

Bristol Town Administrator's Report
March 24, 2024

The Town Administrator's Report is intended to assist the Selectboard, and in its other capacities as Water Commission, Sewer Commission, Liquor Control Commission, etc., with the conduct of their regular or special meetings. References made to documents online relate to documents available electronically at bristolvt.org/meeting-minutes in the **Selectboard** section. Live links are provided throughout this report to those documents when possible, as well as to outside sources. This report is also intended to provide information to Town officials and the public about other Selectboard activities and Town affairs. Except as provided under Vermont's public records laws, all documents are available upon request.

REMOTE MEETING: This meeting will be conducted through the **Zoom** remote meeting on-line platform. See the connection information below. If you intend to join the Zoom meeting and have never used Zoom before, we recommend you begin the log-in process well in advance of the meeting to allow time for downloads and connections to occur.

CALL-IN: People without a computer or other device can call in from the number below and enter the meeting ID from the phone keypad.

TO JOIN THE ZOOM MEETING:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87912810018?pwd=WFdGNUtJYWx1eHMrenpqTkZmUUNGZz09>

Meeting ID: 879 1281 0018

Passcode: 619003

Join meeting by phone: 1 (646) 558-8656

Monday, March 25, 2024 Meeting Agenda and Materials

I. Call to Order: 7:00 P.M.

Item III.1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A). Among the amendments to the open meeting law that took effect July 1, 2014 is a requirement that "an item may only be added or removed from a meeting agenda as the first order of business at the meeting. Other adjustments to an agenda may be made at any time during the meeting."

II. PUBLIC FORUM.

This is an opportunity for citizens to briefly share comments and concerns with the Board about matters ***not already on the agenda***. Public Forum should not be used for lengthy discussion of a new topic, both for time management of the meeting and to allow for the public to receive notice of the matter on a future agenda.

III. DEPARTMENT HEAD ROUNDTABLE.

This is an opportunity for department heads to briefly share information that may be of interest to the Selectboard and the public about one or more topics that are not part of the agenda.

IV. REGULAR BUSINESS.

Item IV.1. Bristol Fire Department: Fire Chief Brett LaRose and Firefighter candidate Eric McDonnell.

Fire Chief Brett LaRose will be present to introduce new Firefighter candidate Eric McConnell. Eric will be Zooming in from out of town.

RECOMMENDATION: Appointment. Add his entry to the historic Fire Department roster when the opportunity allows.

Item IV.2. Water Commission: Consider water connection request by Adam and Amber Thomas

for new water line for proposed 6-unit Planned Unit Development. Online is an [updated plan for a four lot, six-unit residential subdivision](#) proposed by Adam and Amber Thomas, with two single family dwellings off of Pine Street and North Meadow Drive and two duplexes off a North Street driveway extension. When they and design engineer Jason Barnard met with the Selectboard/Water Commission in February, the Selectboard affirmed that connecting the water line from North Street and Pine Street to form a looped system would not be required. Concerns were also expressed then about curb stops being located in private rights-of-way.

The proposed plan now includes meter pits in the Pine Street and North Street rights-of-way. This proposal is in the early stages of state and local review and still needs approval from the Development Review Board as well as water and wastewater permits. I do not know if Act 250 is needed. New or updated driveway permits may also be required for either the Pine Street or North Street accesses.

Also online is a [draft letter of approval](#) reflecting details and conditions proposed by the Water Operator and Town Engineer.

RECOMMENDATION: Determine if more information is needed. If approved, add a condition that final approved plan be provided.

Item IV.3. Mulligan Dog Ordinance violation hearing order check-in.

This item is on the agenda as a follow-up to the Selectboard's March 11 hearing about Mr. Mulligan's barking dogs. [Attached is the letter](#) conveying the Selectboard's order, which included checking in at two weeks to see if there is any improvement. If there are no issues to report, then this will be a short agenda item.

RECOMMENDATION: Receive update. Continue to monitor the situation.

Item IV.4. Consider request to allocate ARPA funds to support the Bristol Farmers Market.

This item follows up on the February 26 discussion about ARPA funding for the fledgling Bristol Farmers Market. In May 2023, the Selectboard allocated \$1,000 in ARPA funds to support Bristol CORE's efforts to revive a Bristol Farmers Market. There has been discussion about allocating \$10,000 per year for three years to help establish the

Market, but no decisions have been made. A balance of approximately \$282,000 is available (does not include accrued interest).

Bristol CORE recently hired Sarah Stillman as the new Farmers Market Manager. She is currently in her third year serving as the Shelburne Farmers Market Manager and was [a vendor](#) last year at Bristol's Farmers Market. She and Taylor Welch-Plante will present to discuss plans for the Market going forward and efforts to support area food producers.

RECOMMENDATION: Determine if more information is needed. Consider allocating \$10,000 per year for three years to support the Farmers Market. If approved, a balance of approximately \$252,000 would remain.

Item IV.5. Continued appointment and/or reappointment of Town officers or representatives. [Online is an updated table listing Town officer positions](#) whose terms are up this year. The green shaded cells indicate the following who have expressed interest in being reappointed:

DRB: Kevin Brown, Brenda Tillberg, and Josh Crandall (Alternate).

Bike Ped Committee: Tanya Bashaw, Kevin Masse.

Energy Committee: Sally Burrell.

Equipment Committee: Peter Bouvier.

[Maple Broadband](#): the one-year terms are from May 1 to April 30 each year. Ben Skolozdra and Mark Gibson have expressed interest in being appointed.

I have not yet unraveled the anomalies in the Revolving Loan Fund Committee appointment information, which seems to have lost some of its term staggering. I may or may not have an update on that in time for Monday's meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: Reappoint those who expressed interest; advertise the remaining positions. Appoint Ben and Mark to the Maple Broadband Board to fill out the rest of this year (basically, the month of April), and for the 2024-2025 term.

Item IV.6. April 8, 2024 eclipse planning update. By now, almost everyone is aware that Bristol is [on the "path of totality"](#) for this rare eclipse event on April 8, 2024. The last one in Vermont was in 1932 and the next will be in 2106.

According to various sources of information, a partial solar eclipse will begin at 2:14pm on April 8, 2024. A total eclipse will darken Vermont's daytime sky at 3:26pm, lasting about 3 minutes. The phenomenon will continue as a partial eclipse until 4:37pm. The path of totality is 40 miles wide, 20 miles of which are in northern Vermont.

Emergency Mangers statewide have been meeting regularly to prepare for an unprecedented influx of visitors to the area. Addison County EMDs and other emergency responders [met last week](#) to coordinate and share information. In a nutshell:

- The event is expected to bring at least 250,000 visitors to Vermont (population increase of 40%) that weekend.
- Heavy traffic is expected, especially immediately after the eclipse as people head back home Monday around the same time.
- Traffic is expected to include day trippers and last-minute travelers who may not be familiar with the area.
- There may be traffic incidents and parking messes.
- Many public schools plan to close in the afternoon or all day, which could be problematic for some parents.
- There is expected to be a large Influx of out-of-town/state visitors with little knowledge of spring road conditions. Some dirt roads could be muddy messes that can trap a car and block traffic.
- There is a potential for increased trail/cliff hikers and injuries.
- Emergency responders may be stretched thin.
- Trails and summits will likely be covered in some combination of ice, snow, and mud.

There is a lot of anecdotal information that lodging and hospitality establishments all around the area are fully booked out for that weekend and Monday. Carol Wells confirmed that Bristol Suites has been entirely booked for that weekend and Monday since last summer and there is a waiting list in the event of cancelations. Jason Kirmse and Kate Baron confirmed that The Tillerman is also fully booked for that entire weekend and Monday. They are normally closed on Sundays and Mondays, but are exploring being open for some type of food service.

There have been postings on Facebook and other social media platforms either inquiring about any events planned in or around Bristol for the event or suggesting that some be planned.

- The Recreation Department is not planning to arrange any particular eclipse events. Nore is Bristol CORE.
- Lawrence Memorial Library is hosting an [event on April 6](#) featuring total eclipse activities and free solar eclipse glasses and will have eclipse programming on April 8 from 10:00am to 1:00pm.
- Bristol Scout Troop 543 is planning an [eclipse viewing event at the Bristol Recreation Field](#).

A lot of information is posted online. For example, www.vermont.gov/eclipse is the state resource for eclipse information that includes an events calendar, viewing etiquette, and links to traffic and other information. Also:

- [Bristol, Vermont eclipse page](#)
- [Vermont Vacation](#)
- [VLCT Municipal Resource Page](#)

Main points for visitors and locals:

- Do not look directly at the sun. Wear specifically designed solar eclipse glasses to protect your eyes.
- Plan for what could be historic traffic. Locals should watch the eclipse from home if they can.
- Visitors are encouraged to stay in Vermont extra days or just be patient driving home.
- Motorists should have a full tank of gas in the event they are stuck in traffic for what could be hours. They should also have snacks and water with them for the same reason.
- Those venturing out to watch the eclipse should bring sufficient layers of clothing. It could be cold, raining, both, or neither the day of the eclipse.

I am in the process of coordinating a meeting of Bristol emergency responders and others to help ensure Bristol is prepared. If it comes together for Monday afternoon, I may have more information to share. Otherwise, it may be later in the week.

Free solar eclipse glasses are available at the Town Office and Lawrence Memorial Library on a first come first served basis. There may also be some available at the Bristol Police Station and Fire Station.

RECOMMENDATION: Determine if more information is needed. Share information about events or other concerns. No action is necessary.

Item IV.7. Consider approval of MAUSD application to install a banner over West Street over Memorial Day weekend to honor graduating students. [Online is an application](#) from the Mount Abe Union School District to install a banner across West Street to honor graduating students. As in past years, the application requests approval for annual installation over Memorial Day weekends and weekdays. It is proposed to be removed no later than June 24.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval for this year as rules and regulations could change from year to year.

Item IV.8. Grant application authorization request: Addison County Regional Planning Commission Small Grants Program. This agenda item could be premature. We received [notice of this ACRPC funding opportunity](#), but do not have a specific proposal in mind just yet. Up to \$10,000 is available on a first come first served basis and must be spent by the end of the year. Eligible activities include:

- engage with consultants, engineers, architects, grant writers or other professionals to help plan for municipal infrastructure, recreation, transportation, governance or other planning improvements; and/or
- provide local municipal volunteers with instate training opportunities to help them fulfill their responsibilities as members of Selectboards, Planning Commissions, Development Review Boards, etc.

That the funds must be obligated by June 30, 2024 and spent within six months limits many options.

RECOMMENDATION: Determine if more information is needed.

Item IV.9. Approve the VTrans Annual Financial Plan for FY2024. [Annual Highway Dept. financial plans](#) are required by state statute and are also a VTrans grant application requirement. They are intended to be a planning tool and are not binding. They also provide evidence that the Town is spending at least \$300 per mile of taxpayer dollars on Class 1, 2, and 3 roads. Based on the FY2025 approved DPW budget and 36.5 miles of Class 1, 2, and 3 roads, more than \$21,000 in taxpayer dollars have been approved to be spent per mile for Bristol's highways.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval. The form requires Selectboard signatures.

Item IV.10. Approve the VTrans Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory. [Online is the annual certification](#) to attest that the Town of Bristol is in compliance with the Codes and Standards that were adopted on July 22, 2019. This is required for eligibility for various VTrans grant programs.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval. The form requires Selectboard signatures.

Item IV.11 Review and approval of the January 29, February 1, February 12, February 26, March 4, and March 11, 2024 meeting minutes. The reviewed draft [January 29](#) and [February 1](#) minutes are posted online. Review of the February 12, February 26, March 4, and March 11, 2024 is in progress. They will be posted to the Web site and e-mailed when completed. Meanwhile, the original drafts are posted online.

RECOMMENDATION: Adjustments as needed. Approval.

Item V.8. Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor or tobacco licenses. The accounts payable [warrant is in online](#). The amount is currently \$64,742.30, which could change by Monday's meeting.

V. OTHER BUSINESS.

Item V.1. Correspondence, documents, reports received.

- [Bristol Budget Status Report thu 2024-02-29.pdf](#).

- [Memo Selectboard Above and Beyond nomination 2024-03-12.pdf](#).
- [Fireworks Display Permit application 4th-of-July Committee 2024.pdf](#).
- [E-mail BRD Friday Newsletter 2024-03-22.pdf](#).

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Efforts to update [Bristol's Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) got underway last week with a kick-off meeting led by consultant Stephanie Magnan of [SEAM Solutions](#). The committee includes representatives appointed by the Selectboard from the Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Public Works, Fire, Selectboard, and a citizen representative. We have a lot of new experiences to reflect on since it was adopted in 2018: floods, slope failures, road washouts, wind storms, downed trees, extended power outages, and more.

Basin Street Improvement Project

The project team met with several Basin Street property owners last week to review the engineers' preliminary alternatives to address the myriad of Basin Street/Main Street issues. It was a good discussion. The meeting was recorded for those who could not attend. The engineers will consider the neighbors' feedback and will be presenting the alternatives at the April 8 Selectboard meeting.

FEMA Progress

Eric, Freeda, and I continue to work with FEMA representatives on the July 2024 flood damages. One hundred percent of the Briggs Hill Road emergency repair will be reimbursed by FEMA. The engineering team is still working through the plans for long-term repair and mitigation.

The Masterson team returned to Eagle Park to complete their part of the project. We are still waiting for a final plan from SLR and Dock Doctors for the platform railings.

TA Schedule

I generally plan to get in the office around 9:00am most days. I plan to still work remotely one day a week, most often on Tuesdays. On the remote days I can be reached by phone and by email at townadmin@bristolvt.org. Messages left to (802) 453-2410 ext. 1 are forwarded to me by e-mail. I will respond either by phone or by e-mail.

Week of March 25

Monday: In the office.
10:00am – FEMA check-in
TBD -- Eclipse event preps: Bristol emergency responders.
7:00pm – Selectboard meeting (probably Zooming in).

Tuesday: **Working from home.**

Wednesday: In the office.

Thursday: In the office.

Friday: In the office.

Week of April 1

Monday: In the office.
Tuesday: Working from home.
Wednesday: In the office.
Thursday: 9:00am – Bristol CORE
10:00am – Eclipse Planning Check-in
Friday: In the office.

Upcoming Meetings

- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Mar. 25, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee](#): Thurs., Mar. 28, 7:00pm, via Zoom.
- [Bristol CORE](#): Thurs., Apr. 4, 9:00am, via Zoom.
- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Apr. 8, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Development Review Board](#): Tues., Apr. 9, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom (if needed).
- [Conservation Commission](#): Thurs., Apr. 11, 6:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Planning Commission](#): Tues., Apr. 16, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bristol Energy Committee](#): Weds., Apr. 17, 7:00pm, via Zoom.
- [Bristol CORE](#): Thurs., Apr. 18, 9:00am, via Zoom.
- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Apr. 22, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee](#): Thurs., Apr. 25, 7:00pm, via Zoom.

Upcoming Agenda Items

- Basin Street improvement project update.
- Approve updated Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP).
- Execution of DWSRF Pine Street and Bristol West loan documents.
- Continued Selectboard decisions for use of ARPA funds.
- Continued review and update of the Revolving Loan Fund documents.
- Consider the creation of a Bristol Equity Committee.
- Continued consideration of an updated rate structure to address the Core Area Sewer's capital improvement needs and high strength waste management.
- Web site improvement options.
- Continued consideration of Police District expansion.
- Continued consideration of Police Station alternatives.
- Continued consideration of the Public Works facility alternatives.
- Presentation of the FY2022 audit report by RHR Smith.
- Continued Personnel Policy review and updates.
- Continued consideration of new village vehicular speed limits.
- Class 4 highways and private roads maintenance policy.
- Other stuff.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator