TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

September 2, 2026

Meeting Minutes

RECEIVED
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BY: Pam S.

Members and Staff Present: BOS Chair – H. Brogna, BOS Vice Chair – R. Sickenberger, BOS member – J. Brooks, Town Administrator – T. Cofske, Interim Town Accountant – Trista Astrella, Police Chief Hagglund, and WCBTV Camera Operators J. Conway

Public Present: White Christmas Committee Member M. Waugh, E. Bene

H. Brogna called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He opened the meeting congratulating Jordan Brooks on his victory (newly elected Board of Selectman member) and thanked Alan Rose for participating as a candidate. He also called everyone's attention to the new microphones the Cable Advisory Committee installed in the meeting room and advised on their sensitivity to pick up noise.

Meeting Minutes of August 18, 2026

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to accept the August 18, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

White Christmas Committee – To discuss White Christmas 2026 Program

White Christmas Committee Member M. Waugh raised concern about the large hole in the ceiling of the Great Hall where they would typically hold many of the festivities and wondered if that area would be repaired in time for the event or if they could use the cafeteria at the former elementary school or any other premises.

The board did not express any concerns with allowing the cafeteria to be used for the event.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to allow the White Christmas Committee to use the cafeteria of the former elementary school for the event.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

Quaboag Youth Sports – License to Use Former Elementary School Sports Fields and Indoor Basketball Court

T. Cofske requested the Board table the agenda item as there are remaining items that are being worked on.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to table this item.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

Special One-Day Liquor License(s)

Saint Carlo Acutis Parish/Sacred Heart Church on September 26, 2026 from 6pm to 8:30pm at 30 West Main Street

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to approve the Special One-Day Liquor License Saint Carlo Acutis Parish/Sacred Heart Church on September 26, 2026 from 6pm to 8:30pm at 30 West Main Street.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

Ragged Hill Cider Company on September 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27, October 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, 31, November 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 24, 29, and December 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 2026 from 11:00am to 5:00pm at 107 East Main Street

R. Sickenberger expressed that he was uncomfortable with the number of dates requested for a single-pour license and believes the applicant should seek getting a formal liquor license. He further stated that usually these licenses are issued for single events.

H. Brogna felt that being for twenty-nine (29) days it is within the allowable limit of the law and that the dates are around the holidays. He further indicated that as long as they submit their TIP's certifications, proof of insurance and the application fee he wouldn't have a problem with it.

J. Brooks would like more details on what they are doing on those dates.

The board decided to wait for the applicant to come to the next meeting to explain.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to table the Special One-Day Liquor License for Ragged Hill Cider Company until September 15, 2026.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

Review of FY2025 Audit Response Letter

T. Cofske informed the board that this year, the financial team and her went through the formal process of review and response to the town's FY2025 financial audit. It appears the town has not done this in the past. Ms. Cofske reiterated that the Town of West Brookfield has an incredibly strong financial team. She explained that she recognized some residents sharing concerns about the financial management of the town during the public informational meetings done for Proposition 2 ½. The management letter is very short and most of the items had been mentioned in the past. Most of the items have already been addressed.

T. Cofske briefly walked through the response letter the team had drafted. Interim Town Accountant, T. Astrella, was present to address any questions the board may have. T. Cofske will be providing a copy of the management letter, financial statements and response to the Advisory Committee and will be posted on the town's website.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to accept the FY2025 Audit response letter.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

Financial Policies, Procedures and Updates

Assessor's – Regional Resource Group Update on Property Tax Growth:

T. Cofske informed the board that Regional Resource Group (RRG) working in the Assessing Department, has been cleaning up data and process and as a result has identified $163,000.00 that had not been taxed. This will not be the last amount as there is an expectation of additional being identified in new growth. This will raise the levy limit going forward.

Treasurer Collector – Update on Delinquent Taxes:

T. Cofske informed the board that the Treasurer Collector's office has worked hard on the collections of delinquent taxes. To date that office has collected over $202,000.00 in delinquent taxes. This is due to their working closely with the Tax Title Attorney and being aggressive in their collections process. They are continuing with these efforts and are confident that the amount collected will increase. The amount collected so far has exceeded the prior years. In FY2025 they had collected $78,000.00 and in FY2024 it was $10,000.00 collected.

Purchase Order Policy & Procedures:

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to approve the Purchase Order Policy and Procedures.
SECOND: J. Brooks
DISCUSSION: H. Brogna stated that he has read through it. He thinks that it is a good policy and a good idea to centralize purchasing. T. Cofske briefly explained the proposed Purchase Order Policy and Procedures that the financial team and she have developed for the board's approval. The policy is to prevent overspending departmental budgets; ensure funds are available before purchases occur, provide better oversight of taxpayer dollars; improve communication between departments, accounting, and administration; reduce unauthorized purchases; and hopefully improve year-end financial planning and forecasting. She also informed them that any expenditure over $500.00 falls within this policy, however, there is a blanket purchase order that is for departments that frequently buy from one vendor. The intent is to allow the department to use an approved blanket purchase order so that it does not hold them up. The packet also includes a Purchase Order Request Form and T. Astrella has prepared a New Vendor Application Form that will be part of this packet.
VOTE: Unanimous

Budget Freeze Status:

T. Cofske stated that some departments have asked whether the policy that was voted in December of 2025 is still in effect. She assumes it would still be in place as the board has not voted to lift it but would like the board's opinion.

H. Brogna stated that he would like it to remain in place. R. Sickenberger provided a brief description of the existing policy. He stated that they could leave it in place, especially the hiring freeze.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to continue the budget freeze that was originally initiated December 9, 2025.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

Certificate of Good Standing (Taxes & Zoning) for all Town Issued Licenses/Permits:

T. Cofske explained that the proposed use of a Certificate of Good Standing has two purposes. If an applicant owes taxes, they do not obtain the license or permit until those taxes are paid. It's another mechanism that the Town can use to collect taxes that are due. From the zoning enforcement aspect, in the past an applicant that had not been required to have a zoning enforcement sign-off goes forward but then later it is discovered that the project was not in compliance causing an issue. This will eliminate that from happening.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to approve the Certificate of Good Standing for taxes and zoning for all town issued licenses and permits.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

West Brookfield Police Department Policies

Police Chief Hagglund explained why the Use of Force and Social Media Policies have been requested to be tabled this evening.

H. Brogna had questions on the 1.04a Response to Calls Policy. Does the Dispatch Center classify they type of call? The Chief explained that it can either be dispatch or the officer who classifies the type of call depending how the call come in.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to accept the West Brookfield Police Department Response to Calls Policy1.04a
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

Police Chief Hagglund explained that they realized they needed to have the 6.03 Property Management Policy in place as the department safeguards people's property but there is no policy on it. This policy is about how the department takes and returns property.

H. Brogna stated that there is a section that refers to auctions and asked if the department has had auctions. The Chief stated that they have not but this gives them the ability to.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to accept the West Brookfield Police Department Policy number 6.03 Property Management.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

FY27 AP Warrant #5 and FY27 Payroll Warrant #5

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to approve the Fiscal Year 2027 AP Warrant #5 and Payroll Warrant #5 as presented.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – General Insurance in the amount of $9,009.00

T. Cofske explained that she will be attending the Advisory Committee meeting tomorrow evening and presenting this request to transfer from the Reserve Fund. This request is being made as a result of an error she made during the FY2027 budget process, and she wants to make the board aware of it. The budget sheet does not break out the various policies that are included in the general insurance line item. One of the policies had been overlooked when calculating the general insurance line item. To prevent this from occurring in the future the budget sheet will be completely broken out so there is no chance of missing a particular policy. Ms. Cofske apologized for the error.

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer to General Insurance in the amount of $9,009.00.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous

TA Report

T. Cofske will be reaching out to various departments and boards to see if they would like to participate in the economic development master plan update process. The public outreach will begin during the fall.

There is a kick-off meeting scheduled for the Green Communities Grant projects, to include heat pumps for the Police Department and the reconfiguration of the building's temperature controls.

H. Brogna informed the board that he will be attending the CMRPC quarterly meetings.

R. Sickenberger asked for an update on the Town Hall roof. T. Cofske informed the board that the state has not provided a decision. It is anticipated that a decision would be given in the next three (3) weeks.

Next Meeting

H. Brogna announced that the next Board of Selectmen's meeting will be on September 15, 2026 at 6:00PM.

Meeting Adjournment

MOTION: R. Sickenberger, to adjourn the meeting.
SECOND: J. Brooks
VOTE: Unanimous
The meeting adjourned at 6:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa A. Cofske, Town Administrator

Approved: