

Town of Bristol, Vermont
Selectboard Meeting Minutes of
Monday March 29, 2021

Selectboard members present: Chair Peeker Heffernan, Vice-Chair Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier, Michelle Perlee, and Darla Senecal.

Staff present: Board Clerk Tasha Bouvier, Town Administrator Valerie Capels, Recreation Department Director Meridith McFarland, Assistant to the Hub & Recreation Department Alex Mihavics, Town Treasurer Jen Myers, Police Chief Bruce Nason, and Hub Director Taylor Welch. Others present: Josh Behounek, Sally Burrell, Christopher B. Cadwell (Green Peak Solar), Carolyn Dash, Jennifer Kiewit, Shawn Kimball (NEAT TV), Ted Lylis, Jenn Mayhew (TPC Addison), Christopher Pepe (PRCPO), Jim Quaglino, Ethan Ready, John Sweptson, Jessica Teets, Nathaniel Vandal (Green Peak Solar), and Helen Young.

I. Call to Order. Chair Peeker Heffernan called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 V.S.A. §312(d)(3)(A). There are no additions, removals, or adjustments.
2. Overview of Zoom meeting operation and procedures: rules for participation, mute microphone, recognition by Chair, etc.

II. Public Forum: Jessica Teets asked if there is going to be a meeting about the COVID-19 relief money that is coming to the town and how the money will be spent. Valerie Capels said she is waiting to see the rules, restrictions, and eligibility around it. It will likely be discussed in upcoming regular Selectboard meetings after we have more information.

Sally Burrell said she emailed with Fred Baser about seeing if customers that decide to buy in for the solar power could utilize the Revolving Loan Fund. Valerie Capels suggested that she, Sally, Fred, and Town Treasurer Jen Myers have a conversation about how many potential small applications would be handled administratively.

John Moyers asked about the Caine Hill Solar project and what the Selectboard's standing is with these types of projects. He would like to see the Selectboard play an active role during the certificate of public good.

III. Regular Business.

1. Green Peak Solar: Lathrop property project presentation. Nathaniel Vandal and Christopher B. Cadwell met with the Selectboard to provide information about the solar project proposed on the privately-owned Lathrop property off Caine Hill and addressed any concerns. There will be a meeting on March 31, 2021 with the Public Utility Commission where they will create a schedule. Green Peak Solar filed for the certificate of public good with the Public Utility Commission on March 1, 2021.
2. Emerald Ash Borer Strategic Management Plan presentation: Alex Mihavics. Alex Mihavics explained this presentation is intended to complement the draft Emerald Ash Borer Strategic Plan the committee has been working on. Alex explained the history and progression of the beetle being found in Bristol in 2019. The project is funded, in part with a grant through the VT

Dept. of Forest and Parks, Urban and Community Forestry's Communities Caring for Canopy program. Things got off to a slow start due to the pandemic. We received an extension to June 30, 2021 to complete the plan. The EAB Strategic Plan Committee identified 226 ash trees in the Town right-of-way so far in the data collection phase. The draft Emerald Ash Borer Strategic Management Plan that will outline which trees are priority for saving and treating, which ones should be removed, and which ones should be removed and/or relaced, cost estimates, and timeline. The EAB Committee recommends that all ash trees in the village be removed while they are still alive and replace them soon after using the principle of "right tree right place." Next steps include a public presentation, submit a written plan to the State of Vermont, continue to monitor the EAB in Bristol, and maintain a list of trees to prioritize for removal. Twenty trees have been identified in the village to be removed and replaced over the next three years. Tree Warden John Swepston obtained a quote of \$12 per DBH inch from Teachers Tree Service and recommends the ash tree on the Town Green be inoculated. He also offered to prune the tree. He did not find any others in the village that warrant inoculation.

3. Request to install memorial plaque on a park bench at the Town Green. Ethan Ready is seeking permission to install, at his expense, a small brass memorial plaque on one of the benches on the Town Green park in memory of Edward Cushman. Ian Albinson moved to replace the wood on the current wooden bench and have Ethan Ready work with Meridith on the design of the plaque for uniformity and the selection of the wood to be used. Joel Bouvier seconded. So voted. Michelle Perlee recommended that Meridith review the wording of the plaque.

4. Request by Bobcat Café to occupy two parking spaces off the Town Green for food truck. Meridith McFarland said she received an email from the Bobcat Café today and they are retracting their application.

5. Recreation Department updates. Meridith McFarland reported the Recreation Department is moving forward with the Teddy Bear picnic and having the Town Wide Yard Sale June 26, 2021. There will be three movies, one per month. She said the Facebook page will be updated and an email will be going out to all that are subscribed. The Recreation Department is planning on having the Harvest Festival, but only 42 vendors instead of 75. Taylor Welch said they are opening the Hub on Monday April 5, 2021.

6. Continued discussion of Holley Hall bell tower repair. The cost proposal from Rooster Construction was discussed. Joel Bouvier said he still feels that a structural engineer should be hired to assess the tower and where the bell sits. The engineer's review might change the scope of the proposed work. Valerie Capels received a cost estimate from Knight Consulting Engineers. She will speak with them to proceed with the assessment.

7. Grant application authorization request: AARP Community Challenge. Valerie Capels reported this is a request for authorization to reapply to the AARP Community Challenge for up to \$18,700 for the purchase of up to six dark green metal park-style benches, matching those installed in the nearby Town Green Park in 2015, to be located on Main Street in the downtown and along the sidewalk in front Holley Hall and Howden Hall. They would be removed in the winter and stored behind Holley Hall. The application would also include the proposal to replace the current round trash/recycling receptacles with rectangular ones that have larger openings. The application is due by April 12, 2021 and no match is required. Ian Albinson moved to approve the grant

application authorization request for AARP Community Challenge and have Valerie Capels apply for it. Darla Senecal seconded. So voted.

8. Continued appointment or reappointment of Town Officers. Michelle Perlee moved to appoint the following appointments: Josh Behounek – Emerald Ash Borer Committee, Richard Butz – Energy Committee, Mike Corey – Energy Committee, and John McCormick – Energy Committee, Joel Bouvier – Addison County Solid Waste Mgmt (retroactive to March 15), Randy Sargent – Equipment Committee, John “Peeker” Heffernan – Equipment Committee, and Joel Bouvier – Fence Viewer. Joel Bouvier seconded. So voted.

9. Conservation Commission candidate: Helen Young. Joel Bouvier moved to appointment Helen Young to the Conservation Commission. Ian Albinson seconded. So voted. Michelle Perlee asked Carolyn Dash about Green Up Day. Carolyn said it will be the first Saturday of May and due to COVID restrictions bags will be available for people to pick up outside at Holley Hall.

10. Review proposed Assessor job description and proposed advertisement for the new position. The proposed job posting and job description for a new Assessor position with the Town of Bristol was reviewed. This position is currently proposed to be a contract position at \$25 per hour for up to 16 hours per week. The consensus is to move forward with the changes of hourly pay is based off experience and this is a contracted position.

11. Continued consideration of updates to Bristol’s personnel policies. Valerie Capels reported that at a staff meeting last week, department heads recommended that Selectboard department liaisons meet with them to review relevant sections of the policy and include any edits or comments in the shared document before resuming review at a Selectboard meeting. This would also help ensure that department heads and Selectboard members will have had a chance to review the document. There was a consensus to support this recommendation. Jen Myers noted that a goal is to complete the review and adopt updated policies before the end of the fiscal year in June.

12. Continued review of proposed Selectboard Rules of Procedure. Ian Albinson moved to adopt the Selectboard Rules of Procedure. Michelle Perlee seconded. So voted. There was discussion about the use of private e-mail accounts for Selectboard and Town business and the logistics of setting up Selectboard-specific e-mail addresses. Jen Myers will speak with DominionTech about seeing the cost to get the Selectboard members their own email accounts.

13. Consider next steps for violation of the Selectboard order regarding Travis Manning’s dog. Valerie Capels reported that on March 3, 2021, a certified letter was sent to Travis Manning regarding the Selectboard’s order from the March 1, 2021 hearing that some form of containment be constructed by May 15, 2021 to control his dog(s) and that any violation of the Dog Ordinance between now and then would result in “...the warrant to seize the offending dog(s) be reissued and an officer of the Town seize your dog(s) and transfer possession and control of it to them to Homeward Bound Humane Society in Middlebury, Vermont for the purposes of finding it or them a new adoptive home.” Travis Manning’s dog June was found roaming at large and brought to Homeward Bound as a stray by a citizen on Friday, March 26. That she was roaming at large constituted a violation of the Dog Ordinance. Peeker Heffernan moved to issue a warrant to take possession of the dog and take to Homeward Bound. Ian Albinson seconded. So voted.

14. Bristol Revolving Loan Fund application for loan amendment: Vermont Tree Goods. The RLF Committee recommended that the existing loan that has ballooned be renewed at 3% over a term of 5 years. As of 02/28/2021, the balance of the loan was \$30,235.02. Michelle Perlee moved to approve the RLF Committee recommendation. Darla Senecal seconded. So voted.

15. Approve of the March 1, March 15, and March 18, 2021 meeting minutes. Michelle Perlee moved to approve March 1, March 15, and March 18, 2021 meeting minutes with the corrections. Ian Albinson seconded. So voted.

16. Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor licenses. \$48,451.06. Please note the US Bank payment is for three bonds: Holley Hall bond, Water bond, and Sewer bond.

17. Selectboard roundtable.

a. Joel Bouvier asked if the lawns on Elm Street will be fixed as a result of the paving. A constituent noted water is collecting between the sidewalk and the road. Joel said parts of the new pavement is starting to crack on Elm Street and Taylor Avenue. Joel commented on the rough estimates Eric received from ECI about the sheet piling on the Upper Notch and on Briggs Hill. Joel asked if we have done any more with the ordinances about putting tracer wire with plastic pipes when water lines are being worked on. Valerie Capels said the ordinance updates will take some time. In the meantime, she recommends any approvals for new connections include explicit conditions about the pipe, tracer wire, notification, and other details. He feels strongly the Town should be putting in copper piping from the curb stop to the meter for each property owner.

b. Michelle Perlee asked what we know about the retail cannabis statute and how much control the Town has. Valerie Capels said the State committee is still working out the rules. A new bill is being considered where municipalities do not need to vote to opt in but rather vote to opt out. For towns that passed votes to opt in, retail cannabis would not be an option until the State committee established some rules and municipalities would be required to enact certain requirements. Michelle asked if the Selectboard will be doing a drive around with the Department of Public Works Director like last year. Michelle asked about the letter from the Vermont Housing Finance Agency regarding the Firehouse Apartments tax credit allocation. She and Valerie Capels had not seen one like that before.

c. Ian Albinson asked if the Town Green water fountain will be operational this year. He would like to see it operational this year by Memorial Day if the person doing it would be willing to take care of it. Peeker Heffernan said he would ask if the person will be willing to do it this year.

d. Peeker Heffernan said he got a call from someone on Saturday to look at the Lincoln Road along the river. Just below Circle Current we have lost about 20 to 30 feet of river cribbing. There will be a mess if water gets in behind it. There is also a spot further up near Eagle Park that needs to be fixed.

18. Town Administrator's report. Valerie Capels had nothing to add to her written report.

IV. Other Business.

1. Correspondence, reports, correspondence received.

Jen Myers announced a reminder that taxes are due April 5, 2021 and dog registrations are due April 1, 2021. Town Offices will be open on April 2, and 5, 2021 to accept tax payments.

V. Executive Session.

Michelle Perlee moved to enter executive session finding that premature general knowledge would clearly place the Selectboard or other parties at a substantial disadvantage regarding personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) and contract negotiations per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(A). Ian Albinson seconded. So voted. The Selectboard met in executive session from 10:03 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Upon returning to open session, Joel Bouvier moved to hire Peggy Connor as the DRB and PC note taker at \$20 per hour. Ian Albinson seconded. So voted.

VI. Adjourn.

At 10:35 p.m. Joel Bouvier moved to adjourn the meeting. Darla Senecal seconded. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Tasha Bouvier
Board Clerk

Valerie Capels
Town Administrator