

Town of Bristol, Vermont
Selectboard Meeting Minutes of
Monday, January 17, 2022

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

Members Absent: none

Staff present: Town Administrator Valerie Capels, Public Works Foreman Eric Cota, Treasurer Anthony Delmonaco, Fire Chief Brett LaRose, Board Clerk Sharon Lucia, Rec Director Meridith McFarland, Police Chief Bruce Nason, Police Officer Josh Turner.

Others present: Linda Andrews, Diane Cushman (Health Officer), Shawn Kimball (NEAT TV), Jim Quaglino.

I. Call to Order. Chair Peeker Heffernan called the meeting to order at 6:05 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.
2. Overview of Zoom meeting operation and procedures, rules for participation, mute microphone, recognition by Chair, etc.

II. Public Forum. None.

III. Regular Business.

1. Consider a resolution supporting face coverings in enclosed public spaces.

Diane Cushman asked that in the Be It Resolved paragraph it be changed to masks and not face coverings. The current recommendation is that cloth masks aren't the best and you should be wearing surgical masks or N-95 which isn't feasible for everyone. She believes bandanas and gators are not feasible. Valerie asked if we could add shield. Ian said he doesn't think it's necessary as it's only for those that can't wear masks. Ian and Darla revised and made it shorter. It's a resolution and recommendation versus a mandate. Ian also created a sign that businesses could post. The Resolution would need to be renewed every 45 days. Joel asked if we are going to post in town buildings. Ian said we should require people to wear masks when in town buildings. Discussion continued on the language of strongly recommend or require. Valerie asked about putting in a sentence that the Town supports the businesses that chose to require masks. Peeker said "strongly recommends and supports the business" language. Darla asked Meridith (Rec Dept) what she is doing upstairs in Holley Hall. Meridith said she requires masks to enter Holley Hall upstairs for any event. Alex and Meridith have been wearing them in the office. Ian said this is a statement from the Town and its support. The businesses will do what is in their best interests whether its recommend or required. Darla thinks the language Valerie suggested would add more support to the businesses. Michelle thinks it will confuse the message to make it mandatory for town offices. Its only good for 45 days so if we receive complaints, we can make changes. Michelle said if a business requires a mask, they probably won't put this sign in their window. The public won't see the resolution, they will see the sign.

Darla Senecal made motion to accept the revised version of the Resolution for masks for the Town of Bristol. Michelle Perlee seconded. So Voted.

2. Budget workshop: Recreation, Fire Department, and other General Fund sections: preliminary Capital Improvement Plan.

Recreation Department. Meridith McFarland said the program registration fees are at \$28,356. Pottery is the same, but we did a vacation clay class so there will be revenue for pottery studio. The mountain bike clinics start July 1, which nets \$3,000 typically and helps out at the end of the FY. Darla asked about swim. Meridith explained they are looking at February vacation swim but a max of 15 people. We must do more sessions for the Level 1-3. We need to get out to the public the Level 1-3 swim class as that is the drowning age level. Maybe during April break we can do two hours of Level 1-3. During the summer we will start classes 7/11 through 8/6 for only levels 1-3 and the last week we can do upper levels and lifeguard certification class at the end on 8/7 and 8/8. The max is 15 per class. Joel asked where did the \$16,000 come from. Meridith explained that it was from Mt Abe. Meridith said we won't meet the \$16,000. Joel asked Meridith what the amount should be. Meridith replied that it's hard to gauge. Michelle said it doesn't look like Rec has made any money on swim since we took over. Meridith said we did bring in funds for it. Tai Quan Do and gymnastics could make the \$55,000 if we can bring them back. Can't do Tai Quan Do right now and she is working with Lyndsey on gymnastics. Joel commented that rentals are up. Meridith said we only allow 60 people in Holley Hall at this time. We are also competing with the ELP programs.

Valerie said actuals for 2021 show the revenue shortfall and that ARPA monies could be used for revenue replacement. Meridith said the amount we made for swim program \$14,174 plus \$1,252 for open swim pre-COVID. Level 1-3 made more money than older levels. The more realistic amount is \$12,000.

Meridith said she has received appropriation money from Monkton and Starksboro. The Hub youth center events income is at \$3,600 and is from summer camp for older kids. Matlock has a waiting list for Adult pottery classes. Only five adults are allowed at a time, but the kids program can be six to eight. We will be doing February and April clay class and that is \$135. Trolley rides brought in about \$395 revenue. Meridith is working with the library to do a murder mystery event. It would be \$75 per couple with add on for sitters at Howden Hall and there would be a 50/50 raffle as well. Rentals are going strong with \$1,400 from ELP to rent Holley Hall for their events which hasn't yet been paid. Tai Chi next session will bring in an additional \$600 rental fee. Ian said it's good to see it rising considerably from last year. The sponsorship/donations is a new line. Joel brought up revenue and if we should lower the revenue number. Darla is fine with lowering the revenue if we think the current number can't be met.

Valerie asked what people thought about using ARPA money for lost revenue. Ian thinks it's something to think about and present to the committee. Michelle thinks it's a great idea. Valerie said we can't wait for committee as we need to finalize the budget soon. Darla asked can we tell the committee that we designate this amount of money towards lost revenue, and this is the remaining money you have to work with. Ian's concern is that we've asked a committee before they've even organized that the Selectboard wants to earmark certain funds. What's stopping other departments from asking as well. Pecker said that shortfalls don't impact next year's budget as we've already paid for these invoices. We would be reimbursing ourselves and it would go into undesignated funds. Michelle asked where does the money come from if their

revenue is less than their expenses. Valerie said it comes out of general fund or undesignated funds. Joel is not in favor of taking money before the ARPA committee begins. The Selectboard needs to come up with list of projects for the ARPA committee as well. More discussion occurred on revenue amount levels for recreation department. Raising additional \$6,000 from taxpayers is not a deal breaker. Ian agrees that it is a small amount of money in the scope of things that we could work it out. Peeker feels if Meridith is good with the levels now and if she goes over then we adjust next year. Meridith said she was able to apply for and receive \$8,000 for lost revenue. Taylor also applied for grants to help with food and such so she didn't spend the budget line.

On expenses, the mileage line dropped, training is level funded as is supplies. Joel asked about the increase in supplies for 2020/2021 and is it related to purchases of COVID-related items. In the Equipment Line Meridith said we are bringing in new programs such as pickle ball. Technology and computer is related to the platform we use to take in money and registration and well worth the money. Postage is to be kept level. For custodial we hire a vendor to clean in the winter and in summer we do it ourselves. Joel asked about swimming line and should we lower in light of revenue change. Meridith responded that this is the line to hire instructors and we need only five for the lower classes. First year swim instructor is \$13, and a lead instructor is \$20. Peeker says to leave at \$15,000 and if Meridith is comfortable lowering it, we will. For the program line Taylor, Alex and myself did the programs. Meridith said she did hire an additional mountain bike coach. She talked about the bus, and they spent \$3,050 in renting Betcha bus. If we buy a bus, then the \$5,000 will cover the cost; if we don't get the bus, the \$5,000 will cover the rental cost. Joel thinks if we have the opportunity to buy a bus, we have it looked at before buying. Peeker asked who a driver would be. Meridith said they all have clean driver's record, and all took the beginner course. Two of them will obtain a Level 2 license endorsement (15 passenger or less). Events line will be kept level and it includes music series, movies in the park and skatepark events. Landfill fees is for Hub and Parks. Meridith moved on to Hub section. She said Taylor is keeping most of the lines flat but did make a change to the food line. She added \$500 to that line with the increase in students and inflation. Michelle thought Taylor had a grant for this line. Meridith said yes, we do for this year but won't necessarily have one for next year. In the programs and workshops there were some grants we received but it's not guaranteed next year. Peeker said these lines should show what the actual money spent which includes the grant money. Valerie explained that grant money is tracked separately and doesn't hit the general fund. Discussion continued regarding actuals pertaining to grants and what budget shows. In the Pottery budget Meridith asked for a raise for the instructor from \$1,066 to \$1,166. The remaining line items for Pottery remains flat. Valerie reminded everyone that the Selectboard will be able to circle back next week with any questions or changes.

Fire Department. Chief Brett LaRose said three weeks ago, the main conversation about the budget was the Firefighter pay and how the Town comes into compliance with Fair Standards Labor Act. The questions that were raised were (1) how the membership would feel about a potential decrease in wages and (2) what other towns are doing for compensation. Brett put together a compensation proposal for the Selectboard to review and ask questions. Michelle asked what are the facilities duties? Brett responded that there are four companies and for three months in a row each company has apparatus inspection, and the fourth month is for facility maintenance (keeping clean and shoveling snow). The 30 hours listed are required by the VT

Fire Service Training Counsel on specific topics and on certain assigned positions. The Vermont Fire Service Training requires at least 24 hours per year to remain a firefighter. Brett is behind this proposal even though the budget increases 3.6%. He does have a list of items he could knock down to 1.5%. Michelle doesn't believe there is a lot of fat in fire department budget, and she supports paying them for their training. She believes the taxpayers will support it. Ian agreed. Joel Bouvier asked about the fire station bond payment. Valerie doesn't have an answer because the figures are not available yet. Sharon conveyed that there are two payments made and this past year it was about \$130,000. We expect it to continue going down. We don't know whether it's a fixed or variable rate. Valerie and Anthony will check on it. There was a question on the propane and it's a pre-buy amount. Brett asked about the capital funds and if there is a solid number. The balances are not matching up. More work needs to be done. Brett will send to Valerie and Anthony his spreadsheet.

Brett said he received a call from John Flowers of Addison Independent last week asking about firefighter compensation. The Addison was at Middlebury Selectboard meeting when Chief Shaw presented his fire department budget. Brett has an interview scheduled for 8 am tomorrow.

General Fund section of budget. Valerie asked how they wanted to proceed. Ian said take a look at bottom line. The increase is currently at 2% for taxes. Michelle asked if this included the firefighter compensation. Valerie said yes. If there are more changes in salary lines then the bottom line will change. When we get to the capital budgets there may be some change if we increase any of the capital funds. Peeker ask if there was any information on any undesignated funds. Valerie said no. Discussion ensued about possible increases in capital funds. Peeker asked if everyone was comfortable with 2%? The consensus is yes and Valerie made the caveat that it is subject to changes that may occur during the week.

3. Continued review of preliminary draft Town Meeting and Police District warnings; determine whether Town Meeting will be in-person or all-Australian ballot.

Ian said he wants the same as last year which is two remote informational meetings and Australian ballot for all articles.

Joel Bouvier made motion that the Town Meeting and Police District meetings be informational by Zoom for 2022, and all articles will be by Australian ballot. Ian Albinson seconded. So voted.

Discussion occurred regarding mailing of ballots and notifications to voters. Ian has language to use from last year.

The warnings were included in the packet, but they are being revised so hold off on making any decisions until next week. Ian agreed.

4. Grant application approval request: Hub Teen Center for Neat Repeats grant for winter weather gear.

Joel Bouvier made motion to approve. Ian Albinson seconded. So voted.

5. Review and approval of the August 23, September 13, December 20, 2021 and the January 3 and January 10, 2022 meeting minutes.

There are no new minutes to review.

6. Selectboard roundtable.

Ian Albinson. none.

Joel Bouvier. Spoke to Richard about recycling and Don at Addison County Transfer confirmed. The hauler will get fined if they bring anything contaminated.

Peeker Heffernan. None.

Michelle Perlee. None.

Darla Senecal. None.

7. Town Administrator's report.

Valerie reported that the Munsill Ave scoping study kick off meeting in February of stakeholders or anyone else that wants to be involved. There will a public meeting for community concerns. Stoney Hill business park infrastructure project is essentially complete. There are a few punch list items. There is also a snafu with the driveway entrance to the apartments. There is an electrical vault that was installed that is larger than what the plan called for, so the driveway has to be adjusted in site plan. Otherwise, it has gone smoothly and are in final stages of figuring out the cash flow.

IV. Other Business.

1. Correspondence, reports, correspondence received. None mentioned.

V. Executive Session. Personnel Matters.

Michelle Perlee made motion to start executive session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). Joel Bouvier seconded. So voted. The Selectboard met in executive session from 9:00pm to 9:47pm. Upon returning to open session, no action was taken.

VI. Adjourn.

Michelle Perlee made motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:47pm.

Joel Bouvier
seconded. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon A. Lucia
Board Clerk

Valerie Capels
Town Administrator