

**Bristol Town Administrator's Report**  
**October 13, 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](http://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, October 14, 2024 Meeting Agenda and Materials**

**I. CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 P.M.**

Item I.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. EXECUTIVE SESSION** per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(F). The purpose of this agenda item is to meet with a Community Resource Specialist candidate.

**III. CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 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."

**IV. 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.

**V. 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.

**VI. REGULAR BUSINESS.**

Item VI.1 Consider closing the west end of Briggs Hill Road at least for the winter, if not permanently: DPW Foreman Eric Cota. The Bristol Public Works Department installed the solar-powered street lights in early September, in part to support Briggs Hill Road as a detour for when Lincoln Road would be closed for a major riverbank repair project. We were considering the installation anyway because the uphill lane of Briggs Hill Road has continued to deteriorate. FEMA determined this additional cost associated with the slope failure is not eligible for FEMA reimbursement because they do not fund increased "operating" costs. Well, at \$5,000 per month to rent the units, this is definitely an increase in operating costs. With the shade from surrounding trees blocking what's left of the declining sunshine, the units have needed to be recharged using a diesel generator. This is costly and not sustainable.

As discussed at previous meetings, engineers prepared a proposal to repair the two slope failures from the July 2023 storm by installing improved culverts, lowering the profile of the road, installing two retaining walls, and stabilizing the slopes—at an estimated cost of more than \$2 million. This would not include expenses associated with easements or other areas of the slope and roadway that have deteriorated since then. I could go on, but for this agenda item, I think you get the idea.

RECOMMENDATION: Close Briggs Hill Road from the bottom to somewhere near the top at least for the winter, and possibly permanently. Determine where the best place would be near the top to place physical barriers yet allow for a turnaround. Plan on arranging a community discussion about possible long-term alternatives.

Item VI.2 Consider whether to purchase a one-year lease for a weather station on Upper Notch Road to help the Public Works Department evaluate weather conditions there. Eric has been in contact with this company, [Frost Solutions](#), that provides remote satellite-based weather stations that can be checked remotely to evaluate weather conditions. Eric would like to try this up on the Upper Notch Road. The lease price for one year is \$3,000 per year per unit.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider trying it for one year to see how it works and if it provides benefits of saving time and resources.

Item VI.3 Consider approval of access permit application #2024-04DA for Stan Livingston, Devino Lane, per the DPW Foreman's recommendations. Online is [an application](#) to install a new [driveway on Devino Lane](#). The installation would include cutting branches of some trees and having a power pole set with an anchor. Public Works Foreman Eric Cota recommends approval with the following conditions:

1. The branch cutting was discussed.
2. A culvert may be needed at a later date at the owner's expense.
3. The sight distance is good.
4. The driveway is to be level at the road height for seventeen feet (17') back from the road.
5. The driveway is to be constructed with twelve inches (12") of crushed gravel for a width of thirty feet (30') x seventeen feet (17') back from the road.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval per the DPW Foreman's recommendations.

Item VI.4 Public Hearing -- Proposed Amendments to Bristol's Unified Development Bylaws. Online is the [public hearing notice](#) for this final review of the proposed amendments to the [Bristol Unified Development Regulations](#). The primary goal of the proposed amendments is to accommodate the creation of additional housing units, including accessory dwelling units. The [Planning Commission's transmittal memo](#) to the Selectboard from October 2023 provides more information.

The Selectboard proposed some adjustments in the course of a hearing in January 2024; however, feedback from the Planning Commission prompted the Selectboard to reconsider some of those adjustments. The [version online](#) for this hearing reflects the Selectboard's and Planning Commission's recommendations.

The next step after this hearing is for the Selectboard to vote to approve the proposed amendments. This item is [Article 1 on the November 5 Special Town Meeting ballot](#) for voter approval. Public information meetings will be held on October 28 and November 4 on this (Article 1) and the proposed bond vote (Article 2) for the Bristol West waterline replacement project.

RECOMMENDATION: Receive public input. Close the public hearing. Vote to approve the amendments.

Item VI.5 ARPA funding update and guidance on final allocations: Assistant Treasurer Kris Perlee. Online are the following documents associated with this topic:

- [Memo Perlee ARPA funds guidance 2024-10-11.pdf](#).  
Kris plans to be present at the meeting to explain in more detail the reasoning his (and VLCT's) recommendation that the Selectboard vote to "[e]xpend SLFRF funds in an amount up to \$530,000 for the purpose of

municipal workforce retention to pay for payroll expenses for the period 07/01/2024 through 10/31/2024.”

- [Katie Buckley ARPA Emails 2024.pdf](#).  
This compilation of e-mails with Katie Buckley of VLCT helps provide the basis behind Kris's recommendation in the above memo.
- [Bristol ARPA Resolution DRAFT 2024-10-11.pdf](#).  
The structure of this resolution is remarkably similar to the resolution(s) we approved last year to document the Selectboard's allocation decisions (see below).
- [Obligation Interim Final Rule Quick Reference Guide 2023.pdf](#).
- [Bristol ARPA approved funding requests 2024-10-11.pdf](#).  
This spreadsheet is an effort to summarize the Selectboards' decisions and considerations regarding requested allocations of ARPA funds.
- [Bristol Resolution for ARPA Funding Allocation 2023-08-14 signed.pdf](#).  
This is a sample of one of other resolutions the Selectboard approved to reflect allocation decisions. This resolution approach was recommended by VLCT early on in this adventure.

I must confess my complete bewilderment with this latest iteration of SLFRF commitment requirements. In March 2022, when the Selectboard voted to opt for the “revenue replacement” option, we were advised then that the ARPA funds would basically become part of the General Fund for the Town to use in whatever capacity the Town deemed appropriate; we just needed to keep a record of it, which we were doing.

I have not studied Katie's guidance or the other attached documents closely yet. Hopefully others will and the guidances will make sense. I do not understand how allocating the remaining ARPA funds toward 2024 payroll meets the original objectives that the original “revenue replacement” vote did not. I understand the allocation would create an undesignated fund balance, which then becomes the Town's to choose to allocate. I do not understand the recommendation to allocate it to payroll rather than to miscellaneous revenue or some other revenue lines. I imagine it could create an audit nightmare.

I also do not understand why ARPA funds cannot be allocated to existing reserve funds. The documents seem to focus on creating new ones. Perhaps I am misunderstanding this. What makes more sense to me is to go ahead and make final funding commitments to either [the current items on the list](#) or pending requests

(next agenda item), and allocate the rest to the existing Capital Roads, Capital Buildings, and recently-created Recreation Equipment and Facilities reserve funds.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. I recommend consulting with our Auditors for their input. If we are not able to reach a conclusion at this meeting, plan to continue it to a next meeting.

Item VI.6 ARPA funding requests: Lawrence Memorial Library for outdoor classroom; Peace Garden renovation; Recreation Department position from part-time to full-time. Online are three requests for a share of Bristol's ARPA funds:

1. [Request for contribution toward renovation of the Peace Park](#), 09/03/2024. They are requesting a total of \$17,000 from the community to renovate the Peace Park.
2. [Lawrence Library ARPA Funding Proposal](#), 2024-09-18. They are requesting \$40,450 to develop the outdoor event and classroom space that was among the ARPA Funding Advisory Committee's early recommendations, but no cost estimates were available then. If approved, an inflation/contingency factor should be included, as well as funds for bollards or a guardrail of some sort to be installed alongside the building to prevent future collisions.
3. [Hub Teen Center funding request for full-time position](#), 2024-09-18. They are requesting \$25,000 in ARPA funds to increase Jackie's hours at the Hub, plus an over-due pay increase, which would enable the Recreation Department to provide more support to the blossoming Elder Eagles program into 2026.

Representatives are expected to be present to further explain their requests.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Determine if additional information is needed.

Item VI.7 Water Commission: Review and provide feedback on letter to customers regarding the approved water rate and structure update: Kris Perlee. [Online a letter Kris drafted](#) to explain the basis for the water rate structure change and rationale for the new rates. A goal is to implement the new rates and include the letter with the December billing cycle.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Feedback on the draft letter. Determine if more information is needed.

Item VI.8 Water Commission: Tentative – Consider water distribution line and water line connections permit application for the T&M Bouvier residential subdivision at 68 Pine Street. [Online are the most current water connection plans](#) for the residential subdivision at 68 Pine Street. Preliminary approval was granted at the

Selectboard/Water Commission's July 22, 2024 meeting for connection of the 2-inch water distribution main to the Pine Street line prior to the Pine Street paving. A complete application has not yet been received. However, Jill Marsano (VTUMS) and Steve Palmer (VTM Engineering) developed the following preliminary conditions of approval based on the information available in July:

1. The waterline details should follow those recently outlined in the Heffernan project. Specifically:
  - a. Specify using an 8" Romac 202NS saddle and brass corporation stop on the existing 8" PVC watermain on Pine Street (rather than a tapping sleeve and valve).
  - b. Specify 2" Type K copper waterline with 2" x 3/4" tees for each individual service line. Keep the curb stops just off the edge of the road 3' or so in the green belt and show access easement limits to be granted to the town (min 33').
  - c. Use a 2" to 3/4" brass reducer for the final service.
  - d. Add the testing notes applied to the Heffernan project. Minimum design operating pressure for all components = 250psi.
  - e. Include of course separation distances from the septic system components, property lines, etc.
  - f. Define the final easement. I think the language they are considering today requires a 33' minimum.
2. Sand for 6" below and 12" above.
3. Specify disinfection requirement.
4. Easement to the Town for the water main.
5. Installation is to be coordinated with VTUMS and the Public Works Department.

RECOMMENDATION: Determine if additional information is needed. Clarify and finalize the conditions. Approval with the conditions noted and that a complete application and application fee be submitted.

Item VI.9 Review and possible approval of Town Administrator job description updates. This is on the agenda because, as I elaborate below, I will be retiring at the end of the year. This is an opportunity to revisit the [Town Administrator job description](#) and update it before advertising the position. I did not have very many recommended adjustments. The biggest one, in my opinion, is separating the Emergency Management Director position out of it. With all of the disasters we've had and are likely to continue to have, that alone is a very demanding role, not only at the time of disasters, but in preparing for them with emergency management planning, table top exercises, and more. I recommend the EMD have a separate job description. Maybe the next TA will be able to navigate both just fine; but it should not be assumed.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Adjustments as needed. Determine if more information is needed.

Item VI.10 Review and possible approval of Planning & Zoning Administrator job description updates. This is on the agenda in part because it relates to the previous item. However, even if the Town Administrator position was not about to evolve, I think it would be worthwhile to consider on its own. The Zoning & Planning Administrator position is currently part-time at approximately 20 hours per week, including night meetings.

The title is traditionally referred to as the Planning & Zoning Administrator (PZA), however, the title was rearranged with the recent recruitment to Zoning & Planning Administrator (ZPA) to acknowledge that, at only ~20 hours per week, most of the duties would relate to development review administration rather than broader planning initiatives. This is an opportunity to consider broadening the scope of duties to include more broad planning initiatives, support for the Planning Commission, and some project administration. Hence, I propose bringing the title back to Planning & Zoning Administrator.

I do not advise crafting job descriptions based on the individuals currently in the positions. However, we are very fortunate to have AZ Larsen in the position who I think is doing a terrific job as ZPA in the few short months they have been on board, and who is interested in being involved in more planning-related initiatives and some project administration. I introduced the idea to the Selectboard in executive session at the previous meeting and presented budget information to show that increasing the position to 30 – 35 hours per week with benefits could be accommodated in the current budget—even more so if activated in November rather than a month ago October. With the Town Plan due to be updated and adopted by 2028, the PZA position could provide more support to the Planning Commission through that process. It is also important that the Planning Commission be actively involved in future iterations of the capital improvement planning process. Regarding project management, keeping the sidewalk replacement plan updated and taking on responsibility for developing the scopes of work, bidding, and general project management for specific sidewalk projects would be manageable and help take it off of the Town Administrator's plate.

The [proposed amendments the Planning & Zoning Administration job description](#) include:

- Removing the part-time reference.
- More reference to participating in the update and maintenance of the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Project management.

Benefits:

- Employee retention.
- Increased capacity to support planning initiatives, such as the Town Plan update process and maintaining the Capital Improvement Plan, and

- Increased capacity to move certain projects forward, such as the sidewalk replacement plan and taking responsibility for specific sidewalk replacement projects.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Adjustments as needed. Determine if more information is needed.

Item VI.11 Review of meeting minutes. Online are the reviewed [September 9, 2024 minutes](#). Others are in the process of being reviewed and will be posted when available. In the meantime, all original draft (not reviewed) minutes are posted on the Web site.

Item VI.12 Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor or tobacco licenses. The accounts payable warrant is expected to be provided in time for Monday's meeting.

## VII. OTHER BUSINESS.

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

- [Bristol Downtown Designation Renewal Approval 2024-09-23.pdf](#).
- [Deputy Health Officer VDOH Appointment Williams 2024-10-03.pdf](#).
- [E-mail Capital Project Fund grant award announcement 2024-09-30.pdf](#).
- [Bristol Allocation Letter Bernard-Gervais for Hanson and Roscoe 15 Monkton Road 2024-10-01.pdf](#).
- [E-mail Bristol Recreation newsletter 2024-10-06.pdf](#).
- [Bristol Recreation Events and Programs 2024-10-12.pdf](#).

### **Three Rs: Resignation, Retirement, Restoration**

As many people know by now, I have announced my intention to retire at the end of the year, with December 20, 2024 as my last day in the office. October 2 marked seven years since we began our adventures together. Kris Perlee, too; we started on the same day. What is said about time flying is all true. (It actually flies whether you are having fun or not.)

We have been through a lot together: staff changes, a pandemic, natural disasters, and several major capital projects, to name a few. The list of accomplishments is long. But it has also been a rough ride at times. I learned in 2019 I had a benign brain tumor (*vestibular schwannoma*) behind my left ear. I was losing my hearing on that side and was having balance issues. I broke my right knee in June 2021 (two fractures in the fibula head) from a balance-related fall, just a month after returning to the office when the COVID-19 lockdown was lifted, followed by weeks of physical therapy. Then knee surgery in Sept. 2021 to repair the torn ACL and torn meniscus, followed by more physical therapy. From Oct. to Nov. 2021 I hoofed it to UVM in Burlington and CVMC in Berlin for daily radiation treatments to stop the growth of the tumor (this was mid the system-wide shutdown due to a hack). This resulted in a nightmare of *trigeminal neuralgia (TN)* and high levels of medication for a full year to manage it. (Among everything, this was the absolute worst of it all.) The medications ultimately stopped working and brain surgery in December 2022 to reduce the size of the tumor and disrupt the *TN* was the last option. More physical and occupational therapy. Though I lost all hearing on the left side and

still have some balance issues, the surgery was a success. The outcome could have been so much worse.

While these kinds of things would ordinarily be private medical information, they have pretty much played out entirely in Bristol's public realm one way or another. I am OK with it. It is what it is. I would rather folks know why I have moments of brain fog, fatigue, or might need to have something repeated because I did not hear it.

Yes, the last few years have been pretty rough. On everyone. I could not have gotten through all of that without the complete support of my beloved partner of more than 36 years, dear friends, the Selectboard, Town staff, and so many others. The people of Bristol and beyond have been wonderful and I am deeply grateful for all of the support you have given me. However, I still have more work to do to regain my health, which is where I will be focusing going forward.

While there is usually never a good time for these kinds of things, the timing now is actually GOOD. Here's why:

- Since August 2023, Freeda Powers has been kicking butt as Bristol's grants administrator. This not only involves applications for new grants, but also monitoring, reporting, and requisitions of various grants among many departments. She has also been essential helping us keep our head above water (no pun intended) with the FEMA process.
- The Sharon Lucia/Kris Perlee Town Clerk & Town Treasurer team have been working closely with the NEMRC folks to reconcile the Town's accounts and improve the Town's budget and accounting systems. While it has been daunting, it has also been incredibly valuable toward getting the Town's accounting and budget system on a more efficient, stable, and reliable path in time for the upcoming FY2026 (!) budget process.
- Item VI.10 on the agenda is a proposal to Increase the Planning & Zoning Administrator position to full-time (30-35 hrs/wk). If approved, it will increase the capacity to provide support to the Planning Commission (PC), Development Review Board (DRB), and Design Review Commission (DRC), particularly at a time when the Town Plan update process will need to begin and the updated Unified Development Regulation (UDR) provisions for housing development will begin to be implemented. This will also provide new capacity for project management, such as refining and implementing Bristol's sidewalk improvement plan and working with Bristol's newly developed Capital improvement Plan.
- All departments are staffed with experienced, capable, dedicated people.
- Steve Palmer and his VTM Engineering team and Jill Marsano and her VTUMS team together provide a high level of service to the Town.
- Bristol CORE is evolving to be a force to be reckoned with and is a huge asset for the entire town.
- Bristol has a talented and awesome volunteer base.
- I could go on ...

All of these, and more, give me confidence and comfort that the Town of Bristol will have the capacity to keep moving forward on its awesome path and will be in good hands.

### **November 5 Election(s)**

Online is the [warning](#) and [sample ballot](#) for the upcoming November 5 general election, which will be by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, upstairs at Holley Hall from 7:00am to 7:00pm. The State of Vermont took responsibility for mailing Absentee ballots to every registered voter. Voters who have not received their ballots yet should visit the Secretary of State's My Voter Web site: <https://mvp.vermont.gov/>.

Also on November 5 is a Special Bristol Town Meeting local election to vote on two Australian ballot items:

- (1) updates to [Bristol's Unified Development Regulations](#), and
- (2) Bond vote for the Bristol West Waterline Replacement Project.

### [Warning](#) • [Sample Ballot](#)

Voters will need to request a separate Absentee ballot from the Town Clerk's Office. Or voters can cast their Australian ballots on Tuesday, November 5 at Holley Hall.

Two public information meetings have been scheduled:

**Monday, October 28, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/>

Meeting ID: 879 1281 0018

Passcode: 619003

Phone in: 1 (646) 558-8656

**Monday, November 4, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/>

Meeting ID: 879 1281 0018

Passcode: 619003

Phone in: 1 (646) 558-8656

### **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](mailto: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 October 14**

Monday: Holiday: Indigenous Peoples Day –Town Office closed.

10:00am – FEMA Zoom check-in?

6:00pm – Selectboard – the Town Office will be open for the meeting.

Tuesday: **Working from home.**

Wednesday: In the office?

Thursday: In the office?

Friday: Out of the office.

Week of October 21

Monday: In the office.

Tuesday: Working from home.

Wednesday: In the office.

Thursday: In the office.

Friday: In the office.

Upcoming Meetings

- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Oct. 14, 6:30pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bristol Energy Committee](#): Weds., Oct. 16, 7:00pm, via Zoom.
- [Development Review Board](#): Tues., Oct. 22, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bristol Equity Committee](#): Weds., Oct. 23, 7:00pm, at Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee](#): Thurs., Oct. 24, 7:00pm, via Zoom.
- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Oct. 28, 6:30pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Selectboard Special Public Info Meeting](#): Mon., Nov. 4, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Conservation Commission](#): Thurs., Nov. 14, 6:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Planning Commission](#): Tues., Nov. 19, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bristol Energy Committee](#): Weds., Nov. 20, 7:00pm, via Zoom.
- [Bristol Equity Committee](#): Weds., Nov. 27, 7:00pm, at Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee](#): **Thurs., Nov. 28?** 7:00pm, via Zoom.

Upcoming Agenda Items

- Review Townwide Reappraisal bids, select consultant.
- Water Commission: Review of proposed Water Use Ordinance updates and revision.
- Fire Department quotes for the purchase of the FD Utility Pickup Truck?
- Consider whether to adopt a Livestock Running At Large ordinance (Jessica prepared a draft).
- Consider whether to develop and adopt a Noise Ordinance.
- Consider whether to develop and adopt a Sidewalk Obstruction Ordinance or amend an existing nuisance ordinance?
- Consider whether to participate in the VT 250th Anniversary statewide celebrations initiative.
- Continued consideration of an updated rate structure to address the Core Area Sewer's capital improvement needs and high strength waste management.
- Continued consideration of Police District expansion.
- Continued consideration of Police Station alternatives.
- Other stuff.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator