

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, August 26, 2024**

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

Staff Present: Valerie Capels (Town Administrator); Eric Cota (Public Works); Brett LaRose (Fire Chief); Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk/Town Treasurer); Kris Perlee (Assistant Town Clerk/Town)

Others Present: Linda Andrews, Kevin Brown, Vicky Coyle, Dale Dingler, Colby Gile, Theresa Gile, Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Bruce Beeken, Matlock Mayforth, Steve Palmer (VTM Engineering), Allison Pouliot, Jim Quaglino, Ben Skolozdra, Roger Sullivan, Carol Wells, Tom Wells

I. Call to Order. Joel Bouvier called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

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

No changes were made to the agenda.

II. Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(F).

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to enter executive session per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(F), inviting Town Attorney Kevin Brown to join. Ian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard met in executive session from 6:02pm to 6:30pm. Upon returning to open session, no action was taken.

III. Call to Order. Joel Bouvier called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

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

There was consensus to add an explanation of the executive session decisions regarding the School Street waterline as the initial topic to be covered.

1A. School Street water line.

Kevin provided an overview of the information gleaned through land records research regarding ownership of the water line on School Street, noting that the Bristol School District specifically reserved the rights to the water line in 1988 when the school property was sold to a private individual and that in 2018 the Bristol School District executed a quit claim deed that gave all those rights to the current Mount Abraham Unified School District (Mount Abe). Because they currently own the line and associated rights, Mount Abe is currently the party responsible for addressing the problems with leaks in that line and associated connections. Kevin agreed to write a letter to notify the school district and the impacted property owners of the current status and outline how to address current problems and move forward with potentially transferring the line to Town ownership.

It was agreed that, in the meantime, a valve will be installed at the intersection of School and Park Streets in order to provide a means to shut of the handful of properties on the School Street line should repair work or other circumstances lead to this necessity. Without the shut off in place, a larger segment of water customers would be impacted by any need to shut off the supply in that area.

Kevin explained that the current leak at the Dinger property cannot be resolved until this broader matter is resolved, as the Town does not own any of the line. He explained that even though Mount Abe is a 'municipality,' the line is currently considered to be a private line.

Jill indicated that the curb stop/valve can be installed during the first week of September, and plans were made for sending out notices regarding potential water shut offs while this work is completed.

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

IV. Public Forum.

Ian thanked Bristol CORE for putting on Pocock Rocks the prior Saturday, noting that the event was very successful and that Courtney did a fantastic job.

V. Department Head Roundtable.

Brett LaRose (Fire Chief): Brett had no updates to report.

Eric Cota (Public Works): Eric reported that Pine Street grinding is complete; paving is anticipated by the end of September. One drainage grate cover needs to be replaced. Transmission work on the International truck is nearly complete. Lincoln Road will close the first week of September for about a month. Alternate route will be Briggs Hill (one-way with traffic lights) and Atkins Road in Lincoln.

Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk): Sharon reported now that the Primary election is over, work on November election has begun. Tax bills, water bills, sewer bills have been sent out. Denise from NEMRC will be in next week for month end closing work.

VI. Regular Business

1. Consider Conservation Commission (CC) candidate: Roger Sullivan.

Roger introduced himself, noting that he had been to a recent CC meeting and was interested in the CC and the various types of projects they take on.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to appoint Roger Sullivan to a 3-year position on the Conservation Commission, ending in March 2027. The motion was seconded by Ian and passed unanimously.

2. Consider appointment of Library Trustee to fill a vacancy: Vicki Coyle.

Vicki introduced herself and spoke of her interest in the Library and the programs offered to the community.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to appoint Vicki Coyle as a Library Trustee. The motion was seconded by Michelle and passed unanimously.

3. Set municipal tax rate.

Sharon and Valerie presented information regarding the tax rate, based upon the budget adopted at Town Meeting. the homestead increase being 2.31%.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to set Bristol's tax rates as follows: Homestead rate of \$2.8037, non-residential rate of \$2.7547, Police District (PD) rate of \$0.3255 – leading to a homestead rate in the PD of \$3.1292 and a non-residential rate in the PD of \$3.0802. The motion was seconded by Peeker and passed unanimously.

4. Water Commission: Consider construction bids for the School Street Extension waterline replacement project, possible award of a contract, source of funding, and other next steps: Steve Palmer. P.E.

Kevin summarized the land records research associated with School Street properties that was presented at the beginning of the meeting. Steve indicated that there is thus no need to discuss the bids received for the proposed work at this point and noted that more competitive bids might be received if the request for quotes is made at a different time of year.

It was confirmed that Jill will be putting in a curb stop at Park/School Streets next month to facilitate limited shutoffs if the work at Dale's house creates a larger issue.

5. Public Hearing (~7:00pm): Bristol Capital Improvement Plan: FY2025-FY2030.

Valerie highlighted what information she had added to the document since the last review, and explained that, although the Plan needs to be included in the Downtown Designation renewal application, it is being developed to serve as a long-term planning document. As such, it will always be a work-in-progress which should be updated on a regular basis. While the FY2025 budget figures do reflect approved or actual expenses, the subsequent 5-year budget plan is for planning purposes only and does not commit the Town.

Valerie pointed out that the document demonstrates that downtown-related infrastructure has been invested in by the Town and that future planning focuses in many ways on adding to and improving that infrastructure. Some of the related financial details in the spreadsheet portions of the document were reviewed.

Valerie pointed out the shortfall outlined in the Capital Roads Fund and reiterated the potential for using remaining ARPA funds to shore up this account. She noted that other capital reserve funds are generally in good shape.

Joel closed the Public Hearing for the Capital Improvement Plan.

6. Consider adoption of the proposed Bristol Capital Improvement Plan, with or without adjustments.

It was agreed that the document may be submitted as part of the Downtown Designation application materials at whatever stage of completion it has reached by that application's deadline, but that further work will continue to round out the details. Ian suggested soliciting feedback from Board members,

Department heads, the Planning Commission, and members of the public with a deadline for comments noted. There was agreement to plan on adopting the CIP at the September 23 meeting.

7. Water Commission: Consider adoption of updated water rate structure and other amendments to Bristol Water Use Ordinance Appendix B – Schedule of Rates and Charges.

Kris explained that the current rate structure is convoluted, making it difficult to provide customers with a predictable bill from quarter to quarter or upon opening a new account. His proposed new structure includes a base rate coupled with a usage rate, which will allow for a more consistent billing amount each period. The rates outlined include an annual base rate for residences of \$180 and \$360 for non-residential properties. Kris explained that most single-family residences will not see a big change in their quarterly bill due to the proposed new structure, but that multi-unit dwellings will likely notice an increase. Kris noted that the proposal for the new structure is still being refined and that he was not requesting approval at this meeting; rather, he is looking for feedback and an indication whether to continue going in this direction.

There was a discussion of the logistics of implementing the new structure once it is finalized and agreed that water customers should be informed that the change will be in effect beginning on January 1, 2025.

Jill explained the Town's eligibility for grant revenues for the upcoming phases of the water line project, noting that – at the State's calculation of 695 ERUs (equivalent residential units) – several million dollars needs to be spent before there is increased eligibility through VT Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC's) programs. There was discussion of raising the base rates accordingly, in order to provide some of the funds which will be needed to upgrade the system and for which grant awards may not be provided. Kris offered to run some scenarios for review at the next Board meeting.

Other aspects of the changes proposed were discussed. It was agreed to keep the base rate in effect even during requested seasonal disconnections. Installation fees and other associated charges were reviewed. Jill explained the logistics of meter installation and that the timing between a connection and meter installation can vary greatly. She explained that the rates proposed are standard rates and eliminate much of the cumbersome administrative work currently experienced. Jill suggested that wording be included to enable charging for excess time when it is required for installation.

It was agreed that there should be charges incurred for non-working meters, particularly when access to the equipment is not provided. These charges will include a fee of 1.5 times the base rate for the property. It was also agreed to include language authorizing the Water Operator to bill directly for bulk water purchases; there will be no charge for bulk water received by Bristol's Public Works Department. On Jill's advice, it was agreed to not charge a fee for any water shutoffs. These and other edits were incorporated into the document during the meeting.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the changes made to the Bristol Water Use Ordinance Appendix B. The motion was seconded by Ian and passed unanimously.

8. Preparation for final Selectboard public hearing regarding modifications to the proposed Bristol Unified Development Ordinance.

In their recent review of the regulations, the Planning Commission (PC) suggested changing the setbacks for accessory structures in the HDR and VR district to match the setbacks designated for primary structures, indicating in their explanation that the use of the provision allowing for Development Review Board (DRB) waiver of dimensional standards will allow for creating an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) in a pre-existing structure that does not meet the new setback standard. Kevin explained that the DRB is not able to consistently hear requests for such waivers, as the level of participation/input from neighbors would vary greatly, and that it would be difficult to discern which requests should be accommodated. He suggested that one solution would be to specify that structures to be used as ADUs must meet the same setbacks as the principal structure.

It was discussed that a large number of existing structures would be rendered non-conforming should the PC's recommendations for increasing accessory structure setbacks be implemented. Discussion also centered on the need for increased density in the Village areas and providing more opportunities for housing, countered by the impacts of creating compact living arrangements where there is little privacy. Following more discussion, it was agreed to not accept the setback changes as proposed by the PC, but to keep the 10' dimensions as included in the UDRs after the Selectboard's previous review.

Valerie will update the master working draft in order for the Selectboard to review the full document and pass along their changes to the Planning Commission for comment.

9. Consider Recreation Department request to apply for a Vermont Humanities Rapid Response Grant of \$1,000 to support the Bristol Theater Group.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to approve the Recreation Department's application for a Vermont Humanities Rapid Response Grant for \$1,000 to support the Bristol Theater Group. The motion was seconded by Jessica and passed unanimously.

10. Authorize use of the Technology Reserve Fund to pay for replacement of the Town Administrator's laptop.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to authorize use of the Technology Reserve Fund to pay for replacement of the Town Administrator's laptop. The motion was seconded by Jessica and passed unanimously.

Ian noted that a spreadsheet showing an inventory of the Town's technology, including the ages of the hardware in use and other information, should be made available to the Board.

1. Review of meeting minutes.

No minutes were available for review.

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

The warrant was for the amount of \$124,235.27. There were no license applications to review.

13. Selectboard roundtable.

Ian noted the following:

- The library steps rebuild draft request for proposals (RFP) is being reviewed.
- Work will begin on creating an RFP for the library building work, mostly exterior work.
- He has reviewed and updated the RFP for the skate park design work.
- He is working with Taylor on Hub technology.
- Work continues on credit card system updates for the Town.

Joel inquired about the bandstand survey and provided photos of a gazebo/stand he noticed in Maine. It was confirmed that the survey had been available online and that the band members are now reviewing the results.

Joel asked Pecker to take a look at the Pine Street catch basin, as he is not sure that the runoff from Taylor Ave will be directed appropriately.

Joel requested that a conversation regarding alternate options for Briggs Hill repairs be part of an upcoming Board agenda. There was agreement that the \$2.5 million project currently proposed is not a viable solution.

Sharon reported that the Town has not yet received the proceeds of the DWSRF loan and that we were notified that all the construction invoices need to be stamped by a State engineer. We will follow up with Steve Palmer about how best to proceed.

14. Town Administrator's report.

Valerie had nothing to add to her written report.

VII. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

VIII. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 10:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator