

# Bristol Town Administrator's Report

## November 22, 2020

The Town Administrator's Report is intended to assist the Selectboard, and in its other capacities as Water Commission, Sewer Commission, Liquor Control Commission, etc., with the conduct of their regular or special meetings. References made to documents online relate to printed or electronic documents available electronically at [bristolvt.org/meeting-minutes](http://bristolvt.org/meeting-minutes) in the Selectboard section. This report is also intended to provide information to Town officials and the public about Selectboard activities and other Town affairs. Except as provided under Vermont's public records laws, all documents are available upon request.

### **Monday, November 23, 2020 Meeting Agenda and Materials**

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER.**

Item I.1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A). Among the amendments to the open meeting law that took effect July 1, 2014 is a requirement that "an item may only be added or removed from a meeting agenda as the first order of business at the meeting. Other adjustments to an agenda may be made at any time during the meeting."

REMOTE MEETING: This meeting will be conducted through the **Zoom** remote meeting on-line platform. See the connection information below. If you intend to join the Zoom meeting and have never used Zoom before, we recommend you begin the log-in process well in advance of the meeting to allow time for downloads and connections to occur.

PHYSICAL LOCATION: Holley Hall will NOT be open to the public.

CALL-IN: People without a computer or other device can call in from the number below and enter the meeting ID from the phone keypad.

TO JOIN THE ZOOM MEETING:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86720873401?pwd=V0RpTURhZ3RXbGtCd056dWZvWm1Mdz09>

Meeting ID: 867 2087 3401

Passcode: 158855

Phone in: 1 (646) 558-8656

#### **II. PUBLIC FORUM.**

This is an opportunity for citizens to briefly share comments and concerns with the Board about matters *not already on the agenda*. Public Forum should not be used for lengthy discussion of a new topic, both for time management of the meeting and to allow for the public to receive notice of the matter on a future agenda.

#### **III. REGULAR BUSINESS**

Item III.1. Fire Chief Brett LaRose and interview with Firefighter candidate David Fernandes for appointment to the Bristol Fire Department. Firefighter candidate David Fernandes was interviewed on Tuesday, Nov. 10 with Fire Chief Brett LaRose, Deputy Fire Chief Eric Forand, Assistant Fire Chief Kevin LaRose, and myself. Chief LaRose and

candidate Fernandes will be Zooming in for an opportunity to meet with the Selectboard.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Possible deliberation in executive session per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3); otherwise vote to approve hiring the paid on-call Firefighter.

Item III.2. Request from Superintendent Patrick Reen to provide an update on Mount Abraham Union School District matters and get Selectboard input. MAUSD Superintendent Patrick Reen is meeting with the Selectboards of all district towns to share information about MAUSD matters where they are in their planning processes. He is interested to hear the views from local leaders and how MAUSD affects each town.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion.

Item III.3. Ratification of Bread Loaf Corp. contract amendment for subsurface soils investigation for the Public Works facility site analysis and feasibility study. At the Nov. 9 meeting, the Selectboard voted to go with option #2 for subsurface soil investigations, which entailed using Town equipment and personnel to dig test pits with a geotechnical engineer on site. It was agreed that Bread Loaf Corp. (BLC) would make the arrangements as a subcontract. The estimated cost was between \$5,500 to \$6,500.

We learned last week they received an offer from Knight Engineering in conjunction with a boring company that would include a full day on site of borings rather than test pits for \$4,580. This was \$680 higher than the test pit subcontractor they were prepared to recommend. Knight would be able to schedule it for November 30, but needed to know before the Selectboard was going to meet next. Advantages:

- Boring is the preferred method over test pits in general, though is typically more expensive;
- Less disturbance to the site;
- Not weather-dependent; and
- Will not require Town personnel or equipment.

Members were [polled by e-mail](#) and agreed to accept the proposal. Although the cost is within the range approved, the scope is different. This agenda item is to ratify the Selectboard's approval of the [additional subsurface soil services contract through BLC](#).

RECOMMENDATION: Vote to ratify the additional service contract.

Item III.4. Review of draft Winter Road and Sidewalk Maintenance Policies. Online is the most current draft of [proposed Winter Road and Sidewalk Maintenance Policies](#). I used track changes to show what was changed from the draft provided at previous meeting, which not everyone had a chance to review. To summarize the changes:

- II.2 was edited to include *all* the streets and roads in each trucks' routes with the priority school routes in bold.

\* Should any other streets be shown in bold as high priority routes?

- III.1 – I removed the highlight and reference to the fact it came from Colchester and edited into our policy.
- III.5. Main Street – Several edits here. Much to discuss.
- General note: sometimes reference to the “village” is capitalized and sometimes not. Does the Selectboard have a preference?

RECOMMENDATION: Any changes to the management of current agreements or practices should require direct notice to those affected and a timely opportunity to provide a response. Discussion. Determine next steps.

Item III.5. Continued consideration of March Town Meeting logistics in the age of COVID-19.

We began discussion at the previous meeting about recent legislative changes that affect how Town Meeting will be handled in the age of COVID-19. To summarize:

- Act 162 authorizes the Selectboard to choose to have all matters voted by Australian ballot for the 2021 Town Meeting only.
- Voter signatures will not be required in order to have a person's name placed on the ballot as a candidate for a local election that is held at a 2021 municipal meeting.
- The Act does not address the need for signatures for other petitioned matters.
- Link to the Act: <https://bit.ly/2li5fLx>.

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns has published guidance on various matters that affect Town Meeting: <https://www.vlct.org/town-meeting-covid-19-faqs>.

### **Social Services Appropriation Policy**

The Town of Bristol's [Social Services Appropriation Policy](#) requires organizations to submit a petition with the signatures of at least 5% of registered voters per [17 V.S.A. 2642](#) for three consecutive years if it is a new or increased request. A number of people and organizations have inquired whether signatures will be required this year.

### **Public Information Meeting(s)**

A public information hearing is required to be held within 10 days of the Australian ballot voting. Bristol has traditionally held its annual floor meeting the Monday preceding the Tuesday Town Meeting. Another option would be sometime in the week of February 22. The Police District public information hearing has traditionally preceded the annual Monday evening floor meeting. Although we will not know what the capacity restrictions will be by then, we may want to consider offer both in-person and Zoom participation as was done in August with the community discussion about Bristol policing.

### **Getting Information to Voters**

Some time ago, a decision was made to not mail the annual Town Report to voters. Instead, citizens need to pick one up at the Town Office. Rather than just posting the Town Report PDF to Bristol's Web site, we may want to consider developing a whole new Town Meeting by Australian ballot Web section. Although a lot of information

can be provided on Bristol's Web site, some voters may not have access to it or have e-mail. If a mailing is done to all voters, what would be in it? Our budget for this year did not anticipate a substantial mailing. This is an opportunity to begin exploring effective ways to inform voters about the new Town Meeting approach.

RECOMMENDATION: (1) Vote to have all Town Meeting articles be voted by Australian ballot. (2) Vote to waive the petition signature requirements for new or increased appropriation requests for 2021 only. A letter from the organization will be required no later than January 11, 2021 (50 days before Town Meeting) in order to be included on the warning. The requirement for a 3-year consecutive span for petitions with signatures would resume in 2022 for new or increased requests. (3) Set the Town Meeting public information hearing for March 1, 6:00pm. Consider holding the Police District public information public hearing separately, such as February 22 as part of the Selectboard's regular agenda.

Item III.6. Consider changing property tax due dates from Nov. 5 to Nov. 15 and April 5 to April 15. Town Clerk Sharon Lucia, Treasurer Jen Myers, and Asst. Treasurer Peter Ryan recommend changing the November and April tax due dates by pushing them out 10 days—from November 5 to November 15 and from April 5 to April 15. They feel it would avoid being so close to a future November general election and, for many people, April 15 is already associated with a deadline for taxes.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval. This would be reflected in the warning for the March 2021 Town Meeting.

Item III.7. Coronavirus COVID-19 update: preparations, response, and impacts to municipal operations. The Governor's [Emergency Order](#) is currently in effect to December 15, 2020 and the Town Office has been closed to the public except by appointment since November 17.

Although the Bristol's Public Works Department has had informal mutual aid arrangements with the departments of neighboring towns for a long time, and they regularly help each other, there are no formal agreements. Several communities are now exploring developing more formal "continuity of operation" plans and mutual aid agreements to outline what should happen in the event an entire department is substantially disabled due to the pandemic—or some other catastrophic event. What is the chain of command if both the Foreman and Assistant Foreman are out? How would roads get maintained in a storm if most of the department is sick or in quarantine? These and other questions are being explored by several Addison County towns. VLCT has developed a model mutual aid agreement as way to record and formalize agreements for sharing specific resources or services with another municipality. Any formal agreement would ultimately require Selectboard approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion.

Item III.8. Budget workshop: Recreation Department, General Fund sections, other stuff.

Online is a [preliminary Recreation Department FY2022 budget](#) for review. Meridith and Taylor will Zoom in to go through items and answer questions. Jen also e-mailed Selectboard members a link to a shared budget spreadsheet that we will also review at Monday's meeting.

The [budget status report](#) through 10/31/2020 is online for reference.

We received notice that the VLCT will not be increasing its annual member dues this year.

Coming up in December:  
Public Works, Fire Department, Police Department, revenues, more general fund review, Sand the capital budget.

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

The Assistant Judges of Addison County invite the public to a meeting to discuss the proposed county budget for 2021-2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022). The meeting will be held virtually on Friday, December 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. If interested in attending, contact the Addison County Clerk at [addisoncountvclerk@gmail.com](mailto:addisoncountvclerk@gmail.com). An e-mail link will be provided approximately 7 days prior to the meeting.

Patricia Ross, Assistant Judge  
Jacqueline McLean, Assistant Judge

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Adjustments as necessary.

Item III.9. Request for authorization to use Technology Reserve Funds to purchase new Zoning Administrator laptop computer and peripheral computer items. The Planning & Zoning laptop committed suicide this week. Kris is coordinating with Jen to select a replacement.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

Item III.10. Approval of the October 26, November 2, and November 9, 2020 meeting minutes.

The [October 26](#) draft minutes are online. The draft [November 2](#) and [November 9](#) minutes are in the process of being reviewed and will be posted online and e-mailed prior to Monday's meeting.

**IV. OTHER BUSINESS.**

Item VI.1. Correspondence, documents, reports received.

- Updated Selectboard 2020-2021 calendar and goals.
- Bristol Revolving Loan Fund status report through 10/31/2020.
- Letter from VTrans, 11/16/2020, re notice of grant funding award for the Munsill Avenue sidewalk scoping study.
- Bristol CORE minutes, 10/08/2020.
- E-mail from Jim Condos, 11/18/2020, commending Municipal Clerks for their Herculean elections efforts.

## **V. EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

The Selectboard may choose to deliberate in executive session regarding contract negotiations per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A) and/or personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3).

### **Schedule**

In response to the COVID-19 guidance, I will continue to be working remotely most days but plan to be in the office at least twice a week to tend to things that were not easily accomplished remotely.

#### Week of November 23

Monday: Working remotely.  
7:00pm – Selectboard via Zoom.  
Tuesday: Off.  
Wednesday: Working remotely ½ day.  
10:00am – staff meeting? (not confirmed)  
Thursday: Thanksgiving Holiday – Town Office closed.  
Friday: Town Office closed.

#### Week of November 30

Monday: 10:00am +/- – in Office.  
Tuesday: Working remotely.  
Wednesday: Working remotely.  
Thursday: Working remotely.  
Friday: 10:00am +/- – in Office.  
11:00am – Stoney Hill Business Park Infrastructure Project design team Zoom meeting.

#### Week of December 7

Monday: Working remotely.  
Tuesday: Working remotely.  
Wednesday: 10:00am +/- – in Office.  
Thursday: Working remotely.  
8:30am – Bristol CORE via Zoom.  
Friday: 10:00am +/- – in Office.  
11:00am – Stoney Hill Business Park Infrastructure Project design team Zoom meeting.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

Below are meetings that citizens, staff, board members, or others might be interested in. Underlined entries include on-line links for more information about the organization.

- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Nov. 23, 7:00pm via Zoom.
- Bristol CORE: Thurs., Dec. 10, 8:30am, via Zoom.
- [Conservation Commission](#): Thurs., Dec. 10, 6:00pm, via Zoom.
- [Planning Commission](#): Tues., Dec. 15, 7:00pm, via Zoom.

- [Bristol Energy Committee](#): Weds., Dec. 16, 7:00pm, via Zoom.
- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Dec. 14, 7:00pm via Zoom.

**Upcoming Agenda Items**

- Budget, budget, budget.
- Process for consideration of Assessor services.
- Class 4 highways maintenance policy.
- Adoption of winter maintenance policies and practices town-wide and for Main Street sidewalks.
- Town Plan review and 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing.
- Stoney Hill / Firehouse Drive infrastructure details.
- Continued DPW and Police Stations facility analysis review.
- 1<sup>st</sup> FY2021 quarter budget review (Jul.-Sept.)
- Personnel Policies review.
- Finalize Town Treasurer and Town Clerk job descriptions.
- Process to become a Certified Local Government (CLG).
- Other stuff.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator