

Town of Brookfield Selectboard Meeting

Monday July 22, 2024

Brookfield Town Office, 40 Ralph Road, Brookfield, VT

MINUTES

Present: John Benson, Selectboard Chair; Keith Sprague, Stuart Edson, Curtis Koren, Selectboard members; Laura Rochat of the Selectboard attended the meeting later. Vicki Blanchard, Administrative Assistant. Gwynn Zakov, Keven Ring and Patricia Kennedy from the Planning Commission; Jon Jickling, State Forester; and Kevin Wheatley, Fire Chief.

A. Call to Order – Mr. Benson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

B. Adjustments to Agenda – The meeting began with a discussion of new OSHA rules, moved up from New Business. Fire Chief Kevin Wheatley reported that the new rules would entail a number of major changes, such as additional requirements in medical and training arenas as well as for equipment. He said the proposed changes will be very costly, especially for smaller towns; they would also mean difficulties in recruiting more fire department volunteers, and be a burden on current volunteers. Mr. Wheatley will continue to monitor new changes, and keep the Board in the loop.

C. Public Comments – Jon Jickling, State Forester

1. Mr. Jickling reported that he and AJ Follensbee, the N. Windsor County Forester, visited the Brookfield forest and found problems with the white pine there which showed brown needles and most needles falling off. To address this, it will be necessary to harvest 40% of these trees to open up the forest to more ventilation and later remove the rest of the diseased trees. This required consent from the Selectboard and Mr. Jickling brought the appropriate Agreement to be signed. Mr. Sprague made a motion to execute the Agreement between AJ Follensbee and Vermont Licensed Forester #148.0122877 with the Town of Brookfield as presented. Ms. Koren seconded the motion which carried unanimously 4-0-0.

2. Town Plan – Ms. Zakov, Chair of Brookfield’s Planning Commission, presented a summary of Brookfield’s latest Town Plan, whose purpose is to ensure high quality of life for the Town’s residents by outlining a strategy for managing growth and community resources. The Town Plan aims to provide clear guidance for future development, inform planning regulations, and attract public and private investment. It covers required topics such as land use, housing, natural resources, education, transportation, flood resilience, community facilities, utilities, historic preservation, and citizen safety, all while aligning with a shared community vision. She noted a few key influences on the 2024 Town Plan:

- a. Mitigating the impact of frequent flooding events on new housing and infrastructure by proposing a new growth area in Brookfield Center, which is outside flood -prone zones like East Brookfield Village District, and has sewage capacity for growth (unlike the Pond Village District).
- b. Addressing the statewide need for more housing while maintaining the town’s rural character. Recommendations focus on increasing housing density while preserving the town’s identity.
- c. Responding to housing cost increases due to the COVID-19 pandemic by emphasizing measures to enhance housing affordability.
- d. Striking a balance between increased housing needs and preserving critical habitats and forest areas, including the establishment of a new conservation district to connect wildlife habitats.

Ms. Zakov said that the Planning Commission hopes to have the Town Plan finished by early September so it can be reviewed by the Selectboard for approval.

D. Payroll and AP Warrants – Ms. Koren made a motion to accept the July 18 2024 AP Warrants as presented for a total of \$37,423.33 with the largest amount going to R. E. Tucker for gravel for \$7,259.00. Mr. Edson seconded the motion which carried unanimously 5-0-0.

E. Highway Report – Mr. Sprague reported that the road crew has been working on culverts, ditching and other areas that were washed out with the heavy rain. He also received a quote from AJ Galfetti to fix a washout on Ridge Road near the old Book Publishing property. The Bear Hill project is well underway and will probably be done in another two weeks or sooner. Sand for this winter is currently being delivered, and Mr. Sprague said he has a source for next year. In order to meet FEMA requests on an Eagle Peak project, a Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H & H) study was done. Mr. Edson made a motion to approve payment of the study by Dubois & King for the Eagle Peak culvert. Mr. Koren seconded the motion which was carried unanimously 5-0-0.

F. New Business – New OSHA rules moved to Adjustments to Agenda.

G. Old Business – none

H. Meeting Minutes – July 8, 2024 – Mr. Edson made a motion to accept the July 8, 2024 minutes as presented. Ms. Rochat seconded the motion which carried unanimously 5-0-0

I. Other Proper Business – none

J. Status Report – none

Mr. Benson made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:25 pm. Mr. Edson seconded the motion which carried unanimously 5-0-0

Mr. Benson made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:40 pm, Mr. Sprague seconded the motion which carried unanimously 5-0-0

K. Adjournment – Mr. Edson made a motion to adjourn at 8:42 pm., Mr. Benson seconded the motion and there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Blanchard

Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard