

## Bristol Town Administrator's Report December 15, 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, December 16, 2024 Meeting Agenda and Materials**

#### **I. 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."

- Add an executive session at 6:00pm for personnel matters (a separate agenda is posted for that)
- Add grant authorization request to IV.4 to the consent agenda.

#### **II. 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.

**III. 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.

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA.**

Item IV.1 Approve GPI Basin Street Improvement Municipal Project Manager (MPM) contract amendment to extend it from ending December 31, 2025 to December 31, 2027. [Online is a proposed contract amendment](#) with Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) to extend the completion date by two years from December 31, 2025 to December 31, 2027. Patrick Travers is serving as the Municipal Project Manager for the Basin Street Improvement Project. This project is still at a somewhat early stage; the heavier lifting (literally) is yet to come with final state and federal approvals of the design plans, right-of-way negotiations and acquisitions, construction bidding, contract administration, construction management, project funding, and more—all of which will take at least two more years to get through. No change in fee is proposed.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval. Authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract amendment.

Item IV.2 Authorization to close the Town Office from noon, Tuesday, December 24 through Friday, December 27, 2024 and Wednesday, January 1 through Friday, January 3, 2025. The Christmas and New Year holidays are on Wednesdays this time around. The Bristol Personnel Policy includes a one-half (1/2) day holiday, or four hours, on Christmas Eve. Because the Town Office remains closed to the public on Fridays (except by appointment), Town Clerk Sharon Lucia is proposing to close the office from noon, Tues., Dec. 24 through Fri., Dec. 27, 2024 and the following week from Weds., Jan. 1 through Fri., Jan. 3, 2025. Based on past experience, public visits to the Town Office around these holiday times is very low. Employees that choose to take the non-holiday time off would use vacation or comp time.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

Item IV.3 Approve request to install a memorial plaque on a refurbished bench at Holley Hall for Megan Thomas: Aidan Lenihan. [Online is a request](#) from Aidan Lenihan to install a memorial plaque on a newly-refurbished bench in front of Holley Hall. He proposes to purchase and maintain the plaque personally, not as a representative of the Recreation Department.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

Item IV.4 NEW: Authorize submission of a grant application to Vermont Afterschool for funds to support the Hub Teen Center. [Online is a grant application authorization request](#)

from the Hub Teen Center to apply to Vermont Afterschool for funds to support the skatepark project and extended Teen Center hours. No match is required.

RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

**V. REGULAR BUSINESS.**

Item V.1 Consider appointment of candidate to fill Library Trustee vacancy: Daniella Sutherland. [Online is a volunteer application](#) from Daniella Sutherland expressing interest in being appointed to the Lawrence Memorial Library Board of Trustees to fill a vacant seat that would need to be filled by voters at the March 2025 Town Meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: Determine if more information is needed.

Item V.2 Consider renewal of Twin Maple Sugar Works' five-year lease at the Seth Hill Waterworks; discuss access concerns from recent erosion management installations. [Online is a proposed updated 5-year lease agreement](#) between the Town of Bristol and Twin Maple SugarWorks owner Don Gale for use of the Seth Hill Waterworks property for his sugar maple business. Renewal of the [2014 lease agreement](#) may have fallen through the cracks amid the COVID-19 pandemic upheavals and stayed under the radar until recently. Although automatic renewal provisions are not included in the lease agreement, one could argue it is implied. The updated document does not include any substantive changes other than an updated format, dates, and minor edits.

This property was recently the subject of a grant-funded initiative to restore or improve various erosion control measures by Vermont Family Forests through the Otter Creek Clean Water Stewardship Program (CWSP) administered through the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. [Don Gale expressed concerns](#) about the impact some of the measures has had on his access to certain areas of the site. The [ACRPC representatives believe the erosion control measures comply](#) with the CWSP criteria and caution that any measures made to address Mr. Gale's concerns do not compromise the erosion control measures. [David Brynn of VFF has offered to help](#) address Mr. Gale's concerns, but this would be outside of the CWSP program (and funding) to be worked out among the Town, Mr. Gale, and VFF.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Determine if any adjustments to the lease agreement are needed. Determine next steps.

Item V.3 Consider acceptance of Addison County Regional Planning Commission proposal to serve as Airport Drive Sidewalk Project Municipal Project Manager pending VTrans approval: ACRPC Transportation Planner Mike Winslow. The Town of Bristol was recently awarded a \$240,000 grant through the VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to construct a new sidewalk in Airport Drive. The funding program requires that Municipal Project Manager (MPM) be hired. The MPM could be a

qualified Town employee, a consultant, or representative from the Regional Planning Commission—all subject to VTrans approval of qualifications. Pat Travers, referenced in agenda item IV.1 above, is our MPM for the Basin Street Improvement Project, which is also funded, in part, through a TAP grant. Rather than go through the time and effort to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for MPM services, I reached out the ACRPC (1) to find out their interest and capacity to consider this and (2) to request a [cost proposal](#) and completion of the [VTrans qualifications questionnaire](#). Both have been provided for our consideration. Mike Winslow [clarified it is a not-to-exceed budget proposal](#) of \$19,056.42.

The total project was estimated to be \$300,000, based in large part on the scoping study completed by DuBois & King in 2022. The TAP grant requires a 20% match. MAUSD leaders committed to sharing in the costs of the project. Additional funds, if needed, could be available through future grants or the Sidewalk Reserve Fund.

RECOMMENDATION: Determine if more information is needed. Approval pending acceptance from VTrans.

Item V.4 Consider results of and next steps for the ACRPC's North Street traffic and village speed limit studies: ACRPC Transportation Planner Mike Winslow. Speaking of Mike Winslow, he will be present at the meeting to [provide an overview](#) of the [traffic](#) and [speed](#) studies he conducted this fall in the village.

In a nutshell, he found that:

- Truck traffic on North Steet was not excessive compared to other streets in Bristol.
- A 25 MPH speed limit for most of the village is entirely reasonable. Plank Road and the northern portion of North Street might be exceptions.
- The data from Liberty Street stand out, based on both speed and percent trucks, which could be driven (no pun intended) by its proximity to the Town garage.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Receive public input. Determine if more information is necessary. Determine next steps.

Item V.5 Consider suspension of STOP sign enforcement at the intersection of Briggs Hill Road and Lincoln Road during road closure, at least for the winter months. [Online is a follow-up request](#) from a Lincoln Road traveler asking that the Town reconsider whether to enforce the STOP sign at the intersection of Briggs Hill Road, which is now closed, and Lincoln Road. Police Chief Nason previously recommended against it because a driveway access to private property exists in advance of the road closure barriers and vehicles had been observed parked up there, whether so people could walk to the New Haven River access points or for whatever other reason(s). We also received a similar request from another Lincoln Road traveler.

Mr. Meller points out the snow shows no vehicle tracks on that part of the road, suggesting that it is at least not being used in the winter. The Public Works Department will not be plowing this section of road.

This intersection is included in Bristol's [Ordinance Regulating Stop or Yield Intersections](#) (2004), which authorizes enforcement of violations. The ordinance does not address temporary suspension of a STOP sign installation.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider whether to cover the STOP sign on Lincoln Road at the Briggs Hill Road intersection for just the wintery months (December-March).

Item V.6 Continued discussion of Briggs Hill Road repair: brief update on FEMA funding and next steps. This item follows up on the conversation from the previous meeting regarding the news that FEMA will be reimbursing communities for the [July 2023 storm at 90%](#), which could be a game-changer for whether Briggs Hill Road gets repaired. Selectboard members had a number of questions, which Ian, Freeda, and I brought to the FEMA team last week and discussed with them last Monday. Because of those outstanding questions, DuBois & King was not asked to do any additional assessment or design work until we heard back.

Ian and/or Freeda can correct me I have this wrong. What I believe I took away from those discussions with FEMA:

- Bristol would forfeit being able to get reimbursed for the initial \$145K+ in engineering expenses to date if we incur additional expenses to explore other options than the one \$2.5million option presented.
- Bristol should proceed with whatever additional engineering is needed to determine the impacts on the design of the additional July 2024 storm damage, regardless of whether they would be determined to reimbursable through FEMA. (It may turn out that the affected areas are already captured in the original design and addition design work would be minimal.)
- How the damage expenses would be parsed between VT-DR4720 at 90% and VT-DR4810 at 75% was inconclusive.

There was discussion about reclassifying this part of the project to "A&E only" to enable the engineering expenses to be reimbursable at this point, but I am not clear about the what the consequences of that would be.

FEMA inspectors conducted a [damage inventory report in November](#), focusing on the area between the upper slide of Briggs Hill Road and the concrete block wall installed at the bottom on Lincoln Road. It is not clear to what extent, if any, the areas between the upper and lower slides on Briggs Hill Road were assessed.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Affirm the authorization for DuBois & King to update their repair plans to address the additional damage from the July 2024 storm. It may be they can use the [measurements recently produced by FEMA inspectors](#) to make an initial desktop assessment. Determine if additional information is needed.

Item V.7 Presentation of proposed consolidations and other adjustments to Bristol's accounting structure: NEMRC and Kris Perlee. Assistant Town Clerk/Assistant Town Treasurer Kris Perlee will be present to provide an update on the progress made to date on the updates to Bristol's NEMRC account systems. A recent [budget status report through 11/27/2024](#) may offer some insights.

RECOMMENDATION: Receive information. Determine if more information is needed.

Item V.8 Consider contractual arrangement with soon-to-be former Town Administrator for support or other assistance as needed. [Online is a proposed agreement](#) between the Town and me for support services, if requested, after my time as Town Administrator is done. As I note in the proposed agreement, services may include orientation, project support, project management, grant administration, audit support, or other assistance as needed during this period of transition and perhaps beyond. The rate reflects the lowest going rate for professional consultants and new non-employee expenses involved.

Please know I will (almost) always be available to try to answer simple questions like, "where can we find ...," "what happened to ...," or things like that. They are bound to come up and I will be happy to help if I can. E-mail will almost always be the better way to reach me. The contract thing is intended for the more substantive situations, should they arise.

RECOMMENDATION: Discussion. Determine if more information is needed.

Item V.9 Consider appointing a new Bristol representative to serve as an Alternate on the Addison County Solid Waste Management District Board of Supervisors to complete the term through April 10, 2025. After December 20, the seat I occupy as an alternate on the [ACSWMD Board of Supervisors](#) will be vacant. Joel is currently their primary representative for Bristol. Their annual appointments run from April 11, 2024 to April 10, 2025 and the Board meets on the third Thursdays of the month, 7:00pm, in person at the ACRPC office in Middlebury and via Zoom. [Online is a form](#) they provide for appointments to the Board of Supervisors.

RECOMMENDATION: The Selectboard has a few options:

- Leave the seat vacant until a new Town Administrator has been installed.
- Appoint someone in the interim until a new Town Administrator is installed.

- Select an entirely different member of the community to represent Bristol. While the [approved job description](#) mentions representing Bristol in a general way, appointment to specific boards is not included.

Item V.10 Consider appointing a new Bristol representative to serve on the Addison County Economic Development Corporation for a one-year term beginning January 1, 2025. As with the agenda item above, the seat I occupy on the [Addison County Economic Development Corporation Board](#) will soon be vacant. However, this annual term runs from January 1 to December 31—coming right up. So this would have needed to be done anyway. They do not have a specific appointment form. [Online is a resolution](#) I developed to assist the appointment process.

RECOMMENDATION: As with the agenda item above, the Selectboard has a few options:

- Leave the seat vacant until a new Town Administrator has been installed.
- Appoint someone in the interim until a new Town Administrator is installed.
- Select an entirely different member of the community to represent Bristol.

Item V.11 Review of meeting minutes. Draft minutes will be sent out and posted online when available. In the meantime, original draft (not reviewed) minutes are posted on the Web site.

Item IV.12 Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor or tobacco licenses. The accounts payable warrant is in progress and will be sent out and posted online by Monday, Dec. 16.

## VI. OTHER BUSINESS.

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

- [Letter LaRose village sidewalks concerns 2024-12-10.pdf](#).  
Mr. LaRose raises important concerns about the condition of some of Bristol's sidewalks. Useful things to know:
  - The ACRPC developed a detailed [sidewalk inventory map](#) and [spreadsheet](#) in 2023 that identified the condition and ranked sections for priority replacement. This—or something like it--should be reviewed and somehow updated on a regular basis.
  - Recent shifts in some job responsibilities and increased capacity in some areas will hopefully enable the Town to advance annual sidewalk improvement projects.
  - The recently-adopted Capital Improvement Plan allows for and anticipates planning and budgeting for regular sidewalk improvement projects.

Way to go Bristol Recreation Department!

- [Bristol Teen Center is Booming Addy Indy 2024-12-12.pdf](#).
- [E-mail BRD Newsletter 2024-12-11.pdf](#).

### **Upcoming Selectboard December and January Meeting Schedule**

The Selectboard's regular meetings are ordinarily the second and fourth Mondays of the month. However, in light of the upcoming holidays and budget season, the Selectboard's schedule will be off-kilter at least December through January:

- Monday, Dec. 30
- Monday, Jan. 6
- Monday, Jan. 13
- Monday, Jan. 20 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday)
- Monday, Jan. 27

Start times are expected to be 6:30pm unless otherwise adjusted.

### **Basketball Hoops in Right-of-Way**

In case you missed it: word went out recently on Front Porch Forum that it is that time of year to move basketball hoops off the road or away from the road and or sidewalk so that Bristol Public Works employees can plow safely and without encountering obstructions or damaging personal or Town property. Owners of basketball hoops that are still out are urged to move them immediately. Questions? Call Eric Cota at (802) 453-4707.

### **Bristol Skatepark Raffle Deadline Friday, Dec. 20**

The Bristol Recreation Department and Hub Teen Center have launched an amazing raffle to raise funds for the Skatepark Project. Winning bidders will be announced on Friday, Dec. 20, which means there is still time to check it out:

<https://bristolvt.myrec.com/info/products/default.aspx> .

### **Updated Water District Fee Schedule and New Connection Form Online**

The updated [Schedule of Rates and Charges](#) of the Water Use Ordinance Appendix B is now available online. Also available online is an [updated application form](#) for new water connections.

### **TA Schedule and Final Notes**

This will be my last week as Bristol Town Administrator. It has been a whirlwind seven years. As I mentioned in my October 14 TA Report regarding my upcoming retirement, we have been through a lot together: staff changes, a pandemic, natural disasters, several major capital projects, and more. The list of accomplishments is long. And there is more to be done. I am confident the timing is good for Bristol's town administration and citizens to carry things forward.

We could not have accomplished the things we did without the support, talents, and dedication of Bristol's Selectboard members, Town employees, countless volunteers, and other partners. Among the many things that set Bristol apart from other communities I have had the privilege of working with over my years as a municipal planner and administrator are its caring and engaged citizens. ***You really care about each other and your community*** and demonstrate it in



so many ways. Bristol has an amazing pool of talented citizens willing to participate or otherwise be engaged in local affairs. It can be a huge commitment of time and other resources, as members of the Bristol Selectboard and other boards and commissions surely know.

Bristol also has amazing employees who go above and beyond on a regular basis to get things done. I cannot say enough about all they do that most Bristol citizens are not likely to be aware of. They are a huge asset to the Town responsible for helping to carry out core municipal functions of public health and safety, fiscal responsibility, and to maintain and improve quality of life.

I am sincerely grateful and have deep respect for all of the Bristol citizens and employees I have had the pleasure of working with.

I want to extend a special **Thank You** to Selectboard member Ian Albinson, who has agreed to step in as Interim Town Administrator during this period of transition. He brings a unique combination of familiarity with municipal operations and some flexibility of time. Recognizing he has a whole other career and family to attend to, the focus will need to be on keeping communications and Selectboard matters moving forward. Some people have asked whether this is a conflict with his duties on the Selectboard. The answer appears to be "No." Selectboard member Peter Coffey served as Interim TA back in 2017 while still a Selectboard member and we know how that turned out. :) But more importantly, any Selectboard person is one of a five-member member board. The Town Administrator is an advisory position and only has the authorities granted to it by the Selectboard. If any real or perceived conflict of interest concerns arise, Ian could recuse himself from Selectboard action if necessary.

I plan to be in the office as much as I can this coming week, all things considered. On the remote times I can still 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. (Or someone else will.)

#### Week of December 16

Monday: In the office.  
6:00pm – Selectboard.  
Tuesday: **Working from home.**  
1:00pm – Medical appt.  
Wednesday: In the office.  
Thursday: In the office around 9:30am.  
Friday: In the office. Then not.

#### Upcoming Meetings

- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Dec. 16, 6:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Planning Commission](#): Tues., Dec. 17, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bristol Energy Committee](#): Weds., Dec. 18, 7:00pm, via Zoom.

- [Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee](#): **Thurs., Dec. 26?** 7:00pm, via Zoom.
- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Dec. 30, 6:30pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Jan. 6, 6:30pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Conservation Commission](#): Thurs., Jan. 9, 6:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Selectboard](#): Mon., Jan. 13, 6:30pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Development Review Board](#): Tues., Jan. 14, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom (if needed).
- [Planning Commission](#): Tues., Jan. 20, 7:00pm, Holley Hall and via Zoom.
- [Bristol Equity Committee](#): Weds., Jan. 22, 7:00pm, at Holley Hall and via Zoom.

### **Upcoming Agenda Items**

- Water Commission: Continued review of proposed Water Use Ordinance updates and revision.
- Budget, budget, budget.
- Town Meeting, Town warning, and Town Report preparations.
- Consider adjustments to the scope and budget of the Holley Hall weatherization MERP-funded project.
- Continued review of a Livestock Running at Large Ordinance.
- 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.
- Review of a draft Vendors Ordinance.
- Consider whether to participate in the VT 250th Anniversary statewide celebrations initiative.
- Fire Department quotes for the purchase of the FD Utility Pickup Truck?
- Continued consideration of Police District expansion.
- Continued consideration of Police Station alternatives.
- Resumed review of Personnel Policy updates.
- Resume consideration of Class 4 and private road maintenance policies.
- Consider whether to become a Certified Local Government.
- Other stuff.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator