

**Town of Bristol, Vermont  
Selectboard Meeting Minutes of  
Monday, January 3, 2022**

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

Members absent: none

Staff present: Town Administrator Valerie Capels, Public Works Foreman Eric Cota, Board Clerk Sharon Lucia, Police Chief Bruce Nason, Police Officer Josh Turner.

Others present: Linda Andrews, Ben Skolozdra, Jennifer Wagner

**I. Call to Order.** Chair Peeker Heffernan called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 mentioned in her Town Administrator report that we might want to pass on reviewing the town meeting warnings, but she feels we should review with the additional information we have.

**II. Executive Session.** Personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) and contract negotiations per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A). Michelle Perlee made a motion to go into executive session per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) to discuss personnel compensation matters. Ian Albinson seconded. The Selectboard met in executive session from 6:03m to 6:55pm. Upon returning to open session, no action was taken.

**III. Call to Order:** At 7:00 p.m. Peeker Heffernan called the regular business meeting to Order. Overview of Zoom meeting operation and procedures, rules for participating, mute microphone, recognition by Chair, etc.

**IV. Public Forum.**

1. Linda Andrews said she wants a public rule that the Town support a mask mandate. She has been talking to Dave Silverman (High Bailiff of Addison County) and he said if the Town passes a public health rule not an ordinance that it doesn't require police reinforcement or fines. Linda would like the Selectboard to review this topic again. Valerie Capels asked if Linda has examples of other communities that had passed a rule and if she had language for that rule. Linda said she doesn't have that information but said that Dave might. She will do additional research. Valerie explained that this topic is on the next Selectboard Meeting Agenda for January 10, 2022, but it is a discussion about Town buildings. Linda will send Valerie information.

**V. Department Head Roundtable.** None.

**VI. Regular Business.**

1. Budget workshop: Public Works, Police, and other General Fund sections: preliminary Capital Improvement Plan.

Police Budget. Bruce Nason explained that the budget presented includes the COPS grant to have a fourth full-time position. There's not much change except for the salary line, equipment, and uniform lines. The COPS grant we would use a third of it to offset cost which would be a 0.3% in taxes. Michelle Perlee asked what cost would be offset. Bruce said it offsets the total cost. We have \$125k total in grant funds for three years that we can draw from at any time. Bruce has been looking for options on how to fund the 4<sup>th</sup> year without raising taxes. the grant requires that we keep the fourth position for the 4<sup>th</sup> year. There are some undesignated funds that we haven't used as a result of positions we budgeted for, and people left, and positions were not immediately filled. Bruce proposed that we use some of the undesignated funds for the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> year. Peeker clarified that the police budget stays level and the undesignated funds currently would not be used for anything else now but would be saved for the additional years. Bruce said yes. Valerie noted that the increase in full time salaries is offset with a decrease in part-time and overtime salary. Peeker is trying to analyze how far out an increase in taxes would occur. The grant pushes the tax increase out three years and with the undesignated fund balance you could push it out one to two years. The sixth year would be hit with a huge increase. If we follow Bruce's plan but used the funds over three years with tax increase each year, then it wouldn't be such a big hit. Michelle Perlee said instead of getting a 10% increase in year five maybe have a 3% increase each after the initial three-year grant. Ian Albinson asked how you increase a salary for someone who's already being covered under the grant funds. More discussion was had on options of spreading out the grant money and undesignated funds so it won't hurt the police district budget in the long run. Ian asked if there was a time limit when undesignated funds must be spent. Peeker said no as its basically a rainy-day fund. On the general budget we try to keep a 5% balance. Valerie noted that the grand list amount is last year's grand list amount, and the police district grand list is increasing. Ian also mentioned that we need to keep in mind that there is still the option of going town wide.

Peeker also said that we also need to remember that our lease is up in 2023 so going town wide and doing a new building in two years is unrealistic. Bruce also explained that since 2017/2018 tax year the police district budget has decreased.

Bruce explained another change is in the vehicle reserve fund (\$19,000) adding another vehicle and updating every two years instead of three years. Michelle wanted to know if \$19,000 was enough. Bruce said the truck cost \$32,000 and that equipment would be reused on the new vehicle. DPW has been good about helping with equipment installation and removal. Bruce said that he added more to Town Traffic Patrol and the dog officer line as they are getting more calls. Additional discussion was had on the dog licensing. (Val – were we really talking about dog licensing in the Police Budget or the dog pound duties?)

There was brief discussion about the speed signs on each end of town and the digital notices on the signs.

Department of Public Works Budget – Eric Cota. Valerie Capels noted that the revenues are not filled in. She suggested going with last years and Eric said that was fine. For the water department revenue line Eric said to take out the \$1,000 as we're doing less and less for them. Valerie Capels noted that the salary budgets have been discussed but this edit is an update to last years but does not include any changes from executive session discussion. Michelle Perlee asked

about the health insurance and if the decrease was from premium or employees changed plans. Valerie said it is from employees changing plans and a decrease in premiums. Valerie will plug in the new salary numbers later. Peeker said everything pretty much stayed the same. The supply line went up due to repairs to the loader and international tandem was \$9,000. Michelle asked if \$11,000 is enough. Ian asked if we should go to \$12,000 instead of \$11,000. Eric doesn't think a \$1,000 is much of an increase as hourly rates for heavy equipment is high. Peeker said that we now have two new garages in town that can work on the DPW trucks if it wasn't covered under warranty. Eric said the newest truck has the best warranty on it which is five years. For the newer vehicles we have been buying warranties, which costs more up front but hopefully will save in the long run. Heating fuel is propane, and we can level fund the east garage as we're using used oil. Eric said to drop the heating fuel for east garage to \$2,500. Materials section is level funded. Michelle asked if salt prices were going up. Eric said there hasn't been a huge increase in salt (\$.73 a ton and last year was \$.71) so not a big increase. Sand went up \$.50 a yard last year so not huge increase. Eric did up the salt line a little bit by \$5,000. The \$5,000 is approximately three loads of salt. Peeker asked what we normally use for salt in a storm. Eric said probably  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a tandem load for one pass around town. Sharon Lucia asked if the line item included what we obtained for Mt Abe and was reimbursed for? Eric said yes it does. Michelle asked where that reimbursement was charged to? Eric understood it went into revenue not his salt line. Michelle asked where in the revenue lines above does that go to? Eric said he didn't know. Next was the chloride line which Eric increased back to \$22,000 as we were over last year. As of right now Eric doesn't have any money in that line to spread chloride in the spring. We had a dry summer last year and he's out. Ian asked about line 63 (repaving) and if we could eliminate it. Peeker said the repaving line went to capital paving fund. Peeker explained that the culvert line went up due to the work to be done on Munsill Avenue. He explained that instead of increasing this line significantly should we make a separate line for Munsill or do we want to increase the capital roads fund to avoid a one-year bump. If we put it in a capital roads budget, then it would stay but if we make it a separate line then it goes away if not spent. Michelle asked if that option was for the entire culvert line or just increase for Munsill Ave project. Peeker said it was for just the Munsill Ave difference if that's what the Selectboard wants. Signs have also increased, especially with speed limit change and street signs which are not currently part of the building permit. Eric said tree work has increased and there are more trees that need to be taken care of. The pavement marking lines is for the striping for the traffic calming measures lines, and bike and pedestrian lines that will need to be done every year if that's the route we take. Ian asked if it was for initial painting or renewal every year. Eric said it was for both and it needs to be hired out as we don't have the equipment to do this work. Valerie asked if we should do more guardrail installation. Eric has called the contractor and they are coming but he doesn't know when. If the contractor could come in before July 1, I could do five this budget year and after July 1 we could do another five if they wanted to spread it out and give a better price. Storm drain line went up due to the Munsill project and maintenance on catch basins. Contracted services went up due to threshold of 15% high priority hydrologically connected segments up to standards by 2025. Total of 1.6% without salary for actual budget increase.

Eric updated capital equipment spreadsheet. The \$70,000 is good price for new extended cab 350-450 truck with flatbed, dump, slide-on sander and v-plow per G Stone. Price could change depending on equipment package. He called Tim Pudvar and the \$175,00 for loader is good number. Trade-in is about \$20,000. Eric didn't call anyone about the Excavator as he didn't

know if we wanted to push it out a couple of years. We plugged in the Kubota as it will be 13 years old at that time. Eric called Champlain Valley Equipment and they said about \$37,000 doing the same size tractor that we have. On the Freightliner Eric called Sandy and he's pricing one out now for \$175,000 so he increased that amount since it's a few years out. Eric wants to go back to regular steel instead of stainless steel which we've had issues with from the start. Currently a Mack truck order is a year and a half out. Valerie noted that we do not know what the actual balance of the account is. We need to check with the Treasurer on exact balance. The 2022-2023 column under cost was corrected to be a minus (-\$70,000).

General Operating Fund. Valerie explained that we will have revenue from the Solar Lease and tax payments. The two are in separate line items as lease payments are stable and tax payments will fluctuate. Clerk fees revenue is for recording documents and for title searches. A payment comes out of these revenues for the record restoration fund. The dog licenses are for last year and this year. The question was asked whether there should be a separate expense line for the payments that goes to the State for dog and marriage licenses? Ian asked about the National Forest payment and if we received last year? He also asked why the library reimbursement dropped. Valerie said the Library staff are not taking health insurance anymore. Michelle noted that parking permit fees have dropped. Sharon explained that only six permits have been sold this year. Valerie indicated that the FEMA Grant money line needs to be looked at. Michelle asked why the General Expenses computer line decreased. Sharon explained this line item is for Dominion Tech for Town Admin and each other department have their own line. Peeker asked why 40% drop? Need to review invoices for exact information. Ian wants to change the name of Computer to something more descriptive. Michelle asked about line 89 for Audit and why was it zero. Valerie said there was a number there earlier and it is a decrease. The election line is increased as there are three elections next year. The delinquent tax collector line is now part of Treasurer salary. The Selectboard Salaries line has decreased as the minute taking is now in-house. The dog officer line increased for the Police Department. The streetlight line increased to anticipate Stoney Hill coming online. Line 122 Town Traffic Patrol Contract is increased to 15,000. The \$4,000 on Line 123 is for responses when Police Department is called. Under the Clerk/Treasurer section, we added Assistant Clerk/Treasurer salary line.

2. Review of preliminary draft Town Meeting and Police District warnings.

Valerie Capels discussed having a hybrid meeting for Town Meeting, but it is not currently allowed. Until the legislature passes another law to change it, the Town Meeting and election will need be the status quo as before the pandemic. If the legislature passes the same legislation as last year, then there will be an informational meeting only and all voting will be by Australian ballot (same as last year). She asked about Article 3 and the penalty for late payment. Do we want to change it? Peeker Heffernan asked what is the status of delinquent taxes? Sharon Lucia explained that there are the regular delinquent residents, but she needs to check with the Town Treasurer for any new ones. Article 4 Selectboard payment was corrected from \$10 to \$15. Sharon added a new appropriation to the Articles. The requirement for signatures on appropriations was not waived this year. Valerie suggested putting on an article that has all appropriations going forward be by Australian ballot. Discussion followed about pros and cons. Jennifer Wagner suggested language changes on the Warning for Article 1 voting by Australian

ballot, Article 2 on tax interest and penalty and Article 5-7 Budgets. She will email suggested language to Valerie.

3. Review and approval of the July 26, August 23, September 13, December 13, and December 20, 2021, meeting minutes.

Michelle Perlee made a motion to approve the July 26, 2021, minutes with changes. Darla Senecal seconded. So voted.

4. Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor licenses. None.

5. Selectboard roundtable.

Peeker Heffernan. None.

Joel Bouvier. Not present.

Darla Senecal. None.

Ian Albinson suggested Town Report changes can be talked about at next meeting. He said it's positive news on what was dug up at the town landfill.

Michelle Perlee. None.

Valerie mentioned the Equalization Study results. The Town appears to be headed toward another town wide reappraisal and we will need to budget for it. Also, we need to be pro-active and get out an RFP sooner rather than later as other towns are in the same position. Last reappraisal was three years ago.

## **VII. Other Business.**

1. Correspondence, reports, correspondence received.
  - Bristol\_RLF\_status\_report\_thru\_2021-11-30.pdf
  - 2021\_Equalization\_Study\_Results\_2021-12-21.pdf
  - E-mail\_Governor\_CDBG\_awards\_press\_release\_2021-12-23.pdf
  - USEPA-WaterISAC Advisory on Cybersecurity Recommendations\_Dec\_2021.pdf

**VIII. Executive Session** (continued if needed) – personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) and contract negotiations per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A). No continuation.

## **IX. Adjourn.**

Ian Albinson made motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m. Darla Senecal seconded. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon A. Lucia  
Board Clerk

Valerie Capels  
Town Administrator