

## **BROOKFIELD RE-VISITS FIRST TOWN MEETING IN 1795**

**Brookfield** – The first town meeting in Brookfield, on March 10, 1795, was re-visited at this year's meeting, as Brookfield celebrates its 225<sup>th</sup> birthday December 30, 2019.

Moderator, William Chamberlain came alive by our current Moderator, The Honorable William Marsh. Marsh read the minutes from the first Town Meeting which was held at the home of Richard Hanson. At that meeting the first selectmen were appointed as well as many other officials. The Town voted to raise 15 pounds for schooling for the present year.

The current selectmen, Richard Surette, Richard Zacher and Brian Robischeau were nominated to be the Selectmen. Selectmen were the most prominent and responsible men in Town. Their duties are much the same as they are today, managing the Town's financial affairs, assessing taxes, maintaining Town property, to appoint other officials and caring for the paupers.

Two men whose ancestors first settled at Stoneham Corner, Cecil Wentworth and Kagan Weeks, were appointed Surveyor of Lumber and Sealer of Weights and Measures, respectively. Cecil is the current holder of Brookfield's Boston post cane as the oldest resident in Town at 101.

Fence Viewer, Brad Williamson was charged to inspect fences that were to keep out domestic animals and act as referee to any squabble that erupted over neighborly fencing.

The Field Drivers, Edward Nason and Dick Wilson are responsible for corralling stray animals and removing such to the Town Pound. This year's Pound Keeper, Bob Servacek is then responsible for the feeding and care of stray livestock such as hogs, cattle, horses, sheep and geese. John DiMambro is this year's Hogg Reeve and is responsible for catching stray pigs that run wild and ensure that they are yoked, "reeved" and ringed. This job was usually assigned to the youngest married men since they had the most energy to chase down the escaping swine.

For the office of Constable this year Richard Mauser has stepped up. Since he was appointed Constable Richard had a request of the Town. He first decreed that he would be closing the town bordellos and tap houses every night at 10 PM. This should ensure that all fathers and husbands will be home by 10:05. When asked by the Moderator if he would be inspecting the bordellos, he assured the Moderator that he would and that the streets would be rolled up in front of the Town House every night. He would like to appropriate \$ 57.20 to replace the sapling bars at the current jail with iron bars from Pittsburgh Iron Works. The Moderator told Richard that would have to be appropriated during the budget portion of the meeting. Richard then requested \$ 11.52 and for a new uniform and a "spiffy" new hat. At that point the Moderator indicated Richard had gone too far, and asked him to be seated.

At the first Town meeting 7 surveyors of highways were appointed. This year we appointed Jay Badger of Stoneham Road; Ron Prior of Prior-Belknap Farm and Frank Frazier of Lyford Road to this position. Each man is responsible for a section of road within his part of the Town. This basically means supervising road repairs in summer and breaking out roads in winter. Each landowner was responsible for maintaining his own stretch at the road.

Tythingman was an important position in the Town. Ernie Brown, Jr. was appointed as the person responsible for enforcing laws pertaining to work and travel on the Sabbath and to be ever vigilant concerning the morality of the Townspeople. In a daring act Harriet Wilson was appointed the Town's first Tythingwoman.

Our final position to be filled was Bell Ringer. This position is responsible for ringing the Town Bell for all important town events. We are nominating Aaron Dame because he has graciously volunteered to replace the worn rope on our Town Bell. We will be recreating the dedication ceremony of the Town Bell on June 29, 2019.

All these appointments, made by the Brookfield Heritage Commission, were duly made and recognized in official documents bearing the Town seal and the words of the original instructions to officers in 1795, "Fail not and this shall be your sufficient warrant."