

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, July 22, 2024**

Members Present: Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier (Chair), Peeker Heffernan, Michelle Perlee (Vice-Chair).

Members Absent: Jessica Teets.

Staff Present: Valerie Capels (Town Administrator); Eric Cota (Public Works); Bruce Nason (Police Chief), Freeda Powers (Grant Administrator)

Others Present: John Ashley (DuBois & King), Jason Gaudette (GEODesign), Marin Howell (Addison Independent), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Steve Palmer (VTM Engineering), Jim Quaglino, Roy Schiff, Sarah Stott, Kristin Underwood (BCC), Cheryl Wilson.

I. Call to Order. Joel Bouvier called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

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

A Fire Department Leave of Absence request, an authorization for Sharon Lucia to sign a loan document for Pine Street work, and approval of a grant authorization request for Hazard Mitigation Funds to be used for Briggs Hill Road work were added to the agenda.

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. Department Heads Roundtable

This item was passed over.

IV. Regular Business

1. Consider update on the Briggs Hill Road slope failures and consider options and recommendations for repair: DuBois & King and GEODesign.

Jon Ashley (DuBois & King) and Jason Gaudette (GEODesign) reviewed some of the existing conditions at the Briggs Hill slope failure, noting that a survey and wetland delineation have been completed. They explained that, even though both the upper and lower slide are a little different in nature, there are similar solutions being proposed for both areas. The solutions include rebuilding sections of the road, grading changes, slope repair, retaining walls, culvert replacements (with catch basins at inlet sides, as lower velocity at the outlet is part of the drainage design), stone at culvert outlets, and options for debris protection at inlets.

Jon and Jason presented some specific information about the two sections of the project:

- More preparation grading is needed at the upper site to ensure the slope is appropriate
- The outer edge of the road has slumped at the upper site, with more recent storm events sending drainage to one location, adding to the problem
- The limits of the rock repair were depicted
- The slopes in general are steeper than what is typically addressed in this type of solution
 - This creates a need to add vertical elements to the design

- The upper slope will need some fill
- Goal of disturbing as little area as necessary
- The plans call for a proprietary concrete block wall
- Plan details were provided, including proposed changes to the road profile

Valerie noted that most of the work to be completed is outside of the highway right-of-way and so will need property owner permission/easements.

Questions about the plans were answered, and it was explained that more dialog is needed with FEMA in order to determine final plans and costs. Currently it is anticipated that the cost of these repairs will be \$2.4M. Valerie explained that the mitigation policy has changed, so she and Frida are looking into what effect the changes have as well as looking for other funding sources. The major change that she indicated is that mitigation cannot exceed the cost of repairs.

The situation is worsening with every rain event; Valerie indicated that there is more undermining of the temporary retaining wall over time. She also pointed out that the uphill road lane is degrading, and there are plans to make the road one lane and install solar street lights. Valerie has been working with FEMA to have this considered a legitimate expense for the situation, and they are looking into it. Also, there is a need to install blocks at the bottom of the slope to keep rocks/debris from going into the roadway of Lincoln Road. This cannot be covered under last year's storm, but might be eligible under the potential declaration which is anticipated due to this July's flooding.

There was some discussion of not being able to adequately address the water runoff if the road is kept open, but that permanent closure of a portion of the road would allow for drainage solutions to be put in place that would address the situation. However, in the near future Lincoln Road will be closed for the related repair work, so it is necessary that Briggs Hill remain open.

There was also a discussion regarding an eventual permanent solution that would involve creating a new road between Lincoln Road and the far end of Briggs Hill where a detour was in place during the 1998 flooding, which would allow for access to the far side of Briggs Hill without needing to use Lincoln roads. It was agreed that a \$2.4M project which serves a minimal number of people, when the road is likely to continue deteriorating after the work is completed, is expensive and potentially alternate solutions should be investigated.

John explained that one solution might be to make Briggs Hill permanently one way, which would require a lesser amount of repair work.

John also indicated that he is able to provide some suggestions of individuals who may be able to assist in drafting appropriate easement language for both construction work and permanent access of the area outside the ROW for necessary future maintenance work.

It was pointed out that blocks at the bottom of the slope to prevent debris from entering the roadway are necessary now, but mostly for smaller debris, as the likelihood of a large boulder coming down the

entire slope is minimal. It was noted, however, that new material at the top of the slope is being uncovered with each storm system that passes through.

A scheduled August 5 meeting with FEMA will help provide clarity. John indicated that a couple of weeks will be needed to finalize plans and work on items such as easement documents; he realizes after this discussion that plans might change, and that some answers from FEMA are important.

2. Consider acceptance of updated quote from Sargent's Welding & Crane Service for installation of removeable rails on the universal fishing platform at Eagle Park

Valerie noted that several pertinent parties had met at the platform to discuss the most recently proposed solution of creating two pieces of rail for each side and sleeving the joins, and that Randy Sargent of Sargent's Welding had provided a quote of \$7450 for the work, including galvanizing the pieces he would be making. He had noted that he would be able to meet the current timeline, even though some weeks are needed for the galvanization work, if he was awarded the job by August 1.

It was discussed that the platform will need to be closed during any period in which the rails are not in place; Roy Schiff indicated that it is likely that the rails will remain in place during the fabrication and galvanization of the new pieces, and that the necessary time for closure of the platform will not be for the full time necessary for the project work to be completed. He also noted that a chain may be hung in the pathway notifying visitors that the platform is closed.

MOTION: Pecker made a motion to hire Randy Sargent to do the rail work as proposed, and to close the fishing platform at any point(s) during the project when the rails need to be removed. The motion was seconded by Michelle, and passed with Ian opposed and the rest voting in favor.

3. Roads projects updates: July 2024 storm repairs; Pine Street grinding, drainage, paving; Lincoln Road grinding, paving, etc.; and other updates

Eric outlined the upcoming schedule:

- Pine Street grinding first week of August
 - Road crew reshapes when grinding complete
 - Jill has been notified regarding marking water lines
 - Munson's will do risers where necessary
 - Paving likely to take place the end of August (base layer, top coat a couple of years out)
- Lincoln Road grinding the next day
 - Road closures and one-ways needed for Briggs/Lincoln logistics
 - Paving not until all other repair work completed (base layer, top coat a couple of years out)
- Stormwater week of August 12
 - Drainage by Jackman's
 - The installation at Munsill

Valerie noted that she has had extensions approved on the paving grants for both Pine Street and Lincoln Road. Eric confirmed that the top layer to be added in two or three years' time will be 2.5" in depth.

Eric indicated that, other than the further Briggs Hill erosion, the recent storm created issues with shoulders and culverts in just a couple of locations.

He also reported that John has completed a cemetery inspection of needed tree work; there was some discussion among the Board regarding leaving one large tree in place and creating a break in the fence (rather than removing the tree, which they would like to keep for aesthetic purposes). John is able to do the interior work now, and the exterior work once the adjacent corn field has been harvested. It was emphasized that the one leaning tree creating a safety issue needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Eric noted that he has also taken a look at the tree canopy/roadsides that need to have trees trimmed, and that he has asked for a quote for that work to be completed. He outlined his upcoming grading plans, and indicated that there is a culvert on Notch Road that needs either to be sleeved or replaced, as there is a hole developing in the roadway above the culvert.

4. Water Commission: Consider approval of a proposed Engineering Services Agreement (ESA) with VTM Engineering, PLC, for the Bristol East waterline replacement project.

Steve Palmer reminded the Board of the new Master Schedule in place for the waterline replacement, noting that they are at the beginning of the Bristol East schedule, with funding applications, etc. to follow approval of the ESA. He outlined that the agreement is generally the same as that in place for Bristol West, and that once approved by the Board it will be submitted to the State for review, which will likely take several months. Steve estimates that the cost will be about \$30K less than what has been anticipated for Bristol West, and that he may also be able to provide some construction savings for the Bristol West project.

MOTION: Pecker made a motion to approve the proposed Engineering Services Agreement with VTM Engineering, PLC, for the Bristol East waterline replacement project. The motion was seconded by Ian, and passed unanimously.

5. Water Commission: Consider approval of a request by Carroll and Laura Griggs for a new residential water connection off of Plank Road at 14 Jay Drive.

Jill indicated that this connection is from an existing curb stop on Plank Road, and that the connections along Jay Drive have been installed and are currently being tested. The one being addressed in this request is not subject to the easement that is being developed for the Jay Drive properties.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the water connection request for 14 Jay Drive, off of Plank Road, per the usual conditions. The motion was seconded by Ian, and passed unanimously.

6. Water Commission: Consider conditional approval of a request by Joel Bouvier for new residential water connections off of Pine Street.

Joel recused himself from this consideration.

Jill clarified that this is a water line extension. Joel provided a map and explained that he plans to have the work completed after Pine Street is ground but before it is paved. He and Jill confirmed that the line will be the Town's up to the curb stops, accessed via the right-of-way (ROW) along the development road and any necessary easements. The 2" connection from the main line will be in the Pine Street ROW and will essentially be a water line valve.

Jill noted that she and Steve have drafted appropriate conditions for this installation, and they both indicated that it is suitable to put the line in with temporary blocking so that it can be completed in coordination with the Pine Street paving logistics. The rest of the system's lines can be installed once the State issues the appropriate permit(s).

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the request for a new 2" water tap on Pine Street and conceptual approval of a water line extension off of Pine Street as discussed. The motion was seconded by Ian and passed 4 to 1 with Joel abstaining

7. Consider grant application authorization request to apply for up to \$15,000 through the ACRPC TAC for an updated speed limit engineering study to reduce village speed limits and vehicular study of the quantity and routes of trucks going through the village.

Sarah Stott asked if the Board would consider putting in a grant application for a traffic study, as she understands that grant funds are available and she has concerns regarding traffic, speed, and related pollution issues. Cheryl Wilson was also present, and provided a count of large trucks on North Street she compiled one morning; she also submitted some pollution/exhaust data she had gathered, noting that her HVAC system pulls these particles into her house.

Valerie explained that there are two types of studies which may be undertaken, a vehicular study and an engineering study, the latter of which may provide results to be used in addressing speed limits. There was some discussion of having completed a study in 2015, which indicated that lowering of speed limits was not called for. Valerie noted that the RPC would likely manage a study if funds were applied for and approved.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to apply for funds through ACRPC's TAC program to complete an engineering study. The motion was seconded by Peeker, and passed unanimously.

Jeff xxx was present, and inquired about progress on the Large Animal Ordinance being developed; Valerie noted that Jessica Teets had pulled together some information from other towns' ordinances, and that a draft is being developed for Bristol.

8. Consider grant application authorization request to apply for +/- \$500,000 through the Vermont Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to support the stormwater, slope stabilization, and road relocation of the Basin Street project.

Valerie explained that this is a new funding source from the State, with pre-applications due in August, with no limit on application amounts and no match required.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to authorize the submission of an application through the Vermont Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to support the stormwater, slope stabilization, and road relocation work for the Basin Street project. The motion was seconded by Michelle.

It was noted that there is already approximately \$526K available for this project through other grant awards, and that the cost estimate for construction is over \$1 million. To date there have been around \$60K in engineering and project management expenses, which have been drawn from the Transportation Alternatives Grant, one of the grants already awarded for the project.

VOTE: The motion passed, with Ian abstaining and the rest voting in favor.

Ian noted that he has concerns about the loans and related expenses involved in covering such large projects in the interim before any grant funds awarded are received by the Town.

8A. Consider grant application authorization request to apply for +/- \$500,000 through the Vermont Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to support the stormwater, slope stabilization, and road relocation of the Briggs Hill Road project.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to authorize the submission of an application through the Vermont Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to support the stormwater, slope stabilization, and road relocation work for the Briggs Hill Road project. The motion was seconded by Michelle, and passed with Ian abstaining and the rest voting in favor.

Frida noted that she understands Ian's caution, and that she hopes to attend an upcoming informational meeting about this grant program for clarification on some aspects of the grants and awards.

9. Consider grant application authorization request to apply for +/- \$20,000 through the Vermont Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to upsize the culvert on Upper Meehan Road.

Eric explained the logistics of his planned culvert relocation along the road – noting that the existing 2' culvert will be moved to a place where no culvert currently exists, and indicating that a concrete headwall will go in the new location as well.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to approve the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application for upsizing the Upper Meehan Road culvert. The motion was seconded by Peeker, and passed unanimously.

Valerie pointed out that energy work is also able to be covered through this grant, and that the Town might consider submitting some implementation plans for approval, particularly for Holley Hall, which is a shelter location.

9A. Consider identifying Sharon Lucia as an authorized representative for signing the documents related to the Pine Street water line loan.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to identify Sharon Lucia as an authorized representative for signing Pine Street water loan documents. The motion was seconded by Peeker, and passed unanimously.

10. Preliminary review and discussion of the proposed Capital Improvement Plan.

Valerie spoke of the upcoming Selectboard road trip being an opportunity to see in person some of the projects included in the Plan; she explained that this Plan is an opportunity to outline the big picture of capital expenditures, for both current and planned projects. She has been working on compiling this information for some time, and now the Plan is required for Bristol's Downtown designation renewal, which also includes a public hearing requirement for adoption of the Plan. While previously the work has been comprised of various spreadsheets, at this point Valerie is adding some narrative information for each section.

As this is a draft, evolving document, Valerie proposed having a preliminary public hearing on August 12 and then a final public hearing on August 26. Although it will always be a work in progress, a version must be submitted along with the Downtown renewal documents.

Valerie has presented the draft to the Planning Commission, noting that this Plan can serve as a planning tool, and that the Town Plan can inform the Plan as well as the Selectboard's planning for capital investments informing the development of the Town Plan's sections on capital expenditures.

She then provided a quick overview of what to anticipate seeing in the Plan, including capital project definitions (\$5K or more cost and ten years or more of infrastructure life span), articulation of projects/needs that will assist when completing grant applications, recent accomplishments, and a demonstration of the Town's commitment to capital projects. Some specifics were mentioned as well:

- Tables are organized by reserve fund
- Current balances of funds as well as scheduled contributions are outlined
- Needs outlined to determine what funds should be added
- Police, Water, and Wastewater are included separately
- Capital planning information from Town Reports to demonstrate the history of planning
- Correlation to Town Plan goals and strategies indicated
- Vehicle replacement schedules

Ian pointed out that, while this is the last required renewal of the Downtown designation, this Plan is useful and should be maintained, possibly at a more limited level, going forward. He also spoke of investing in a system that would allow department heads to view, and potentially edit, this information.

10A. Leave of Absence Request

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to approve Firefighter James Goodyear's leave of absence request. The motion was seconded by Ian, and passed unanimously.

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

The warrant was for the amount of \$436,673.36

No review of license applications was necessary.

12. Selectboard roundtable.

Peeker expressed his frustration with the rate that things are accomplished, noting that some matters are before the Board for extended periods.

The annual road trip was confirmed for July 30 at 3 pm.

Weight limits on the Harvey Road bridge were discussed, with it being confirmed that tankers, heavy equipment, and the town plow all use the bridge.

Joel requested that sidewalk priorities be reevaluated, with consideration given to West Munsill; Valerie noted that the list had been created with input from the bike/ped committee and the planning commission, but that it is possible to rearrange the order in which areas will be addressed.

Jim Quaglino expressed that he felt the Equity Committee would benefit from having a Selectboard liaison in some manner.

Email from Vermont Gas. Joel had an email from the Vice President of Vermont Gas asking about where the Town was re: the gas project pause. He sent them to the Town Admin.

13. Town Administrator's report.

Valerie highlighted several items, noting that more information was included in her written report:

- Noted the importance of approving the update to water system rates before the next billing goes out in September
- MERC presentations on energy assessment reports
- Capital Plan public hearing
- Water Use Ordinance still under revision; likely not ready to review until at least September
- Consideration of adopting a noise ordinance
- Review of a draft Livestock At Large Ordinance
- Scheduling of a public hearing for UDR updates in order to allow for a November (Election Day) vote

V. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

There was a brief discussion of possibly beginning meetings at 6:30 on a regular basis; to be discussed again.

VI. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary