

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, January 13, 2025**

Members Present: Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier, Peeker Heffernan, Michelle Perlee, Jessica Teets

Staff Present: Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk), Meridith McFarland (Recreation Director), Bruce Nason (Police Chief), Kris Perlee (Assistant Town Clerk and Treasurer)

Others Present: Jill Marsano (VTUMS), NEAT, Jim Quaglino, Jordan Vickers, Jennifer Wagner

I. Call to Order. Joel Bouvier called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

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

No adjustments were necessary.

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

II. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

III. Consent Agenda.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, including the items listed below. The motion was seconded by Michelle. Ian answered some questions regarding the logistics of a two-phase approach to tree growing and planting; he will look into obtaining answers for some other questions that arose, such as how to rectify a situation where the first phase results in trees that do not grow as expected. Joel expressed an acknowledgment of Tyler Hebert's resignation.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

- Approval of Annual Certificate of Highway Mileage without changes.
- Approve driveway access permit application for Marthe and Stephen Bryant next to 141 North Street (TBC) for a 20-foot-wide driveway per Public Works Foreman's recommended conditions.
- Bristol Fire Department: Accept the resignation of Firefighter Tyler Hebert.
- Public Assemblage permit request: 2025 New Haven Ledges Kayak Race, April 5, 2025 (backup date April 12), New Haven River.
- Consider a two-phase RFP approach for tree growing/planting: Josh Behounek

IV. Regular Business

1. Discussion and potential adoption of updated Zoning Application Fees; AZ Larsen, P&Z

Administrator.

AZ had provided suggestions for some changes to Zoning Fees, which they outlined for the Board. Changes included permitting ADUs at the same rates as other residential development, adjustments to charges for Certificates of Compliance (CC), and a change to subdivision fees to only charge for new lots being created. Board members asked for some clarifications and offered changes to clarify the language regarding CCs, as well as adding that applications requiring Design Review Committee oversight be charged the same as Development Review Board meetings.

MOTION: Jessica made a motion to adopt the Zoning Fee changes as proposed, including the adjustments agreed upon during the meeting. The motion was seconded by Michelle, and passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and potential approval of Planning & Zoning's role in Right-of-Way and Access Permits; AZ Larsen, P&Z Administrator.

AZ explained the proposed changes, noting that their intent is to streamline the permitting logistics for both staff and applicants. Board members indicated that the language should refer to 'work in the ROW approval' rather than simply 'ROW approval,' and explained that access permits also go to the Public Works Foreman for review before presenting to the Board. It was noted that all the paperwork will be filed in the property records, and that a copy of any approval from VTrans for access from State highways could be requested but not required.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to approve the changes as proposed, including the edits made during the meeting. Michelle seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

3. Budget workshop: preliminary budget review for the Recreation Department, Police Department, and other sections if available.

Bruce was present to review the proposed Police Department budget with the Board. He noted that the police union negotiation process for staff was ongoing, so no amounts had yet been entered for salary or benefits. The following was noted:

- Revenues:
 - Detail revenues includes all the event coverage provided by the Department
 - The Mount Abe contract is a flat rate increase each year
 - Non-district services covers house calls outside of the District
 - Some actuals amounts are not yet correct; Sharon is making adjustments now that the new NEMRC numbering system is in place
 - The Town contract covers speed enforcement
 - The Dog (changed to Animal) Officer work covers answering complaints, in lieu of the Town having an Animal Control Officer
 - Police services include fingerprinting, providing accident reports, etc.
 - The Transfer In line typically includes an amount of unassigned funds to be transferred
- Expenses:
 - Sharon will provide a breakdown of insurance costs
 - The actuals to date do not reflect a full year of spending
 - Miscellaneous expenses include things such as stickers for children and other public event items
 - Supplies and equipment was three categories; Bruce would like to provide the public with more clarity, and the Board agreed that this could be done during a presentation rather than in the budget document

Notes and updates were made during the discussion. Bruce indicated that at some point the building needs will have to be addressed. He also pointed out that the expenses for vehicle maintenance are important, as the upkeep provides for a greater trade in value.

Meridith was available to review the proposed Recreation Department budget. Notes and updates were made to this budget during the discussion as well. Points discussed included:

- Revenue:
 - Sharon explained that a change in the accounting process will ensure that all Youth Center revenue is applied as Teen Center revenue

- Meridith will be requesting an increase from each participating town during the coming year, which will increase that revenue from \$9500 to \$11,000 in the FY27 budget. She noted that the other towns' residents are offered a residential rate as a result of these payments.
- The Elder Eagles Program has been funded by a grant this year
- The timing of Recreation income indicates that some revenues should be reported for the fiscal year that the program runs, due to the fiscal year ending on June 30
- Allocations to equipment purchases/equipment reserve were discussed
 - An article specific to moving funds to the Equipment Reserve Fund is needed
- Expenses:
 - Training includes first aid/CPR, chainsaw classes, Vermont Parks and Recreation conferences
 - Training expenses are up because programs are growing
 - Mileage expenses have increased due to Aiden's reporting his mileage; that line was increased to \$500
 - Additional trash removal expense is generally due to the Farmers' Market
 - Currently the Market is charged for the extra receptacles, but not extra pickups
 - Sharon will look into how to differentiate the costs and charge Bristol CORE accordingly
 - Meridith is working on a rental ordinance for the Town Green
 - The Pottery Rent difference between budget and actuals was explained

Sharon indicated that she will look into the best practice for reporting expenses that will be covered by grant revenues. She also pointed out that some information related to the recoding of accounts will be clarified.

There was some discussion regarding the best way to present salary and benefit information in the budget, with a preference indicated by the Board for including each Department's costs within their budget lines in order to provide a full picture of the Department. Kris explained that there would need to be some level of manual record keeping involved to present this information on a Department basis.

4. Review of preliminary draft Town Meeting and Police District warnings.

Ian had drafts of both the Police District and Town Meeting Warnings available for review. He had adjusted the language of some Articles, such as that outlining property tax payments. It was agreed that the new language was easier to understand, but acknowledged that it should go through some level of legal review in order to ensure that the new language format is allowable.

There was some discussion regarding what amount of undesignated funds would be verified by auditors and able to be included in the Warning, but it was noted that there will be some amount that can be defined even if audit work is not completed, particularly the remaining ARPA fund amounts that were approved to be moved to General Budget expenses. The skate-park related amount (\$140K) was discussed as a potential initial allocation to a new Skate Park Reserve fund, which had been requested by Taylor Welch.

Special appropriation amounts were reviewed, and edits to those lines as well as other minor edits were made during the meeting's discussion of the Warning.

5. Discussion on Town Meeting engagement and attendance; Jessica Teets, Selectboard Member.

Jessica reported that four main points resulted from her work gathering information regarding increasing attendance at Town Meeting. These are an earlier start time, provision of food, provision of child care, and some level of an educational campaign.

An earlier start time was discussed, and it was agreed that the Police District informational meeting could be moved to a Selectboard meeting preceding Town Meeting day, allowing for a start time of 6 pm for Town Meeting.

Meridith presented some ideas regarding child care, which she indicated could be held in the downstairs space of Holley Hall, with some supervision provided. She also explained that food trucks might provide service for the evening, and suggested some locations for their set up as well as that a tent on the lawn would be a beneficial addition. It was agreed that it would best to have the food available prior to the meeting rather than during, as that would provide less distraction from the conversation. Meridith offered to organize child care, and Jessica indicated that she would contact some food truck vendors.

Jessica also noted that Porter Knight has some funds available through a grant focused on inclusion, which might be applied. Jennifer asked to post some information on Front Porch Forum as part of the educational piece, and that was agreed to be suitable.

6. Discussion on 2024 Ethics and Conflicts of Interest Changes: The Statewide Municipal Code of Ethics - Act 171.

The summary of the new requirements provided by Ian was reviewed; he noted that most of the contents of the Act are already in place, but suggested that Board members review the changes in more detail. He noted that Board members are required to attend a related training later in 2025.

7. Review of meeting minutes.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the Minutes of December 9, December 16, December 23, and December 30, 2024 and January 6, 2025. The motion was seconded by Jessica, and passed unanimously.

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

The total for the warrant was \$58,543.03

No licenses were up for approval.

9. Selectboard roundtable.

Peeker asked if others had been contacted regarding Front Porch Forum; it was confirmed that this was a legitimate request. Jessica noted that she has responded; it was asked that Board members copy the rest of the Board when responding to these types of requests.

Joel thanked the Board for their understanding of his absence from a couple of recent meetings.

Joel indicated that he agrees with providing some cell phone compensation in lieu of pagers for the road crew, but noted that the use is not at the same level as that of Department heads, and so would like to see it denoted appropriately, whether as a stipend or through some other mechanism.

10. Town Administrator's report.

Ian noted that he had responded to an email from Herb Olsen regarding legislation related to the recent flooding around the state.

A FEMA meeting had been held earlier in the day, but Ian indicated that most of his time is focused on Town Meeting preparation and Budget work.

V. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

Ian will forward to the other Board members an email he received from a local store owner expressing concerns regarding sidewalk snow plowing.

VI. Executive Session.

MOTION: *A motion to enter Executive Session pursuant 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) (3) [Personnel], inviting Sharon and Kris to join, passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 9:28 pm and returned to open session at 10:14 pm. No further action was taken by the Board.

VII. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary