

**Town of Bristol, VT  
Selectboard  
Minutes of Meeting  
Monday, September 9, 2024**

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**Members Present:** Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier (Chair), Peeker Heffernan, , Jessica Teets

**Members Absent:** Michelle Perlee (Vice-Chair)

**Staff Present:** Valerie Capels (Town Administrator); Eric Cota (Public Works); Aidan Lenihan (Recreation Coordinator); Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk); Meridith McFarland (Recreation), Kris Perlee (Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Town Clerk)

**Others Present:** Amanda Allen (Lincoln Selectboard), Jason Barnard (Barnard & Gervais), Colby Gile, Theresa Gile, Mike Leyden, Stephanie Magnan (SEAM Solutions), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), NEAT TV, Steve Palmer (VTM Engineering), Jim Quaglino, Courtney Radford (Bristol CORE), Sally Roth, Matt Sharpe, Adam Thomas, Amber Thomas, Trish Waugh (Lincoln Town Administrator)

**I. Call to Order.** Ian Albinson called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm.

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

Valerie suggested adding to the Consent Agenda approval of an extension to the contract with Dubois & King for completion of Accessible Town Park work, to be valid through November 30, 2024.

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

**II. Public Forum.**

Nobody offered comments for the Board.

**III. Department Head Roundtable.**

Public Works: Eric reported that the Pine Street work is finishing up; paving is scheduled for later in the week. They are planning to pave between 21 and 22 feet wide so there is room to add a white line for pedestrians if it is decided to do so. Winter sand is being drawn. Lincoln Road--the drill rig is on site for the pinning work. Briggs Hill Road detour--a pair of traffic lights have been installed on Atkins Road due to the narrow roadway there. Sidewalk brush and tree trimming is expected to begin in the coming week. He is considering a Frost weather station for Upper Notch Road, which would help in assessing the area without having to drive up. A year lease is possible. The software provides a camera plus weather data.

Town Clerk: Sharon reported that training is scheduled for this week, so the office may have reduced hours. Election ballots are being mailed by the State to every voter.

Recreation: Meridith Introduced Aidan Lenihan, the Department's new Program Coordinator. She noted the annual Harvest Fest is on Saturday, September 28. Youth sports has begun; more than 200 youths have registered for soccer.

Police: Bruce reported that the Department handled 309 calls, 4 criminal citations, and 39 traffic stops during the month of August. They are seeking the person who broke into and stole cigarettes from Champlain Farms on August 28. The Briggs Hill Road traffic lights have resulted in an increase in speed complaints. They are trying to determine a suitable location for a portable speed cart and have increased patrol in the area.

**IV. Consent Agenda**

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, consisting of the items listed below. The motion was seconded by Peeker.

1. Approve minor change in the recently approve property tax rate due to a change in the Grand List.
2. Approve authorization to apply to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation for a 50/50 grant of up to \$20K for renovations to Holley Hall.
3. Approve and sign the "Municipal Letter of Attestation" for the Downtown Vibrancy Fund grant.
4. Approve the annual Harvest Festival plan on the Town Green and Stampede 2.0 5K Walk-a-thon for Saturday, September 28, 2024.
5. Approve access permit application #2024-03DA for T&M Bouvier, LLC at 68 Pine Street per the DPW Foreman's recommendations.
6. Approve amendment to contract with Dubois & King for the Accessible Town Park project from September to November 30, 2024.

IV.1: Sharon noted that the property tax rate will be going up slightly, due a reduction in the Grand List total.

IV.2: It was confirmed that the Holley Hall renovations would include upper exterior balcony repair, framing of stained glass windows, and masonry work on the porch.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously.

Meridith noted that a quote for Holley Hall roof repair has not yet been received. She will follow up with the contractor as the insurance company is seeking closure on the damage claim.

## **V. Regular Business**

### **1. Meet with Lincoln Town officials regarding Briggs Hill Road closure coordination(s).**

Trish and Amanda outlined that Bristol serves as a hub for Lincoln and that the current road closure has an impact on Lincoln residents and businesses, including access to deliveries and emergency services. They noted that it has been requested by their Road Foreman that the traffic signal on Atkins Road be removed. They requested that Lincoln personnel and officials be part of future conversations regarding road closures that will affect Lincoln so that they are able to keep residents informed. Eric noted that the request for removal of the signal arose earlier in the day, and that there will be some changes made to the plans for traffic control.

### **2. Review and discussion of the Bristol Hazard Mitigation Plan draft update: Stephanie Magnan, SEAM Solutions.**

Stephanie explained that she is working to complete an initial draft for submission to Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) by September 20, as the Town needs VEM review to be triggered by that date in order to be eligible for FEMA funding related to the recently declared disaster. She noted the committee has been looking at the community profile and identifying hazards for prioritization, then outlining actions for the next five years to address these, as well as ensuring connectivity between the Town Plan, the UDRs, and the LHMP. Invasive species, snow impacts, and flooding have been highlighted.

In response to questions regarding river dredging, and the berm created by flooding events from 1998, 2004, and others, Stephanie explained that State permitting would be necessary and that floodplain restoration needs to be looked at holistically and include considerations such as the transfer of knotweed and other relevant aspects of work to be conducted along riverbanks.

Removal of older trees that may be creating potential hazards was discussed. Valerie mentioned the work underway with the ad hoc Tree Committee and a grant for removal/replacement of Town trees. Stephanie noted that identifying such potential actions in the Plan is important to have in place for when funding becomes available.

Stephanie also explained that actions from the previous iteration of the plan are reviewed as to completion and their continued relevance. She requested that Board members review the actions and offer feedback on whether they are in alignment with the Plan's goals. She indicated that work on the Plan will continue after the submission of the draft document on September 20, and comments received from VEM will be integrated as part of the iterative process of developing the Plan.

### **3. Water Commission: Consider connection application for the Thomas Planned Unit Development Subdivision off of North Street and Pine Street.**

Valerie reported that completed plans for the proposed water lines were available, as was a recommendation/report from Jill Marsano and Steve Palmer. Jason Barnard noted that the Wastewater and Potable Water Supply application had been submitted to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Jill indicated that there will be individual meters at the curb stop for each dwelling, and that she has included language providing the Town with a permanent easement in order to access those individual curb stops when necessary.

Jason confirmed with Steve and Jill that it would be allowable to drill the pipe in using tracer wire, indicating that the HDPE pipe used will be thick-walled and have fused joints. Jill noted that this is suitable due to meter pit being included as part of the installation plans.

Jason also clarified where on the Sensus meter valves shutoffs should be installed; it was also confirmed the valve on the outside of the outlet does not need a shutoff. Jill pointed out there is another development in progress nearby with which there might be coordination of work. However, the timing may not be compatible except for some potential work along the main line. Potential logistics of completing the work, including the work needed in the road right-of-way (ROW), were discussed, with Eric's input included.

**MOTION:** Peeker made a motion to allow the Thomas PUD to make the water connections as proposed and according to the requirements included in the report provided by the Water Operator/Town Engineer. The motion was seconded by Ian and passed unanimously.

### **4. Water Commission: Continued consideration of adopting an updated water rate structure and other amendments to Bristol Water Use Ordinance Appendix B – Schedule of Rates and Charges.**

Kris explained details of a spreadsheet he created and how the proposed "billing unit" approach would

affect individual properties. In addition to residential, there are either non-residential or mixed use, clarifying that he had applied one business rate for each mixed-use building. Residential rates are based on the number of dwelling units.

Kris explained that he had worked through billing information to come up with a proposed rate structure, including both base and unit rates, that would replicate to the degree possible the amounts currently billed to residents. The proposed rates will lead to minimal residential increases, with some decrease likely for one or two person households. The spreadsheet enables the Board to see the impacts on users of applying different base rates. Some specific accounts were reviewed to determine impacts of the changes. Following review of various scenarios, it was agreed that an annual base rate for residential and non-residential customers of \$200 and \$400 respectively would serve to build some capital while not imposing too great of a sudden impact on user fees.

**MOTION:** Peeker made a motion to set a base rate of \$200 for residential users, a base rate of \$400 for non-residential users, and a usage rate of \$5.50/1000 gallons for Bristol's Water System, to take effect in December 2024. The motion was seconded by Ian. The motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion of presenting the information to users, along with an explanation that other increases may be necessary in coming years. Kris concurred that outreach is the next step to focus on. It Kris will draft a letter to be included an upcoming billing outlining the new structure and explain that this is a more equitable method.

Valerie recounted that at their last meeting, the Water Commission approved some changes to the special charges outlined in Appendix B. After further review, she had some minor changes to recommend. One suggestion was to remove the word 'residential' in reference to connection fees, as there is not a specific section addressing non-residential connections. She also pointed out there is language related to connections for meters to lines that are 1" or larger needing to be calculated, but no base rate is provided to be paid at the time of application. She suggested a base rate of \$2,150 be used.

Jill explained that any size up to 1" has similar parts requirements (meters, etc.), but that larger than that is more complicated and thus more expensive. Valerie indicated that establishing a base rate allows for collecting that minimum along with an application, and then additional charges may be billed once they are calculated.

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to accept the new billing structure as proposed for connections, as well as removing the word 'residential' so that the requirements apply to all new connections. The motion was seconded by Peeker and passed unanimously.

## **5. Review of meeting minutes.**

**MOTION:** Peeker made a motion to approve the minutes of August 26, 2024 as written. The motion was seconded by Ian and passed unanimously.

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

The warrant was for the amount of \$141,884.86.

No review of license applications was necessary.

**7. Selectboard roundtable.**

Jessica reported that the Library has advertised the Children's Librarian position.

Ian indicated he is working on the following:

- Coordinating with Energy Committee members and the RPC on the MERP Energy Resilience grant, reviewing the reports received for the three Town buildings
- The fiber connection for the Hub building; this will also include updating the wireless system
- Reviewing UDR updates in order to provide a synopsis for the Board
- Looking into software for project management, particularly a product called Base Camp, which provides for tracking and document storage to help coordinate efforts

Joel noted that, as a resident, he will be requesting that the Water Commission finalize his development's water taps; he noted that the work in the road ROW is complete, and also that there is an existing easement from Liberty to Plank Roads which he will be requesting be removed.

**8. Town Administrator's report.**

Valerie highlighted some of the documents referenced in her Town Administrator's Report. She noted the Town is still waiting for a grant agreement for the Airport Drive sidewalk work and that this project will need a municipal project manager when ready to move forward. The new West Street sidewalk scoping study for which a grant was awarded is at the point where an RFP can be issued. Ian noted that he will work on this.

Valerie invited all Board members to a ribbon cutting ceremony scheduled for September 16 to celebrate the new bus shelters. Ian noted that he will check that all necessary permitting is in place for those.

Valerie reported that the Capital Improvement Plan has been sent to the State as part of the Downtown Designation renewal and has been provided broadly to townspeople for feedback as well.

**VI. Other Business.**

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

**VII. Adjourn.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary  
Valerie Capels, Town Administrator