TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

August 4, 2026

Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED
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BY: Pam S

Members and Staff Present: BOS Chair – H. Brogna, BOS Vice Chair – R. Sickenberger, Town Administrator – T. Cofske

Public Present: Francis Bateman, Jr., Jordan Brooks, Crystal Sposato-LaChance

H. Brogna opened the meeting at 6:00PM.

Meeting Minutes of June 23, 2026

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to accept the minutes as presented.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

Appointments/Resignations

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to accept the resignation of Micelle Durkee as the Veterans Services Officer effective September 22, 2026.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to accept the resignation of Renee White as the Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

The board acknowledged their years of service with gratitude.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Mary Jane Haesche for a 3-year term and Michael Audette for a 3-year term to the Advisory Committee.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Jacob Conway to the Cable Access TV Camera/Studio Operator position for a 1-year term.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Ryan Sheppard for a 1-year term to the Cable Access TV Committee.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Irene White for a 3-year term, Nancy Arsenault for a 3-year term and Lisa Marie Berthel for a 3-year term to the Council on Aging.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Christine Long, Cynthia Paquette, Debra Korman, Diane Vayda, Elizabeth Mary Kozik, Kathleen Landry, Kathleen Pratt, Nancy Olson, Nicolas Argento, Pamela Searah and Thomas Meade to the position of Election Workers for 1-year term.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Jason Paquette for a 3-year term as the Board of Health Representative to the Earth Removal Board and Kevin Dorman for a 3-year term as the Zoning Board of Appeals Representative to the Earth Removal Board.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Keith Fontaine for a 1-year term as the Electrical Inspector.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Trista Astrella for a 1-year term as the Interim Town Accountant, and Nicole Perreault for a 1-year term as the Assistant Treasurer/Collector and Jillian Patch to a 1-year term as the Treasurer/Collector.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Jim Daley for a 1-year term as the Highway Department Superintendent and the Tree Warden, and Anne Garwood-Hampp for a 1-year term as the Highway Department Administrative Assistant.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Joseph Borlikowski for a 1-year term as the Drop Off Center Custodian.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Jennifa Styles for a 3-year term and Michael Droulet for a 1-year term, to the Recreation Committee.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Anne Garwood-Hamp for a 1-year term to the Stormwater Authority's Clerk position.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint James Daley for a 1-year term as the Stormwater Highway Department Representative.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Francis Bateman, Jr., for a 1-year term as the Veterans Services Officer, effective September 22, 2026.
DISCUSSION: H. Brogna, recognized Mr. Bateman as being present, thanked him for coming to the meeting and for his interest in serving as the Veteran's Services Officer for the Town of West Brookfield. He then read the letter of interest submitted by Mr. Bateman. He further stated that he received very good character references.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Amanda Wodyga for a 2-year term, Melanie Waugh for a 1-year term, Madalyne Chamberlain for a 3-year term, Jessica Price for a 3-year term, Christin Girouard for a 2-year term, and Jamie Hasenfus for a 3-year term to the White Christmas Committee.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to appoint Melinda Barnes for a 1-year term to the Zoning Board of Appeals Clerk position.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

<u>State Primary Election Warrant</u>

MOTION: R, Sickenberger, to approve the September 1, 2026 State Primary Election Warrant.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

Special Town Election Warrant

MOTION: R, Sickenberger, to approve the September 1, 2026 Special Town Election Warrant.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

WBCTV Part-time Camera Operator Job Description

The board reviewed the job description for the part-time Camera Operator position. T. Cofske stated that the West Brookfield Cable Television Committee is requesting approval of the job description and approval to post the position.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to approve the WBCTV Part-time Camera Operator job description and approve posting the position.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

Special Use Permit for The AquaRiders of Holland Show at Wickaboag Boat Club, Saturday, September 5, 2026
MOTION: R, Sickenberger, to approve the Special Use Permit for the AquaRiders of Holland show at the Wickaboag Boat Club on Saturday, September 5th, 2026.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

Use of Elementary School for Pickleball

H. Brogna provided an update regarding the potential use of the former elementary school for Pickleball. He had met M. Astrella on site, it looks as though there could be up to three (3) courts made in the cafeteria for Pickleball.

There is a separate entry keypad lock in the back of the building that would be given to the individuals responsible for overseeing the Pickleball program.

The Pickleball players would have access to the bathrooms while there. They will be asked to leave the property cleaned as found after each game.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to allow the use of the cafeteria and the outdoor court for Pickleball.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

H. Brogna will notify E. Kurr of the board's decision.

Treasurer's Delinquent Taxes Report

The Town Administrator summarized a report that Jillian Patch, Treasurer-Collector, had prepared for the Board providing an update on the collections of delinquent taxes. There has been significant improvement made in the Town's tax title collections during fiscal year 2026. The department has collected approximately $202,000 in outstanding tax title accounts. This represents an increase above the fiscal year 2025 collections of $78,00 and fiscal year 2024 collections of approximately $10,000. This department has worked hard to provide a compressive and proactive approach to collection, which has really made all the difference.

The goal of the department is to continue building on these efforts to maximize the collection of delinquent taxes while returning properties to productive use and ensuring fairness to all taxpayers.

The Town Administrator announced that the financial team will be attending the September 1, 2026, Board of Selectmen's meeting to provide an update on various financial topics.

Treasury WarrantsFY27 AP Warrant #3 and FY27 Payroll Warrant #3 TA Report

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to approve the FY27 AP Warrant #3 and FY27 Payroll Warrant #3 as submitted.
SECOND: H. Brogna
VOTE: 2 – 0 in favor

Town Administrator's Report

The Town Administrator provided the following updates:

1. Hazardous Mitigation Plan – With the assistance of CMRPC, West Brookfield applied for the FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program to fund a Hazardous Mitigation Plan update, since the current HMP is set to expire. It is currently under review, and we should hear back on that soon.
2. Green Communities Grant - The Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities Division has approved a Green Communities Competitive Grant in the amount of $105,589.00 to fund energy conservation measures, Police Dept. heat pump, building controls, roof top unit heat pump, and administrative assistance, in municipal facilities including Town Hall/Police.
3. Audit – Process – Will review with Financial Team and prepare a response. Once the final is received, it will be distributed to the BOS, AC as well as the Financial Team. It will then be discussed at a subsequent BOS meeting and posted to the website. Preliminary review is outstanding comparatively.
4. Financial Team Meetings – Will be holding a meeting on 8/19 to begin working on the financial policies (Trista has begun the initial drafting). We will also be looking at procedural changes ie:
    - Year End
    - Spending Freeze
    - Implementing Purchase Order Program

5. Dept. Head Meetings – As we roll out changes, we will be holding department head meetings to explain the process, answer questions and provide expectations
6. Water Superintendent Wage Discrepancy – In 2025 it was brought to our attention that our Water Superintendent believed strongly that he had been shortchanged in pay due to cola and step & grade increases that were missed. The difficulty in resolving the issue was that the record keeping was poorly done. After lengthy research, Jillian was able to determine that in fact he was owed a substantial amount of retroactive pay totaling $13,600. This is positive in several ways...first he gets made whole and secondly, it is a clear demonstration of the commitment by the Town Treasurer-Collector in getting to the bottom of this ongoing issue. This issue was raised long years ago with no resolution. It was brought back to the forefront over a year ago and is now resolved.
7. Mid July applied for a Public Safety USDA Grant – Submitted Request for Set of Extraction Tools $48K for the Fire Dept.
8. Prepared submission of West Brookfield's Economic Development Priorities to Senator Durant to take up at ED Bill Deliberation.
9. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) – PureSky Solar Draft Agreement Update:
    - Tax Evaluation by RRG has been completed. The original Solar Array and ESS Capacity (kilowatts or megawatts) equals 8.996 Megawatts DC for which 41.3 percent of the projects' generating capacity is attributable to solar assets located in the Town of West Brookfield.
    - Annual 20 Payments Schedule:
        - 2027 $48,610.00
        - 2046 $70,813.00
        - Total $1,181,095.00

    The first year's PILOT payment will be pro-rated to the date the project has been completed and certified to operate. This is currently being reviewed by Puresky Solar. Once agreed, we will have a draft PILOT to send over to Town Counsel for review.

10. Charter Communications Contract – We are nearing the last stretch of negotiating the contract. West Brookfield Cable Access Television (WCATV) has worked hard and well with Charter on this. The draft contract we are settling includes $25,000 to the Town for capital expenditure and the franchise fee payment to the town will be 4.5% compared to the 1.0% we currently receive.

    We have a call set up with Charter for a final review of terms. We anticipate over the next couple of months to ready to present the Board of Selectmen with the Cable Contract for approval.

Next Meeting

H. Brogna announced that the next meeting date is August 18th, 2026, at 6:00PM.

Meeting Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa A. Cofske, Town Administrator

Board of Selectmen, Chair