

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, May 22, 2023**

Members Present: Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier (Vice-Chair), Peeker Heffernan, Michelle Perlee, Darla Senecal (Chair)

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Valerie Capels (Town Administrator), Eric Cota (Public Works Foreman), Anthony Delmonaco (Treasurer), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk), Meridith McFarland (Rec Director), Bruce Nason (Police Chief), Taylor Welch (Teen Center Director)

Others Present: Wade Acker, Tasha Ball (Willowell), Fred Baser, Cecil Foster (Libanus Lodge), Julie Heffernan, Sarah Heffernan, Porter Knight, Tatum Main, Cyrus Marsano (VTUMS), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Steve Palmer (VTM Engineering), and Danielle Wallace (Turning Point).

I. Call to Order. Darla Senecal called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

II. Executive Session

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to enter executive session in order to discuss personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3). The motion was seconded by Peeker. Eric Cota was invited to attend. All voted in favor. The Selectboard met in executive session from 6:30pm to 6:55pm. Upon returning to open session, there was a consensus of the Selectboard to allow the Public Works Department to switch to four 10-hour days, Monday through Thursday, from June 1 through August 2023. This will be reevaluated at the Selectboard’s August 28 meeting.

III. Call to Order. Darla Senecal called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

V. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A).

A Recreation Department grant authorization request and a request from the Listers to seek a filing deadline extension were added to the agenda as part of agenda item 10.

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

IV. Public Forum.

Nobody present requested the opportunity to address the Board.

V. Department Head Roundtable.

Jill and Cyrus (Water and Wastewater Systems – VTUMS):

- Six contractors attended the pre-bid meeting last Thursday.
- Working to determine exact location of transition to 2” line near the town garage. Eric provided some pertinent information. The goal is to resolve this before the addendum to the water line replacement specifications is written.
- There was a question regarding North Street valves. It was confirmed that all three were installed when that section was completed.
- There may be some road surface impacts greater than 8 feet, and no paving unit pricing is included in the specifications. Contractors will bid higher if such things are not specified.

- Steve Palmer indicated that it may be possible to move the line slightly to avoid going outside the 8-foot distance.

Meridith (Rec Director):

- Town wide yard sale for June is being coordinated and advertised – the money raised goes toward programming and scholarship funds.
- Teddy bear picnic will take place on June 28.
- Camps are all pretty full. She is hoping to add some bike clinics.
- Working on getting swim program going, instructors are being recruited.
- Received a grant to purchase additional bikes and helmets. Valerie suggested also looking in Police Department's storage for unclaimed bikes.
- The front step repair work at Holley Hall is going well.

Sharon (Town Clerk):

- Real estate is picking up, so land records work is increasing.
- There is a lot activity for marriage certificates.
- Continued work on purging the voter checklist.
- Sewer bills issued this month. Water meters will be read in June.

Brett (Fire Department):

- The new fire pumper is on the way to NH for final equipment installation.
- James Cole and Ethan Dewitt have completed their Firefighter I certification. Brett acknowledged the large time commitment involved and offered congratulations.
- The station recently hosted a National Fire Academy training; firefighters from around Vermont were in attendance.
- Pike Industries has put down the asphalt on the new drive as a \$2,300 donation.
- The Department recently supported the 5-town food drive by providing the use of a trailer.
- The recent open house event was well attended and brought forth two potential recruits.
- Will be requesting authorization to exercise the air horn at the station twice annually.
- There was discussion about E-911 address sign compliance. Brett noted at times it is difficult to locate homes. Valerie suggested placing an order form for the signage provided by Bristol Rescue in the 'Welcome to Bristol' package provided to new homeowners.

Taylor (Teen Center Director)

- Things are going well at the Hub. Everyone is in the midst of end of school activities.
- Quotes will be sought for skate park improvements, and feedback is being solicited.
- Zac is working well with the kids; Bruce's work is also appreciated.

Bruce (Police Department):

- Warmer weather means things are busier.
- Buckle up campaign began today.

Eric (Public Works Department):

- Scheduled paving has been completed.
- Ditching and other summer work underway.
- Waiting for a bids on Notch Road project.
- They are washing up and putting away winter equipment.

VI. Public Hearing – Dog Ordinance Violations: Wade Acker.

Valerie provided background information regarding the bites and other incidents that have taken place since August of 2022. She noted that as of today both dogs are now registered with the Town.

Julie Heffernan told the Board that she has not felt comfortable walking in her neighborhood since being bitten by the Ackers' dog in November 2022. She indicated that she has tried to speak with the Ackers about this situation, and that she is not confident that any restrictions on the dog's freedom will be carried out.

Wade Acker noted that a new radio collar had been put into use in November, and that he is clearing land behind his house for fencing the dog in. Tatum Main explained that the dog is currently being trained and on a wait list for further aggression training.

Board members discussed potential solutions, noting that in similar past situations it has been required that the dog not be outside without being leashed and attended to. In this case it should also be muzzled. Valerie explained that in the past the Selectboard has issued a warrant authorizing the Police Department to take the dog if it is found running at large. She also indicated that once a fence is in place, if the dog gets loose, it will still be taken. Bruce suggested that he inspect the fence when it is complete.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to require that when the dog in question is outside, it must be on a leash, accompanied by an owner, and muzzled. Any one of those criteria not met will be grounds for the dog to be taken. In addition, when the fence is complete, it will be inspected by Bruce, and if satisfactory, the dog may then be contained within the fenced area without a leash. The motion was seconded by Michelle. All voted in favor.

VII. Regular Business

1. Consider renewal of Recycled Reading RLF loan for an additional five years. May include deliberation in executive session regarding contract negotiations.

Fred Baser explained that he was recently notified that the Recycled Reading Revolving Loan Fund loan for Recycled Reading was at the end of its term and that the store owner is requesting another five year loan term. He noted that she has always been current on payments and that this will be the final term, as the loan will be fully paid at the end of the five years. He suggested using the template that has been used in the past to document the loan, and explained that the payments will increase by approximately \$35-40 per month due to increased interest rates. In a written summary handed out at the meeting, Fred suggested if the interest rate on the 10-year Treasury is used, plus a minimum of an

additional 1% as our guide for a loan rate, a 5-year loan at 4.75% on \$13,798.46 would mean monthly payments of \$257.80. Assets of the business plus a personal guarantee would be part of the loan agreement. He noted that, because the RLF Committee is advisory to the Selectboard, the Board is able to work directly with the borrower rather than through the committee, as has happened in the past.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to renew the RLF loan to Recycled Reading as outlined by Fred Baser. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

2. Continued consideration for approving one or more ARPA funding allocation proposals.

Ian recommended that four requests for funding be approved, and provided further information about each that he had gathered. The four projects are:

- Bristol Rescue Squad - \$130K for a new ambulance and \$35K for training equipment. This is the same amount as originally requested. The Squad has looked into other financial assistance options.
- Libanus Lodge #47 – Masons - \$52K for an elevator for the Lodge building, to enable senior programming expansion. Details of this project were provided. It was noted that the organization has exhausted other funding avenues.
- Willowell Foundation - \$200K for construction of a schoolhouse for pre-school children and affordable housing for AmeriCorps employees. Tasha Ball was present and provided details regarding programming, the number of students involved, and the proposal for construction of new buildings. She noted that the total projected cost is \$1.48 million, and that some grant funding has been awarded and other grant applications are pending.
- Turning Point Center - \$55,565 for providing on-call services, family programming, staff training, and expanded hours. Danielle Wallace provided further information, explaining that the intent is to use these funds to initiate programming, the success of which will allow for future funding from other sources.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to support all four organizations discussed at the levels requested. The motion was seconded by Michelle.

Discussion included Valerie's reporting that a late request had been received from the Open Door Clinic for \$2,500 to retrofit their travelling exam van. Ian indicated his support for this project, noting that it fits the criteria outlined for awarding ARPA funds.

AMENDMENT: Ian amended his motion to include supporting Open Door at the amount requested, in addition to the other four organizations. The amendment was seconded by Michelle.

The motion passed 4-1, with Joel abstaining. Joel explained he abstained because he arrived at the meeting toward the end of the presentation/discussion.

Valerie adjusted the Resolution for this round of ARPA awards to reflect all five organizations and the fund amounts approved. A cleaned-up copy will be made available for Selectboard members to sign.

3. Vermont Community Foundation DEI grant report and recommended next steps: Porter Knight.

Porter provided highlights of the grant report which has been completed, outlined the next steps coming out of the work that has been completed, and noted that the Town has been invited to apply for additional funding to continue this DEI work.

She noted that the training, which was funded by the grant, provided sessions on multiple topics. While most topics had over a dozen participants, the intent is to compile a survey to determine what might increase future attendance. The program has resulted in providing suggestions for future communication from the Town that will promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. A 'Driving Equity' tool was developed, to be used by staff and board members when initiating research or implementing a program. Next steps include the development of a document outlining the options brought forward during the training sessions. Several of these suggestions require further funding, some of which the additional grant award may cover.

Valerie cautioned regarding the potential need for staff support that further work by a committee may involve. Ian and Porter indicated that a committee formed to address the additional items should not need much administrative support.

4. Consider grant application authorization request to apply for \$10,000 grant through the Vermont Community Foundation for DEI next steps.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to authorize the grant application for the Vermont Community Foundation DEI Program. The motion was seconded by Michelle. All voted in favor.

Porter reminded the group that a committee will need to be in place to move ahead if the grant is awarded, and offered to help recruit volunteers.

5. Review of annual landfill inspection report: Steve Palmer, P.E., VTM Engineering, PLC.

Steve presented some photos of the landfill site, noting the significant improvement of drainage ditches and vegetative cover that was implemented in the past year.

Valerie noted that an annual Stormwater Inspection Report also needs to be prepared and submitted related to the solar project on the landfill cap and that Steve has agreed to provide this in conjunction with the annual landfill inspection. Some questions arose regarding who is financially responsible for such reporting. Valerie will look into whether the solar array team or the Town should bear the cost according to the lease agreement.

6. Review of annual wastewater system inspection report: Steve Palmer, P.E., VTM Engineering, PLC.

Steve explained that Jill and Cyrus have completed some clean up around the edge of the field where trees were encroaching. He also described the problems the system is encountering due to an overload of grease and other organic matter, creating a situation where there is no capacity available, although the gallons being received are well below what the system is designed for. Steve and Jill spoke of addressing the problem through pretreatment systems and potentially via related local ordinance and

state legislation solutions. It was noted that this would likely be discussed at the June 12 annual Sewer and Water meeting/hearing, and that the topic will likely be a future agenda item for the Board.

Jill explained the need to do sampling to obtain data in order to determine more specifically where the problem lies. She noted that this can be an expensive undertaking, but she is attempting to have some sampling done by the State.

8. Consider approval of proposed DWSRF Step II scope of services and contract for the Bristol West Water Line Replacement Final Design Services: Steve Palmer, P.E., VTM Engineering, PLC.

Steve explained that the next step is to submit a funding proposal to DEC's DWSRF program, noting he was confident that the project will be funded. The program provides a loan program where 50 to 60% of the amount awarded is forgivable. He had provided a report which is available on the Town's website. Much of the information needed for the loan application is contained in the report. Steve indicated there are many unknown factors, such as how much work will be needed at each connection, and so some of the information is based upon conservative assumptions. He also explained that the necessary archeological and environmental assessment will be completed for both the west and east side work during this phase.

MOTION: Joel made a motion to authorize Steve and Valerie to put together the materials and submit an application to the DWSRF program. The motion was seconded by Michelle. All voted in favor.

7. Preparations for the June 12 annual Water Dept. and Sewer Dept. annual budget meetings: review and discussion of preliminary Water Dept. and Sewer Dept. budgets.

Jill reviewed some of the budget information, which she noted is all available on the Town's website. She noted that the increased electricity costs were due to leaks that weren't able to be detected until Spring, and explained some of the upcoming needs and related impacts on the FY2024 budget. During the discussion, some adjustments were made to individual budget lines.

There was some discussion regarding new users, and it was decided to include connection fees as contributions to reserve funds rather than as revenue, as the fees will help offset capital expenses to accommodate new users rather than cover operating expenses.

It was agreed that the Capital Improvements and Capital Equipment fund lines may be combined on Jill's spreadsheet.

Billing protocol for new connections and repairs was discussed, with input from Anthony and Jill. She explained that the current process, where VTUMS bills the Town for the work involved and the Town then bills the customer, has been in place for a while. She confirmed that the customer can be billed directly by VTUMS if it is decided to make that change.

Jill noted that no rate increases are reflected in the budget she presented, but that some percentage could be added due to the anticipated increase that will be necessary once the proposed work on the system is completed.

The Sewer Department budget was then reviewed Jill explained that some clarification is needed regarding the number of months that have been billed. She noted that revenues may be approximately \$10K less than projected, and that there are extra expenses being incurred due to the organics loading and minimal water being sent through the system. Overall rates need to increase by 26.5% to cover these costs; Jill explained that it would be best to consider how to allocate a portion of the additional burden directly to the high-strength users who are creating the need for additional clean-out, etc. She suggested a \$375/quarter charge for users with grease traps. There was some concern that a flat fee for all such users may not be equitable. Jill explained that without data it is not possible to differentiate. Valerie noted that Bend, Oregon has a high-strength waste program that could be a good model to look into. The Board agreed that a meeting with the high-strength users to discuss potential solutions would be beneficial.

9. Consider approval of a proposal to replace the Howden Hall sign.

Ian presented several sign design options for replacement of the Howden Hall sign. There was a general preference for a curved top border with the building's established date included. Ian will provide a mock-up of such a design at the next meeting for approval.

10. Consider appointment or reappointment of Town officers: appointment of Josh Crandall to DRB Alternate position.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to appoint Josh Crandall to a DRB Alternate position. The motion was seconded by Peeker. All voted in favor.

10A. Consider grant authorization request from the Recreation Department.

Valerie explained this grant requires no matching funds and the award will be used to increase programming for seniors.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to approve the grant authorization request from the Recreation Department. The motion was seconded by Michelle. All voted in favor.

10B. Lister request for extension.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to authorize the Listers' request for an extension of time to complete filing and to authorize Darla to sign the related document. The motion was seconded by Joel. All voted in favor.

11. Review and approval of the May 8, 2023 meeting minutes.

Approval of the minutes was postponed.

12. Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor or tobacco licenses.

The warrant was for the amount of \$64,636.83

MOTION: Ian made a motion to approve the following license applications. The motion was seconded by Peeker. All voted in favor.

- Wild Hart Distillery – Special Event Permit request for June 12, 19, and 26, 2023
- Wild Hart Distillery – Pocock Festival
- Groennfell Meadery LLC – Pocock Festival
- Drink Pink (Bobcat) – Pocock Festival

13. Selectboard Roundtable

Darla offered congratulations to the Recreation Department for a successful Human Powered Parade.

14. Town Administrator's Report.

Valerie had no items to add to her written report.

VIII. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

IX. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator