

**Town of Bristol, VT  
Selectboard  
Minutes of Meeting  
Monday, September 23, 2024**

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**Members Present:** Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier (Chair) (arrived 6:45pm), Peeker Heffernan, Michelle Perlee (Vice-Chair), Jessica Teets

**Staff Present:** Valerie Capels (Town Administrator); Eric Cota (Public Works); Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk); Kris Perlee (Assistant Treasurer and Town Clerk)

**Others Present:** Linda Andrews, Elizabeth Blair, M. Chesley, David Flaschenriem (Energy Committee), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), NEAT, Ashar Nelson (Vermont Integrated Architecture), Steve Palmer (VTM), Randy Potter, Allison Pouliot (Energy Committee), Jim Quaglino, Matt Sharpe, Maddison Shropshire (ACRPC), Grace Williams

**I. Call to Order.** Michelle Perlee called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

**1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A).** Valerie noted that no minutes were available for review.

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

**II. Public Forum.**

Ian offered a reminder that there was one remaining upcoming Farmers' Market.

**III. Department Head Roundtable.**

**Town Clerk:** Sharon reported that tax bills are being prepared and that the replacement of the handheld water meter reader is taking place. Election ballots are being mailed and other election organization is ongoing.

**Assistant Clerk/Assistant Treasurer:** Kris reported he is meeting with banks to adjust accounts as needed for FDIC coverage. The ARPA fund account is being reviewed for necessary administration actions to comply with new standards.

**Recreation Department:** Meridith reported that today was new Program Coordinator Aidan's first day on the job. The soccer program has a high participation rate. For the last day of the Farmers Market, they are arranging to provide wine from local vineyard in compliance with all the proper protocols.

**Water Department:** Jill reported that the water read continues this week. Some water and sewer sampling has been completed and they are working to find source of FOG (fats, oils, grease). She will be marking water line locations to prepare for the upcoming geological probes for the Bristol West project. Things are progressing on the water line inventory. After meeting with representatives from MAUSD, it was decided against beginning the School Street work due to ownership questions and impending line replacements.

#### **IV. Regular Business**

##### **1. Deputy Town Health Officer candidate: Grace Williams.**

Valerie noted that information from Grace had been forwarded to the Board; Grace was present and provided some details of her interest in the position. Board members answered Grace's question regarding Bristol's population impact on government services and had further conversation with her regarding the Town and Selectboard's efforts and expectations of a Health Officer.

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to recommend that Grace Williams be appointed as Bristol's Deputy Town Health Officer. The motion was seconded by Jessica and passed unanimously.

##### **2. Review of Holley Hall energy efficiency improvement options for the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) grant application: Ashar Nelson, Vermont Integrated Architecture, et al.**

David Flaschenriem provided a general update on the MERP program, explained where in the process things are at, and then presented two options for the Board to evaluate. The program is set up to provide funds for municipal building energy improvements and has an application deadline of September 27. Notifications are scheduled for the week of October 21 and agreements are anticipated to be in place by November 29. Valerie offered a reminder that this phase follows up on assessments completed on three buildings, and with other initiatives applicable to two of the buildings, the focus of this program is now on how these funds can best be used for Holley Hall improvements.

David noted the group working on this project has contacted the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation to determine what changes will be allowed to the building, which is on the National Register, and there is now a better understanding of what is possible. Ashar Nelson and the team have subsequently been looking into realistic costs of the projects outlined.

Ashar reviewed the information which has been collected related to two approaches which are being considered. He noted the process is moving forward quickly and that some grant details are still unknown. The two approaches are seeking to balance energy efficiency improvements and preservation of the historical building features.

Ashar outlined that Plan A more strictly follows the MERC report and addresses the thermal ability of the walls with no improvement of air circulation through the building. The main aspect of the work is insulation, and this option is less costly and less invasive; however, there is no information available regarding the impacts the additional insulation will have on increasing moisture and related potential degradation of the building in general.

Ashar explained that the second option, Plan B, is a more invasive approach and includes some removal of walls in order to add a vapor control layer, redoing the walls, and replacing the baseboard heating with something that has a smaller profile. This option is also the more costly of the two plans. David noted that this will also bring the walls in slightly, creating a negligible decrease in interior space, but that this option will still maintain the historical appearance of the interior. Ashar indicated that this option uses less carbon to manufacture and install the materials, making for faster payback in terms of carbon reductions.

Ashar added that both options include the installation of heat pumps, meaning that there will be some increase in electricity costs, but a reduction in fossil fuel use. Either option may increase the life span of the current boiler, as it will have less demand.

Ian explained that he believes Plan A creates a large risk of building degradation, but that one concern with opting for Plan B is having the building out of commission for some period of time. Meredith explained that Holley Hall is not frequently used in June, July, August, and even into September, as it is too warm inside the building for comfort during those months.

Ashar explained that both options need more fleshing out, work which will happen if a grant is awarded. He indicated that changes may be made to the plans even after receiving a grant award. Maddison spoke of some potential costs which would not be eligible for coverage under the grant. These owner costs are estimated to be about \$53K. She also indicated it may not be required to engage a preservation consultant. Maddison suggested that Efficiency Vermont may be able to provide some assistance as well as some incentive funds.

Joel asked about phasing the project, potentially completing the insulation work and plumbing for the heat pumps, but holding off on the actual installation of the pumps. Ashar noted that such details can be worked through if/when a grant is awarded, but that the work applied for will need to be completed. He agreed with a suggestion that some testing be completed before the building is put back together and emphasized that the plans which have been drafted are very preliminary.

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to proceed with Option B. The motion was seconded by Peeker and passed unanimously.

**3. Public Hearing -- Bristol Waterline Replacement Project; Bristol West 90% Design Plans review: Steve Palmer, VTM Engineering.**

Steve provided a presentation, outlining the information to be included in the application which will be submitted in January for DWSRF funding. Steve provided information regarding the nine streets involved in this section of the project, noting that the work will take place over two construction seasons, with phasing to be determined after a contractor has been selected.

Steve explained that he sought the least expensive strategies for replacing lines along the roads involved, noting that there will need to be disturbance of some utilities and trees, and that the Plan is designed to avoid impacts to asphalt surfaces as much as possible. Trees that need to be removed will be replaced. Steve indicated what characteristics are needed in determining the species to be used for those replacements.

He presented drawings of each road that will be involved and explained the different aspects of the work on each street. It was confirmed that all lines from the new main line to curb stops will be replaced as part of the project. The streets involved are Elm, West Pleasant, Church, School, Park, West, Munsill, Taylor, and Maple.

There was a suggestion that sidewalk work be coordinated where possible. Steve said he was not sure any of the work would be scheduled for the same time frame. It was discussed that placing water lines down existing sidewalks may enable avoiding some tree removal. Steve noted that such a change can be incorporated, but there will be an associated cost revision.

Steve reiterated that work will take place in the green space where possible and that considerations have been made for drainage infrastructure, sidewalks, and traffic. There is potential for coordination with other work scheduled to take place along those roadways in the same time frame.

Steve explained the intersection of West with North/Main/South Streets will require directional boring. Following further discussion, some line adjustments were agreed upon.

It was agreed to potentially save some of the trees on Taylor Ave., and possibly others. Steve will reach out to those homeowners for their feedback.

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to accept the Bristol West 90% Design Plans as provided by Steve Palmer. The motion was seconded by Jessica and passed unanimously.

#### **4. Bristol West Waterline Replacement Project Necessity Resolution for Nov. 5 bond vote.**

Valerie provided a draft of the resolution language and noted the change proposed by the Town attorney regarding the public informational meetings. It was agreed that it should be clarified that the Water District residents will be paying for the project amount that is not covered by grant monies, and so the language regarding 'ultimate taxpayer cost' was changed to read simply 'ultimate cost.' Steve reviewed the cost estimate he had provided and it was agreed that the bond amount should be presented as 'not to exceed \$3.95M.'

**MOTION:** Michelle made a motion to approve the resolution as adjusted. The motion was seconded by Ian and passed unanimously.

**5. Review and approval of the Nov. 5 Special Town Meeting warning for the Bristol Unified Development Regulations (UDR) amendments and Bristol West bond vote.**

Valerie provided a draft warning, including both the bond vote and adoption of the UDRs. A 7:00 pm start time was confirmed.

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to approve the Special Town Meeting warning, with the appropriate change to the bond vote dollar amount (not to exceed \$3.95M). The motion was seconded by Michelle and passed unanimously.

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

Valerie explained she had made some typographical but no substantive changes to the document since last reviewed by the Board and that a large portion of the text relies heavily on existing language from other Town documentation such as the Town Plan. The CIP serves to demonstrate previous investments, current projects, and future plans for improvements to various aspects of Town infrastructure. Because it is intended to be a living document, consideration of communications tower locations, as well as other projects, may be addressed in future discussions.

Valerie reported that the application submitted to the Regional Planning Commission for a traffic study was not awarded, but that the RPC will be completing some of the work in-house that had been outlined in the application. This will provide some data to work with, particularly regarding truck traffic; however, it is not clear whether analysis of the data will point to any needed changes. She also report the grant program has reopened for new applications and a proposal will be submitted for a feasibility study for upgrading Harvey Road to Class 3, as its use has increased substantially.

Valerie made note of the numerous positive comments expressed about Bristol in general during the Downtown Application renewal review. The Downtown designation was approved and the Town will not need to go through this process again.

Joel asked about getting an RFP for sidewalk work out in January. Valerie indicated that this would not fit in her schedule before the beginning of the year. Joel offered to review a previous request for similar work and put some effort toward replicating that document.

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to adopt the Bristol Capital Improvement Plan in its current form. The motion was seconded by Peeker and passed unanimously.

Jessica noted that this is a planning tool, rather than a defined plan, and that it will be revisited and prioritized going forward.

### **7. Review of meeting minutes.**

Valerie noted at the onset of the meeting that no minutes were available for review.

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

The warrant was for the amount of \$109,376.00.

**MOTION:** Ian made a motion to approve the renewal of Cubbers' First-Class Liquor License. The motion was seconded by Peeker and passed unanimously.

### **7. Selectboard roundtable.**

Joel inquired about progress on the Service Line Inventory (SLI). Jill noted that she is cleaning up E-911 addresses and that she is still waiting on 83 SLI confirmations. She explained that these can continue to be collected after the October 16 submission of the Design Plan. Ian indicated that he will reach out to several individuals regarding SLI reports.

Jessica noted that she is waiting for an update from the Recreation Department and that the Library continues their hiring process for a Children's Librarian. She also reported she attended an Equity Committee meeting and that she will likely be arranging for some of her students to help with surveys and focus group work.

Ian provided a demonstration of Basecamp, the project management web-based platform he has been looking into, and outlined the associated costs and possible access configurations for staff, board members, and others. The \$15/month/user charge would apply only to staff and give those people the ability to add new master projects to the platform for access by others to the associated message boards, chat feature, email connectivity, organizational functions, etc. He noted no commitment is necessary and the fees are paid on a month-to-month basis.

Michelle thanked Bruce and his officers for their assistance in the parking situation on Briggs Hill over the weekend.

Peeker indicated that he is able to attend the next evening's School Board meeting.

Joel noted that there are still cemetery trees that need to be addressed. He asked for an update on the Lincoln Road project. Valerie reported that efforts have moved to the lower site and the work is expected to be completed by the end of the week. Joel reminded the group that the decision regarding having selectboard emails for Town use rather than using personal emails for town business has not yet been made. Joel said he asked a month ago for a report on the Police cruiser incident. Valerie said that between her schedule and his, she has not been able to connect with Bruce on the subject. Joel asked where responsibility lies for broken water meters. Jill explained that when a meter fails due to a user allowing it to freeze or having

taken the meter apart, the cost is to be covered by the user. Joel asked about other water bills for specific people. Valerie indicated that they will follow up on these.

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

Valerie drew attention to several pieces of correspondence and noted that she has responded to some of the concerns raised regarding cemetery tree work. Regarding the defunct water line easement that crosses Joel's property to Plank Road, she recommended that a legal document be prepared and recorded formally extinguishing it.

**V. Other Business.**

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

**VI. Executive Session** re personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) and attorney-client communications per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(F).

**MOTION:** Michelle made a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) and attorney-client communications per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(F), inviting Bruce Nason to join. The motion was seconded by Ian and passed unanimously.

The Selectboard met in executive session from 9:16pm to 10:10pm. Upon returning to open session, the following action was taken:

**MOTION:** Peeker made a motion to confirm it is the Selectboard's intent for Bruce to receive the same benefits and salary adjustments as Officers receive under the NEPBA Union contract. The motion was seconded by Ian and passed unanimously.

**VII. Adjourn.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator