

Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard/Water and Sewer Commission
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, June 3, 2024

Members Present: Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier (Chair), Peeker Heffernan, Michelle Perlee (Vice-Chair)
Members Absent: Jessica Teets
Staff Present: Valerie Capels (Town Administrator)
Others Present: Bruce Beekin, Dale Dingler, Cyrus Marsano (VTUMS), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Matlak Mayforth, Steve Palmer (VTM Engineering), Jim Quaglino

I. Call to Order. Joel Bouvier called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

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

No adjustments were necessary.

II. Regular Business

1. Update on the School Street water line investigation and consideration of next steps.

Jill explained some of the details of water line configuration in the School Street area, indicating that it has been determined that there is 1" or 1.25" galvanized line serving the five properties there. Steve confirmed this is part of the Phase 2 area but is not currently part of the project due to its being understood to be a private line. Board members indicated that the Town should take it over.

Jill and Cyrus explained a new connection needs to be made to Dale Dingler's property to remedy the existing leak. This could be done using the current 1" line, with an important caveat that if problems are encountered, the supply to all five properties would need to be shut off for an undetermined amount of time. Jill and Cyrus suggested putting in a valve to allow shutting off just the Dingler property, as running into problems is very likely given the age of the line.

The overall configuration was discussed, with it being agreed that the best solution for the area would be installation of a loop using 8" pipe. It was noted that doing this separately from the next phase would allow for faster completion. Steve reminded the group that construction funds will be applied for in January as part of the Bristol West phase for which DEC is currently reviewing preliminary plans, which could be amended to include this project. However, that would require addition archeological and environmental review.

Peeker raised the idea of approaching the issue of eliminating the leak and providing a new service line to the Dingler residence using directional boring and fused HDPE line, which would not require digging up the roadway until the replacement of the galvanized line is planned for during a later phase.

Steve noted that preparing plans and quotes will help to determine how much of this work to include in the Bristol West project and spoke of needing legal review to determine exactly what portions of the lines in question are owned by the Town. Cyrus explained that it is unknown exactly what is underground in the alleyway area, and what the related impacts will be, which led to Peeker's suggesting that an approach from the other direction might be possible, eliminating the need to investigate ownership and potentially work through easement needs.

Steve indicated that he can do the engineering work for these options, but not immediately.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to have engineering plans developed and quotes provided for each of the three approaches: directional boring using fused HDPE, conventional digging to replace the School Street extension from Park Place to Church Street with an 8" water main, and to connect to Church through the alleyway. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

2. Preparations for the June 10 annual Water District and Sewer District annual meeting public hearing.

Preliminary budget information

Draft budgets for the Wastewater System and Water District were reviewed, beginning with the Wastewater information. The following points were made:

- It needs to be confirmed whether the receipt of actuals reported on the spreadsheet are for 11 or 12 months;
- The administrative expense lines need to be reviewed to ensure that all increases have been included;
- Past fee increases have been kept low as much as possible;
 - The current iteration shows a 4.4% fee increase;
 - Reducing the amount of BOD the system needs to handle will reduce overall costs;
 - Future needs will need to be addressed.
- Clarification is needed re cash or accrual accounting methods.

The Water District budget was then discussed, and the following topics raised:

- Clarification is needed re cash or accrual accounting methods.
- 75% of the readings have been completed, and the actuals indicate that 72% of the budgeted revenue has been received.
- Connection fees are meant to fund improvements to/maintenance of the system, and so should automatically be applied to Capital Reserve. One such fee that appears as operating budget revenue and should be moved accordingly.
- The water system fee paid to the State is based upon production, not consumption, so is impacted by leakages.
- A significant leak was discovered on South Street last spring; it is planned to shut the roadway and complete the repair work at this point.
- Addressing this and other leaks should serve to lower total electricity costs related to pumping. It was agreed to lower the electricity use line item to \$32,000.
- Only \$2,500 is shown as expended of the \$6,000 budgeted for building overhead and maintenance.
- PFAS testing is still necessary and still expensive. It was agreed to lower the building maintenance line to \$3,000 and raise the compliance testing line to \$5,600.
- Loan payment amounts were reviewed, and the total determined to be \$120,499.

Questions arose regarding the fund balance that should have been available in each of the past several years and where/how that is accounted for.

Valerie and Jill will work on putting together more definitive information in preparation for next Monday's meeting.

Discussion of alternative water rate structure

Valerie and Jill explained the current rate structure is based upon volume alone and there is no base fee as part of the rate charged to users. Valerie provided the example of Waitsfield's billing structure, which spreads the debt and operation/maintenance expenses over the number of ERUs (equivalent residential units) the system serves, providing a base allocation of 10,000 gallons with an additional charge for any use over that amount. Ian explained the in-town/outside-of-town structure used in Middlebury.

Valerie then outlined some work she had begun on determining the number of EUs in Bristol, and there was some discussion regarding the difference in numbers generated by the Town and those used by the State in funding formulas. Jill noted she will be meeting with Matt Caldwell, Sanitary Survey person for the State, and will ask for how those numbers are determined, as additional information for the Board's decision on how to calculate Bristol's EUs.

Review of preliminary Water Use Ordinance revisions to address private water lines and other updates

Valerie explained that the group working on the draft language will refine the document further before presenting it to the Board.

3. Continued review of draft letter to the Governor and follow-up to the DWSRF RF3- 477.3.0 loan offer.

The most recent draft of the letter was reviewed and edited during the meeting, with a request being made for reconsideration of loan forgiveness/elimination of administrative fees (interest). It was agreed that Bristol's State Representatives be copied when the letter is sent.

MOTION: Pecker made a motion to send the letter as finalized during the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

III. Other Business.

IV. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator