

**Town of Bristol, Vermont  
Selectboard Meeting Minutes of  
Monday, December 13, 2021**

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

Members Absent: Chair Peeker Heffernan

Staff present: Town Administrator Valerie Capels, Fire Chief Brett LaRose, Board Clerk Sharon Lucia, Recreation Director Meridith McFarland, Assistant Recreation Director Alex Mihavics, Police Chief Bruce Nason, Police Officer Josh Turner, Hub Director Taylor Welch.

Others present: Kate Bentley (Bristol CORE), Sally Burrell, Nancy Morrison, Ben Skolozdra, Cookie Steponaitis, Jacqueline Leigh Steponaitis, Shawn Kimball (NEAT TV), Jim Quaglino.

**I. Call to Order.** Vice Chair Ian Albinson called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 V.S.A. §312(d)(3)(A). There is one addition, and no removals, or adjustments.

Valerie Capels recommended one addition. The Fire Department is requesting authorization to sell retired piece of equipment for \$500. There was agreement that it go under Other Business number 2, Authorization to Sell Town of Bristol property.

2. Overview of Zoom meeting operation and procedures: rules for participation, mute microphone, recognition by Chair, etc. Vice Chair Ian Albinson.

**II. Public Forum.** None.

**III. Department Head Roundtable.**

1. **Public Works:** Foreman Eric Cota said Dave Cavaretto of the Town of Lincoln called to ask about the turn-around area on Lincoln Road at Eagle Park that Bristol uses. Dave asked his Selectboard if the busses could turnaround at Eagle Park in Bristol instead of where they currently turn around in Lincoln. The Lincoln Selectboard agreed with this proposal if the Town of Bristol was on board. The Town of Lincoln would install the turnaround signs, so Bristol doesn't have to. Valerie Capels asked if there would be any conflict with visitors at Eagle Park and the bus turning around. Eric said the morning shouldn't be a problem, but the afternoon could be in warmer weather. We'll have to keep an eye on it. It would be just Monday through Friday. Joel Bouvier said the busses could turn around at the previous location in the warmer months if needed. Ian Albinson asked how the new guys are doing with plowing. Eric said that they're coming along but there have some misunderstandings with communicated instructions, but we've corrected it. Ian asked if there was continued issues with the gate at Mountain Terrace. Eric said there was an issue at one point, but they tied the gate back, so it won't close, and it seems to have solved the problem. The rock at Eagle Park for the Peter Diminico Memorial is all set and the parties are happy with the installation.

2. **Rec Dept/Hub:** Recreation Director Meridith McFarland said the memory tree ceremony took place on December 10, 2021, and she put a video of it on Facebook. The activities for the weekend are the SD Ireland lighted truck, Santa hosting a candy cane hunt with

prizes and trolley rides on Sunday, and it is all booked up. Meredith said she is working on the town report with photos and Holley Hall rentals are up. Ian Albinson asked about the playground and the work that needs to be done there. Meredith sent an email to Bobby Stoddard and hopes to catch up with him by the end of the month to get on his schedule for the repair in early spring. She wants to order some certified cedar for playground and indicated that the Astro turf needs to be raked out or leaf blown for the spring. Ian talked about the structure posts that need to be repaired or replaced and there was a brief discussion on live wood and pressure treated wood. Meredith hopes to get an estimate from Bobby so it can be added to the budget.

3. **Police Department (BPD):** Chief Bruce Nason said there is a new speed radar sign on West Street. He thanked Foreman Eric Cota and his crew for installing it and Patrolman Josh Turner for setting up “Welcome to Bristol” with the speed showing. They are working on speed signs for East and West streets to put on a message and using color on the speed display to get the driver’s attention. Bruce acknowledged and thanked the Vermont State Police and the City of Vergennes Police Department for their assistance last week at the Mt Abe Union High School during the events that occurred and continued follow-up. Michelle Perlee thanked Bruce for being at the school. Ian Albinson acknowledged that the Police Department is a tremendous asset.

4. **Town Clerk:** Sharon Lucia reiterated that the Town Report is starting up. There could be changes for the elections coming up especially if redistricting is approved, so we’ll be waiting for the legislatures’ decision. Land Records are still behind, but Assistant Town Clerk Nichole Marden is working on them so we can catch up. The water read will be done this week, and the bills will go out next week. Sewer read reports need to be completed and filed. She is assisting Anthony Delmonaco with the Audit. Ian Albinson asked if she wanted his help with the Town Report this year. Sharon said yes but wants a chance to review the report before it goes to printer. Michelle Perlee reminded us that Sharon Compagna also agreed to review it as well. Valerie Capels said that Anthony will be joining the Selectboard meeting next week.

#### **IV. Regular Business.**

1. Conservation Commission candidate interview and possible appointment: Nancy Morrison. Nancy Morrison explained that she moved back here from Texas with her family as her husband got a job at Collins Aerospace in Vergennes. She has a 2-year-old son. She and her family like to do a lot of outdoor activities and is excited to be here in Vermont. Nancy has a Bachelor’s Degree in Recreation Management and likes the town parks and outdoors so thought Conservation Commission would be a good fit. She was on the Library Board in Texas. Ian asked if Nancy had reviewed any of the minutes from past meetings of the Conservation Commission and she said she attended the last two meetings in person. Joel Bouvier asked how many years she was on the Library Board. Nancy said she started the beginning of 2019 through August 2021. Joel asked what she could bring to the Conservation Commission. Nancy said maybe being new to the area with fresh eyes she might be able to add to what’s already been done. Joel asked if the Town had put this out to the public? Ian said it had been a while but that we had posted the vacancy. Ian thanked Nancy for offering to serve.

Michelle Perlee made a motion to appoint Nancy Morrison to the Conservation Commission for the vacancy that runs through the term of March 2025. Darla seconded. So voted.

2. Energy Committee candidate interview and possible appointment: Benjamin Skolozdra. Benjamin Skolozdra explained that he is new to Bristol and moved here with his fiancé in March 2021 from Burlington. He is an electrical engineer and has worked on power plants design and construction, some solar, some hydro-electric but does mostly water and wastewater work now. Public infrastructure is important to him. This would be his first volunteer position in public government. He believes an engineer could provide a different perspective from a technical/analytical side. Joel Bouvier asked if he preferred to work solar or wind. Ben said he likes solar projects and was excited about the local solar project in Bristol, but he has never really done any wind projects. Sally Burrell said that the next Energy Committee meeting is in January 2022 and is excited to have Ben aboard.

Michelle Perlee made a motion to appoint Benjamin Skolozdra to the Energy Committee through the term March 2024. Joel seconded. So voted.

3. Hub Teen Center Program Assistant candidate interview and appointment: Jacqueline Leigh Steponaitis. Taylor Welch introduced Jacqueline Steponaitis, who was selected to cover at the Hub while Taylor is on maternity leave for 12 weeks to assist Alex Mihavics. Taylor noted that Taylor Goodwin who had been working part-time at the Hub for the last couple of years moved back to North Carolina. It's been good to have the third person to give us flexibility in scheduling. Also, in the past six months the Hub has gone from having an average of 12 kids a day to 20 kids a day so having the extra help will be great. The job was advertised through various avenues such as Craigs List, Indeed, and Front Porch Forum. We received a number of applications and interviewed a handful of candidates. We were impressed with Jackie's background, with her friendliness and felt she would be a good fit and be an asset to the group, especially with the glowing reviews we received from her references. Ian Albinson welcomed Jackie and asked about her interest in this position. Jackie said she has worked with teenagers most of her adult life. She was a mentor with for at risk youths at the Boys and Girls Club of Vergennes. She was also a program assistant there twice on a part time basis and her full-time job is teaching English as a second language to students in Asia. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Communications and a 120-hour TEFL certificate and a recently acquired 120-hour CELTA Cambridge Certificate. She has spent time abroad in Japan. The Japanese culture is of interest to local high school students and she is excited to share her experiences and her love of Japanese food.

Taylor said Jackie would be working 20 hours a week. This is a temporary position and Jackie will be paid out of the UWAC grant and Honey-pot grants, which is for drop-in hours at the Hub. Taylor will be applying for another grant to have an additional cushion. Darla asked Jacqueline why she hasn't been scooped up yet, if she was looking for full time or part time work, and how long she was planning to stay. Jackie said she was looking for a job in Europe and the goal is to stay here to the end of this temporary job and then decide if she wants to or is able to go back to Europe. She is looking forward to working with teens in Bristol and providing them with a safe, fun and an education space after school.

Joel Bouvier made a motion to offer Jacqueline Steponaitis the position in 2022. Darla seconded. So voted.

4. Consider Town Green Park Use application: Lumen, Saturday, December 18, 2021, 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Kate Bentley introduced herself as the new Executive Director of BristolCORE. She said they would like to bring back the Lumen Celebration of Fire and Light event on Saturday the 18th. There will be fire performers on the Town Green, then the lantern walk down Main Street, along with delicious food, beverages, and fire pits with s'mores in the alleyways. Ian Albinson said he coordinated with the Fire Department volunteers and obtained sign off by the Police Department for the event. Ian said they were planning to have a larger stanchion area for the fire performers to make it safer for spectators. In addition, they obtained permission to use alleyways from the town merchants. Michelle Perlee asked if candles were to be used as in the past. Ian said they have switched to battery lights and Kate said that lantern making kits are available at the library with the LED lights.

Joel Bouvier made a motion to approve the Lumen Celebration of Fire & Light event. Michelle Perlee seconded. So voted.

5. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. Valerie Capels said she did not have any new information to share. The Town is still recruiting members for the ARPA committee and the plan was to have appointment of candidates on next week's agenda. Ian Albinson reported that he received interest from one member from the Conservation Commission, one member from the Energy Committee and two from the Planning Commission. Valerie said she has received plenty of interest for the bike/path advisory committee but only one for the ARPA committee. Joel Bouvier asked if we thought people were waiting to see what the parameters of the committee would be? Ian said the posting was very open ended and broad. The Town did ask for residents in the village and outside the village. Sally Burrell asked if the Town knew what the time commitment would be? Ian said it probably would be monthly or bimonthly meetings similar to other committee meetings in town. Sally asked if it was clear that members don't have to come up with proposals only that they are to review what others have submitted. Ian said it could be both reviewing and coming up with ideas. Joel asked if the committee is for one or two years and if the Selectboard had ideas did they need to submit them to committee? Valerie said the Selectboard should submit an outline of infrastructure or other capital projects the Town would like to do. Michelle Perlee felt that once the items are identified the committee's job will be done. Ian felt that a year-long commitment for the committee is good. Valerie suggested starting the posting with a question like "do you want to be involved with how this limited money will be spent in Bristol?" Ian asked Joel what he would like to see in the posting to get people interested in this committee. Joel said the Selectboard needs to have a discussion on end goals and relay to the committee. Discussion was had on what the committee would do and how it would know if a project qualified under the ARPA fund, so it doesn't get rejected at the end and we have to ask the voters to pay for it. Valerie said the Selectboard would have final say and there would be more information at that time so we wouldn't end up in that position. Joel asked, how do we handle a conflict of interest if they are on another board say for Addison County. Michelle said they would have to recuse themselves as a board member and the remaining would vote on it. Valerie said the Town's Conflict of Interest Policy would apply to the committee. The idea of the

committee was to have people from different fields to have a broader perspective and understanding of projects. Valerie said Elizabeth Blair is interested and Ian knew of one other person that was interested. Ian will revise the posting and send it to the Selectboard to review and then push the deadline for submissions out until January 2022.

6. Winter Maintenance Plan review. Valerie Capels said this is on the agenda to remind people that it exists or if they didn't know about it to make them aware. The Policy was adopted last year and lays out when and what roads will be plowed; when sidewalks will be plowed; the use of salt/sand on the roads and sidewalk; the expectations for snow removal; and when the Town would be responsible for private property damage. The exceptions being potholes, mailboxes, and windshields unless there is clear negligence of the plow driver. The Policy also identifies where there are agreements for private property arrangements for plowing and depositing snow as well as other general provisions. A copy of the Policy is on the website and will be posted on social media. Joel Bouvier asked about the language in the first paragraph on the first page regarding the truck assignment and equipment failure. He thinks it should reference a truck breakdown. Valerie said the language for equipment failure was put there to change people's expectations. Valerie said we could change it so if a truck breaks down there would be changes to routes. Eric is fine with the language either way. Michelle Perlee said sidewalk is sand/salt and policy says only sand. Eric said the barrels have 75/25 sand/salt ratio and sidewalk plow has 50/50 ratio. Ian said we could change IV.4. to replace Bristol CORE with the Town. Valerie reminded the Selectboard that this is just a policy and has not been a warned agenda item so changes couldn't be made.

7. Budget workshop: schedule, Recreation Department preliminary budget review (tentative), other sections. Valerie Capels reported that Rec Dept needs a little more time to present their budget. The projected schedule for the next meeting is for Rec Dept; Fire Department; Planning & Zoning and Listers to present. Next Monday will also have the health insurance on the agenda to approve. There are no proposed changes to the insurance benefits. The Monday meetings on January 3 and January 17 would be for budget items only. Joel wants to start those budget nights at 6 pm and the regular meetings on January 10 and January 24 would remain at 7 pm. There is no meeting on January 31. Valerie said the ACRPC and VLCT dues have changed, and she would let the Board know of other significant changes. There was agreement that liaisons should plan to meet with their departments in preparation for the Selectboard meeting. Joel has talked to Water Department and discussed what needs to be done for the Town Report. Sharon will send what we have spent to date in the Water/Sewer budgets.

8. Consider adoption of a resolution to reappoint Town Administrator Valerie Capels to the Addison County Economic Development Board for one year. Valerie Capels said it has been beneficial for her to be on the Board.

Michelle Perlee made a motion to reappoint Valerie Capels to the Addison County Economic Development Board. Joel Bouvier seconded. So voted.

9. Consider appointment of Selectboard representative to participate in the upcoming New England Police Benevolent Association (NEPBA) contract negotiations.

Joel Bouvier made a motion that Ian Albinson be the Selectboard representative since he is the Police Department liaison. Ian wanted to know what it involved first. Valerie Capels said she and Ted were the representatives the first time and, since they didn't have experience with police union contracts, there was an attorney, John Klesch, at the meetings every time making it a lengthy and expensive process. Valerie didn't think attorney representation would be needed every time this round. Chief Nason said he could bring suggestions and recommendations to the Selectboard and if agreed to by the Association then our attorney could review for approval and signature. Valerie asked what changes might be coming. Bruce said he didn't know. The union, with assistance from the Bristol police officer representative will have their own recommendations and hopefully the parties can meet in the middle. The negotiations could be agreed on or it could end up going to mediation. Valerie asked if both officers or just one would be representatives and Bruce said there was only one representative last time. Valerie told NEPBA representative Chris Hoar it will be on tonight's agenda to discuss, but negotiations wouldn't begin until after the Town report and budget are done. Negotiations need to be done by the end of June 2022. Ian asked Michelle Perlee if she would be interested in being the Selectboard representative. Michelle agreed that we don't need an attorney at the beginning. Bruce said he could be part of the Town as he is not eligible to be in the union. Valerie asked if Bruce would want to be at the table for negotiations and he said he believed he had some insight. He might not be at every meeting but hoped that the Town would reach out to him with questions if he wasn't in attendance. Michelle said she was okay with being the representative.

Joel Bouvier made a motion to appoint Michelle Perlee to the New England Police Benevolent Association. Darla Senecal seconded. So voted.

10. Consider appointment of two Bristol representatives to the new Regional Emergency Management Committee. Valerie Capels said she would be one of the representatives. Valerie is going to ask Peter Coffey or Mark Bouvier if they would be interested in the other position and report back. The Committee meets quarterly.

Joel Bouvier made a motion to appoint Valerie Capels to the Regional Emergency Management Committee. Michelle Perlee seconded. So voted.

Joel made motion to appoint Peter Coffey if he is interested. Michelle Perlee seconded. So voted.

11. Grant application authorization request: Hub Teen Center to Fieldstone Foundation. Michelle Perlee made a motion to approve the request to apply for the Fieldstone Foundation Grant request up to \$5,000. Joel Bouvier seconded. So voted.

12. Review and approval of the July 26, August 16, August 23, September 13, November 8, and November 22, 2021, meeting minutes. Michelle Perlee made a motion to approve the November 22, 2021, meeting minutes with changes that Michelle Perlee and Darla Senecal made. Darla clarified that she did not suggest any changes. Joel Bouvier seconded. So voted. The November 8, 2021, meeting minutes were approved at the November 22, 2021, meeting.

13. Approve an amendment to the August 9, 2021 Selectboard meeting minutes to correct an omission. This item is moot.

14. Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor licenses. The check warrant is for \$193,948.20. The liquor license application is for South Mountain and it's to renew their 3rd license for the remaining six months. Joel Bouvier asked about the Cemetery appropriation. Sharon responded that they receive the first half of their appropriation in July and second one in December.

15. Selectboard roundtable.  
Joel Bouvier had nothing to report.

Darla Senecal commended the Church for the live nativity event this past weekend. She said it was very well attended and was nicely done. Darla commented that she likes the lights shining on the stained-glass windows in Holley Hall. Darla said that Taylor Welch is on the Board of Ok You Got This - Resilience Project with Darla and she was pleased that the Hub was involved.

Ian Albinson had a concern about the Elementary School project as the asphalt on the new north end looks very different and doesn't look like the road. Eric Cota said that Pikes was closed, and Whitcomb's didn't have the same mix, but it was all they could get. The contractor will replace the mismatched asphalt in the spring with right asphalt mix. Ian asked about upgrading the cloud storage in the Town's zoom account to 100 GB which costs \$40 a year. This would be available to all committees and be easier to transfer to NEAT TV rather than being on local computers. Valerie suggested that this not come out of the Technology Fund as it's a recurring cost. Michelle agreed that it needs to come out of general fund. Ian will work on archiving of recordings, so we stay under the limit.

Michelle Perlee asked about the landfill and the unearthed trash. Valerie Capels has not heard anything on the results of the sampling. She said it might take 10 days to get results. Michelle asked why are we finding trash? Valerie said it's not in the area that is capped. It was in the area where the stormwater pond is going to be. There will be expenses with cleanup, but on the flip side, we will be getting solar rental payments to help offset some of the costs. Joel Bouvier asked if this was the solar company's issue. Valerie said the agreement with the Solar Company states that anything else outside capped area is the Town's responsibility. Joel said the uncovered items were more steel and tires not necessarily trash.

16. Town Administrator's report. Valerie said she didn't have anything to add to her written report. Regarding the four hours that are typically given to employees per the Personnel Policy for the day prior to Christmas Eve, because Christmas is on Saturday the Town has Friday (Christmas Eve) off as the holiday, Valerie asked if the Selectboard was amenable to giving the 4 hours off on Thursday afternoon. Ian Albinson said he is good with it. Joel Bouvier said the bank is closing at 1 pm on Friday and they're getting half a day on Friday plus holiday pay. Darla said that her company is giving Christmas through New Year's off without affecting their time off.

**V. Other Business.**

1. Correspondence, reports, correspondence received.

- Report on Landfill trash
- Email from a citizen on Political unrest in schools and flags.
- Planning Commission's efforts to involve UVM interns in the Town planning processes
- Vermont Retail groceries association re: mass mandate.
- Landfill updates
- Addison Independent Article about housing project in Bristol
- ACRPC newsletter.

2. Added Item. The Fire Department is requesting authorization to sell fire department equipment for \$500.

Michelle Perlee made a motion to sell the fire department equipment. Joel Bouvier seconded. So voted.

**VI. Executive Session.** None.

**VII. Adjourn.** Joel Bouvier made motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. Michelle Perlee seconded. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon A. Lucia  
Board Clerk

Valerie Capels  
Town Administrator