

**Town of Bristol, VT  
Selectboard  
Minutes of Meeting  
Monday, August 28, 2023**

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

**Staff Present:** Valerie Capels (Town Administrator), Eric Cota (Public Works Foreman), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief), Meridith McFarland (Rec Director), Bruce Nason (Police Chief)

**Others Present:** Tabatha Coe, Randy Durand, Cyrus Marsano (VTUMS), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Andrew Mi....?, Michael Perpall, Jim Quaglino, Halee Ross, Jamie Simpson

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

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

Designating a delegate to VLCT's annual town fair was added under Other Business.

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

**II. Public Forum.**

Nobody present requested time to address the Board.

**III. Department Head Roundtable.**

Brett LaRose (Fire Department):

- Black mold remediation at fire station kitchen has been completed; further information is being put together to have an insurance claim processed.
- Thank you to Joel Bouvier and Kevin LaRose for their time spent putting the kitchen back together.
- The new pumper is in service and will be returning to NH for some punch list items.

Meridith McFarland (Rec Department):

- Camps have finished; the Department is gearing up for fall programming.
- The Harvest Fest is coming up, along with school programming.

Jill Marsano (VTUMS):

- Pine Street project is underway, digging commences tomorrow.
- Asked for feedback regarding the Pine Street work; nobody had anything to report.

Eric Cota (Public Works):

- Upper Notch repair is nearly complete; Lower Notch partially done.
- Briggs and Lincoln still need to be addressed.
- The new loader has arrived.
- Boom mowing is completed.
- Crosswalk lines are mostly complete.
- Toured Lincoln and Briggs Hill Roads with FEMA representatives; invoices are to be turned in for all damages in town.

Bruce Nason (Police Department):

- School starts this week, so there will be an increase in pedestrian and vehicle traffic; the 30 MPH speed limit will be strictly enforced.

#### **IV. Public Hearing – Dog Ordinance violations: Halee Ross**

Michelle ensured that all those providing testimony were sworn in.

Bruce outlined the sequence of events, beginning with a voice message left by Katie Clark regarding her dog being attacked by a neighbor's German Shepherd on August 1, 2023 while tied up in her yard. The attack resulted in puncture wounds to her dog. Tabatha Coe arrived and removed the German Shepherd from the scene. The complaint process was outlined for Katie, and the paperwork was completed on August 9. Records checking indicated that the German Shepherd was not registered at the time of the attack, but that the dog received a rabies vaccine on August 1 and was registered on August 7. The report indicated that the same dog was loose at other times, and seen at the Clark property. Bruce noted that there had also been reports of the same dog running loose on the recreation fields, but no official complaints had been filed other than the one from August 1.

Halee Ross agreed that the dog was loose, with a leash on, at the time of the attack. She did not recall the dog being loose at other times that were noted in the report that was filed. Halee expressed willingness to pay related veterinarian bills, but explained that it might take some time to cover the full amount. Tabatha Coe confirmed that she had removed the dog from the scene.

Selectboard members explained that in such situations, they take the approach of warning that the offending dog may be seized if found to be running at large again at any point. In this case, they also determined that Halee must pay the vet bill resulting from the injuries sustained, but that she will not be required to pay for the injured dog's rabies shot, as that expense was not due to the attack. Valerie noted that the Dog Ordinance also provides for fines for additional violations.

The Selectboard ordered that the dog be on a leash or lead at all times when it is outside, that fines may be issued or the dog may be seized if there is another incident, and that the vet bill minus the rabies shot in the amount of \$175.12 be reimbursed to Ms. Clark.

Valerie will send written communication to Halee Ross and Katie Clark outlining this decision.

#### **V. Regular Business**

##### **1. Bristol Rescue Squad (BRS) update on use of ARPA funds allocation: Chief Elwell and Mark Boltz-Robinson.**

Will Elwell, BRS Chief, and Mark Boltz-Robinson, BRS Treasurer, gave a slide presentation, which they also submitted as part of the public record. Images of the new ambulance purchased with ARPA funds were provided, and some of the details of the vehicle and equipment were outlined. They explained that the use of ARPA funds for this purchase provided an opportunity for Rescue Squad funds to be used for other needs and thanked the Board for their assistance in providing better emergency services. They noted that some conversations are still taking place with other towns regarding contributions toward defraying this cost.

**2. Police Station relocation to Firehouse Drive feasibility update and next steps: Cushman Design.**

Michael Perpall (Cushman Design) and Jamie Simpson (Landmark Engineering Design) were present via Zoom and provided an update on this project. Construction costs, design fees, and permitting fees were available for both the one-story and two-story options which had been presented to the Board in March 2023. The one-story standalone fee totals are estimated to be \$2,660,352 and the two-story estimates total \$3,402,507. There was discussion of the inside configuration of each option, and it was acknowledged that this type of detail will be addressed once an option is selected. Michael confirmed that the one-story option should provide space for 9 people, and the two-story would allow for 12 people. Bruce explained that space is often needed by outside agencies for various reasons, and a new building will provide that space without the logistical problems that currently arise.

It was noted that parking spaces will be added at the site and that stormwater treatment will stay in the same location. It has not yet been determined whether the stormwater infrastructure will need to be expanded; Jamie indicated that the full situation will need to be evaluated.

The discussion then focused on whether voters will approve an expansion of Police Department coverage to town-wide, and what impact that vote will have on the size of building needed. It was also noted that deciding to construct a new building is not fully dependent on the town-wide decision, as there are rent expenses and other factors to consider in the current location. There was agreement that if the Selectboard supports expanding the Police District townwide, that it should be presented as such and not from a neutral position. Ian, as liaison for the Police Department, offered to work with Bruce and compile data that will be useful in both discussions. Valerie noted that there is also the past analysis completed by Joel that can be used and updated. Bruce explained that there is more to the information needed than numbers, that numbers alone do not give the full picture, but that he understands what is needed for presentation to the public.

Valerie suggested that a vote on the expansion of the Department's coverage take place in March, that the focus between now and then be on getting the information together, and that the building decision be made following that vote.

**3. Street tree planting project update and discussion of source of match funds: Tree Committee members Josh Behounek and John Sweptson.**

A written update was available for the Board, which Valerie summarized. A survey indicated that 22 people were interested in hosting a street tree at their property, of which 17 sites have been determined to be suitable by the Tree Committee. Three bids were received for the cost of the trees.

Josh Behounek explained that he and John Sweptson were working to determine other potential sites for plantings, as the original grant was for 30 trees. He indicated that this project is a beneficial first step for ensuring a treed streetscape as ash trees continue to succumb to the Emerald Ash Borer and confirmed that sight lines and other considerations such as storm drains will be part of the final planting location decisions. Josh acknowledged that a smaller number of trees may be suitable for this phase of the project, as additional tree planting grant opportunities are expected to open up later this year.

Josh outlined that the low bid is for smaller diameter trees, but that the smaller size tends to establish better. He also noted that the low bidder is able to provide a one-year replacement guarantee for each tree, but indicated that the cost to replace a tree is about \$100, the same as the guarantee would cost for each tree.

There was discussion of potential sources of funds for the required match amount and expenses beyond the \$5,000 grant. It was agreed that the A Johnson Fund would be the most suitable for this purpose.

**MOTION:** Michelle made a motion to purchase 22 trees at this point, accept the bid from Boro Hill Nursery, and use money from the A. Johnson fund toward the purchase. The motion was seconded by Peeker. All voted in favor.

**4. Consider authorizing the Town Administrator to submit a letter of request to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for assistance through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) for the Briggs Hill Road repair.**

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to submit a letter of request to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for assistance through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) for the Briggs Hill Road repair. The motion was seconded by Peeker. All voted in favor.

Valerie explained that this work is similar to what was necessary for the West Street slope failure. There is a 25% match required. If awarded, we would need to wait until the grant agreement is in place in order to have the related engineering work covered.

**5. Consider authorization request from the Recreation Department to apply to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation for a grant for Holley Hall brick and window repair.**

Valerie explained this would be for repair of the front entry brick work and broken stained glass windows. She noted Meridith is gathering quotes to submit with the grant application. There was some discussion of the timing of future applications to the program, and consideration of library needs that may be applied for in an upcoming grant round.

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to authorize the Recreation Department to apply to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation for a grant for Holley Hall brick and window repair. The motion was seconded by Peeker. All voted in favor.

**6. Continued consideration of a plan to replace the Howden Hall sign: Ian Albinson.**

Ian reviewed the discussion held at earlier meetings regarding the sign, and presented his revised design based upon decisions made the last time he presented the sign layout. He confirmed that the Design Review Commission does not need to approve the new sign. There was some discussion regarding keeping the building image as the sign's background, as discussed with Ted Lylis at the previous meeting. Ian explained that the design he is proposing is more traditional, as it would not have been possible to include an image similar to the one proposed on a sign that was created at the same time the building

was constructed. Valerie indicated that she had received feedback regarding keeping the font the same throughout the sign, and having the bottom text bordered similar to the previous design rather than on a dark background.

The logistics of including restoration of the support posts and painting completed were reviewed. Ian will bring an updated design to the Board on September 11 for final review.

**7. Check-in on the Selectboard's calendar and goals (tentative).**

This item was postponed.

**8. Review and approval of the August 14, 2023 meeting minutes.**

This item was postponed.

**9. Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor or tobacco licenses.**

The warrant was for the amount of \$122,356.65.

No approval of license applications was necessary.

**10. Selectboard Roundtable.**

Peeker asked about activity taking place in the ROW on Lover's Lane. Eric explained that the resident is doing some drainage work and an appropriate permit is in place with Eric's conditions outlined.

Joel asked about sidewalk repair and replacement, questioning how to catch up if some work isn't done every year. Valerie explained that an updated inventory has been completed, and she will be using this information to develop a replacement plan and schedule. She is hoping to involve the Bike Ped Committee in this planning.

Joel noted that the residents on Mountain Street should receive a response to the concerns they raised. Valerie said she has responded to let them know the limited role of the Selectboard in zoning matters. Darla will send a separate communication on behalf of the Board.

Michelle asked about the revisions to the revolving loan fund documentation. Valerie said the updated draft is complete, but she has not sent them to the Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC) for review, That next steps ill be taken shortly.

Ian thanked the people of Bristol CORE and the Police Department for hosting and assisting with a successful Pocock event. Darla echoed this appreciation.

**11. Town Administrator's Report.**

Valerie had nothing to add to the written report she had provided.

**VII. Other Business.**

**1. Correspondence/reports received** were reviewed.

Valerie outlined what had been posted online.

**2. Department Head Roundtable.**

Joel suggested that the department head roundtable might be reorganized so that it becomes a smaller time segment of Board meetings. Others noted that the time has been minimized significantly in recent meetings.

**3. VLCT Town Fair delegate.**

Valerie said she is not sure yet if she is going to attend, but if she does, she should be designated as a delegate.

**MOTION:** Peeker made a motion to designate Valerie as a Bristol delegate to the VLCT Town Fair. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

**4. Public Input – Flood Hazard Area concerns**

Randy Durand raised questions regarding the construction of a cabin in what he believes to be the Flood Hazard Area, noting that there appears to be conflicting information between FEMA maps and the application materials submitted. He suggested having the surveyor determine where the cabin is in the flood hazard area. He believes the cabin and related structures are in the Flood Hazard Area and require Development Review Board approval.

**VIII. Executive Session**

**MOTION:** Michelle made a motion to enter executive session in order to discuss *potential* contract negotiations per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A) and personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3). Peeker seconded. Eric Cota was invited to participate. The motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard met in executive session from 9:43 pm to 10:40 pm. Upon returning to open session, Peeker made a motion to authorize Eric to make an offer to the Public Works employee candidate per the terms discussed. Joel seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**X. Adjourn.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Valerie Capels  
Town Administrator