESE stating that they look at where the monies are needed in the towns and how they can support their school systems.

D. Pontbriand stated that she does not want to hurt the school district but rather enhance the test performance of the kids that are going there.

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She stated that she spoke with the President of Old Sturbridge Village Charter School and he indicated West Brookfield has one thing in it's favor, and that being it has a building.

She has been speaking with a charter school that has grown out of their area (name of the school not provided). The school is interested in coming to West Brookfield and they would like some sort of commitment from the board.

She further mentioned that this would give children options and would bring in revenue that would basically wash the $230,000 cost of having an empty building. She stated that going in with an existing charter school is a quick pace and that's why she is pressuring the board because a letter of intent is needed by August of this summer. Then if approved, in February of next year, the school could open in September 2027.

R. Sickenberger, stated that he is not familiar with charter schools and asked how they work. D. Pontbriand explained that the monies that were allocated to a school, now gets allocated to a charter school. Basically, now the schools would be sharing funds.

R. Sickenberger asked if students had to pay tuition to attend. D. Pontbriand said no, and then went into describing the City of Worcester, their charter schools and different options. She stated that she is looking at a more classical education, getting back to basics.

D. Pontbriand stated that once she gets the blessings, they would hold public information sessions and meetings with the district explaining coexisting. The Town would have a board of residents to manage the operations of the charter school. She explained that the charter school would be paying rent and they would be doing the repairs on the school.

R. Sickenberger asked how this would affect the monies coming into the Quaboag Regional School District.
H. Brogna asked if the Town would pay money on top of what they pay the district.
D. Pontbriand said "no". Further stating that the district and charter would be sharing.
G. Piermarini (School Committee Member) stated that the Town would have to pay the foundational money of $14,500 per student attending.

When questioned about how enrollment happens, G. Piermarini stated that it is a lottery system even for West Brookfield students.

D. Pontbriand stated that the charter school she is speaking with ranks in the top ten of charter schools in Massachusetts.

Lengthy discussion ensued around costs, reimbursements, etc. that was not directed through the Chair.

D. Pontbriand wants to know if the Selectmen are on board with the idea. R. Sickenberger, stated that he personally would like to see a school back in town and believes it will increase property values. H. Brogna said that he is open to the idea and assumes we'll be putting an RFP out there soon to see uses for the school. He further stated that he would like to have them come in and talk to the board once they are not anonymous. She'll see if a meeting can be set up with the board and the charter school.

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Requests to Carry Over Unused Vacation Time

MOTION: H. Brogna, to allow carry over of unused vacation time of 2 weeks to be used by September 30, 2026 by Jim Daley.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to allow carryover of unused vacation time of 2 weeks to be used by September 30, 2026 by Theresa Cofske.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to allow carryover five (5) days of unused vacation time to be used by September 30, 2026 by Nathan Hagglund, Police Chief.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

Approval for the Issuance of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Route 9 Project - Phase III Engineering

The Highway Department, with the assistance of CMRPC, MPPO and MassDOT have successfully acquired grant funding towards engineering in the amount of $1.1 million and $150,000.00 towards a culvert replacement for Phase III of the ongoing Route 9 project. This work will be done using MPO grant funding; another grant received for the culvert work will be considered the Town's match share and other miscellaneous expenses will be paid using Chapter 90 funds. No Town funds will be used for this work.
The Board thanked the Highway Department for their efforts in securing the grant funding.

MOTION: H. Brogna, to approve the issuance of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Route 9 Project.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

R. Sickenberger announced that the board was going to move into executive session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2) and read the following aloud:

"Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2), to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel and to discuss strategy with respect to such negotiations, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body. Police Chief – Contract".

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to enter into executive session.
SECOND: H. Brogna
ROLL-CALL VOTE: H. Brogna – I, R. Sickenberger - I
At 8:04PM, the Board resumed the remainder of the meeting in open session.

Treasury Warrants: FY26 AP Warrant #26 and FY26 Payroll Warrant #26

MOTION: H. Brogna, to approve the FY26 AP Warrant #26 and the FY26 Payroll Warrant #26
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

Town Administrator's Report

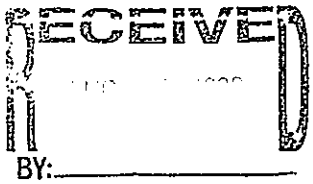
- Will be meeting with H. Brogna and CMRPC to go over the data that has been pulled together on the Economic Development portion of the Master Plan Update. This project will complement the grant application that was filed regionally by several towns along the Route 9 corridor for economic development corridor study.
- Looking at possibly using some space at the Elementary School for document storage. Currently, the Town is storing documents from several departments at a facility in Westfield. Would like to look at using the grant funding for digitization of records and in the future software to upload documents that could make them available to staff and to the public. R. Sickenberger will check on getting network attach storage units that could be used to store scanned documents in the meantime.
- Town Clerk has confirmed that the Board of Selectmen can place the board vacancy on the ballot that would be done at the same time as the State Primary Elections on September First.
- The Assessors will be submitting an official notice to the board for July 7th to have a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen to appoint Phil Landine to the Board of Assessors.

Reorganization of the Board of Selectmen

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Henry Brogna as the new Chair of the Board of Selectmen.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: H. Brogna, to appoint Roland Sickenberger as the new Vice-Chair of the Board of Selectmen.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor

Meeting Adjournment



MOTION: H. Brogna, to adjourn.
SECOND: R. Sickenberger
VOTE: 2-0 in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:15PM.

Authorized Party for the BOS