

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, February 26, 2024**

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

Staff Present: Valerie Capels (Town Administrator), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk), Bruce Nason (Police Chief)

Others Present: David Brynn, James Cole, Rebecca Cole, Ruth Farmer, Noah Greenstein, Chanin Hill, Bryson Knight, Porter Knight, NEAT TV, Jim Quaglino, Ben Skolozdra, Jordan Vickers, Jennifer Wagner, Greg West, Helen Young

I. Call to Order. Darla Senecal called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm.

II. Executive Session

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3). Ian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard met in executive session from 5:45pm to 6:25pm, when it was recessed to be resumed at the end of the meeting.

III. Call to Order. Darla Senecal called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Joel Bouvier joined the meeting.

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

Consideration of Bryson Knight for appointment to the Town Health Officer position was added to the agenda as item 2A under Regular Business.

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

IV. Public Forum.

Jim Quaglino suggested that the Mount Abraham Union School District (MAUSD) consider giving the Police Department free rent if they purchase the Bristol Works property.

V. Annual Police District Meeting Public Information Meeting.

Valerie noted that the warning, Police Department Report, Budget, and Capital Vehicle Replacement Plan were all posted online. She indicated that the budget was up 4.6%. In response to questions from the Board, Bruce confirmed that there are currently three full time staff members and noted that the pay increase approved has led to more interest, but that no candidate has yet been hired through the COPS grant. Those monies (\$125K) must be expended by the end of 2026 and will be used to fund a new full-time staff member. Regarding the new Community Resource Officer position, Bruce explained that it has not yet been advertised, but that there has been an inquiry from one potential candidate.

VI. Department Head Roundtable.

Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk) reported that Town meeting is Monday, the election is all day Tuesday, and afternoon volunteers are needed. Town reports are available at the Town Office and the Library.

Bruce Nason (Police Chief) had nothing new to report.

Brett LaRose (Fire Chief) reported through a written report shared by Ian that Naylor & Breen will be evaluating the Fire Station repair needs tomorrow and that a prospective candidate is working through the application materials.

VII. Regular Business

1. Consider Development Review Board candidate Rebecca Cole to fill a vacant seat that runs to March 2024 and March 2027.

Rebecca Cole introduced herself and explained her interest in housing, the area maintaining its cultural aspects, and her desire to help out with town needs.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to appoint Rebecca Cole to the Development Review Board for a three-year term ending in March 2027. The motion was seconded by Joel. All voted in favor.

2. Consider Town Health Officer candidate Greg West for a three-year term appointed by the Vermont Health Department.

Greg West introduced himself and explained that he has been considering ways to help the town for some time now, he has a background in building and so can use that to address structural issues. Mr. West confirmed that he resides in Addison.

2A. Consider Town Health Officer candidate Bryson Knight for a three-year term appointed by the Vermont Health Department.

Bryson Knight introduced himself, explaining that he would like to give back to the community. He noted that he has a contracting background and a degree in public communication. He grew up in Bristol and works in town but lives in Winooski.

Valerie provided some information about the position, noting the frequency of calls can be variable in nature and, in the past, has included dog bites, hoarding issues, and mold growth. The State has taken on rental inspections, which in the past was in the purview of the Town Health Officer. Valerie was not able to recall a situation when the response required was so urgent that a Health Officer residing outside of Bristol would have been an issue. Joel recalled that past Officers had some type of health or medical background.

It was agreed to discuss the appointment in executive session.

Later in the meeting, Valerie received additional communication: Greg West via email explaining that his wife in the health care field and that he is aware of related issues. Helen Young noted in the Zoom chat that the ad for the position specifically stated that a health background was not necessary, but that knowledge of buildings would be useful.

3. Consider Vermont Paddler's Club Eagle Park and Bartlett's Falls use application for annual one-day kayak event Saturday, April 6, 2024, 8:00am – 6:00pm.

Jordan Vickers was present, and confirmed that a rain date of April 13 has been set.

MOTION: Joel made a motion to approve the Paddler's Club application for the use of Eagle Park and Bartlett's Fall as proposed on April 6, 2024, with a rain date of April 13, 2024. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

4. Review and approval of Use Value Assessment Forest Conservation Plan for the Town of Bristol's Seth Hill Waterworks in Lincoln.

David Brynn provided information regarding the Plan, which he noted needs to be updated on a ten-year cycle as part of the Current Use program, which focuses on maintaining forest productivity. He explained that he completed an inventory of the land and that all sections are reasonably stocked, with quite a bit of diversity found on the parcel. David provided information on the current proposed iteration of the Plan, which does not alter any ownership objectives or limit recreational uses or historical acknowledgment previously included. He noted the gist of the plan at this point is addressing erosion control on some of the steeper portions of the property, mainly through development of water bars where appropriate, using a small excavator during dry summer conditions. He confirmed that grant money will cover the work required and may even allow for some educational aspects to be incorporated in the work.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to approve the Conservation Plan for Seth Hill Waterworks as presented, and to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the document on behalf of the Selectboard. The motion was seconded by Joel. All voted in favor.

5. Preparations, logistics, and other details for the in-person March 4 annual Police District and Town Meetings with Moderator Jennifer Wagner.

Jennifer Wagner discussed several aspects of Town Meeting with the Board, including what articles might lead to longer conversations, Zoom traffic moderation, and logistics in general. Ian offered to reach out to NEAT TV regarding their coverage.

6. Consider selection of consultant team for the Bristol Accessible Recreation Town Parks project and allocation of ARPA funds for it.

Valerie explained that six responses had been received to the RFP that was published, and that the committee narrowed the choices to two. She indicated that the CRO proposal includes a potential additional cost of several thousand dollars for each park above the \$50K general amount included in the proposal. The proposal from Dubois & King is for \$43K. Valerie explained that once this work is complete and designs are in place, the shovel-ready projects will be more likely to qualify for grant funds to be awarded for construction of the features to be implemented. She also noted that ongoing maintenance costs need to be considered when evaluating the consultant's proposed plans.

It was discussed that permitting is likely not necessary for the work to be completed or will be minimal if required. The Town has been pleased with past work completed with Dubois & King. Peeker noted that Memorial Park will be more expensive to address than others.

Porter joined the meeting and expressed that it should be emphasized to Dubois & King that community engagement and creative thinking are to be important aspects of the project, and that she felt their presentation was good. She also suggested that Dubois & King reach out to Vermont Adaptive for their input/expertise in adaptive design features.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to accept the proposal from Dubois & King for an amount not to exceed \$45K. The motion was seconded by Peeker. All voted in favor.

7. Consider additional allocations of ARPA funding.

Valerie had no new proposals to report, but provided some expense and balance information, noting that there remains approximately \$282K of unallocated funds, after accounting for the \$45K just approved for park work and \$5K for bus shelter needs.

There was some discussion of the allocation of \$10K per year for three years for Farmers' Market support that was previously approved to pay for a director position. Ian explained there might also be Farmer's Market support available through Bristol CORE, and that the goal is to have the market become self-sustaining, which would result in the funding not being needed for the full three years. Porter explained that the ARPA committee desired to support local food and farmers, and that there is hope there will be more farm stands at the market this summer, as there has been sentiment expressed that the market has more craft/prepared food vendors than farmers. Anecdotal information regarding the minimal number of farmers was discussed, and it was pointed out that the market was just beginning again and may need some time to establish farm vendors. Ian noted that a paid manager position will be able to focus some efforts on this aspect of the market. Information about the Farmers Market budget was requested for further discussion.

Ian confirmed that there are updates in the Town Report from those groups which have already received ARPA funds. It was mentioned that the library may be looking for funding, as they are investigating outdoor classroom possibilities.

8. Consider retroactive grant authorization request from the Hub Teen Center to the Vermont Afterschool Vermont Youth Project.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to retroactively authorize the grant submission to the Vermont Afterschool Youth Project. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

9. Review and approval of the January 8, January 15, January 29, February 1, and February 12, 2024 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the Minutes of January 8 and January 15, 2024. The motion was seconded by Joel. All voted in favor.

Approval of the other minutes was postponed.

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

The warrant was for the amount of \$431,718.06. No license applications needed approval.

11. Selectboard roundtable.

Ian asked that he be notified of any Town Meeting information on the website that needed attention.

Ian asked about a policy regarding flyers being posted on lamp poles. There was some discussion of these being removed in the past, although no policy exists. The recent postings will be removed.

Ian reported that the Energy Committee met recently, and there was discomfort expressed regarding broaching the topic of natural gas being brought to Bristol, mostly due to legal issues that arose when the issue was worked on in the past. The Energy Committee discussion was prompted by Joel's request to look into the matter, and there was some discussion regarding the suitability of one Board member making such a request before discussion with the full Board. Ben Skolozdra of the Energy Committee was present and explained that the Committee had approached the topic based on Joel's request as an individual community member, not as a Board request. Ben explained that the Committee is working to determine what their role might be in relation to this matter going forward.

Darla cautioned drivers to be careful on the roads until patchwork and other repairs can be addressed.

12. Town Administrator's report.

Valerie drew attention to the rescheduling of the dog ordinance violation hearing to March 11, 2024.

She also noted that the letter to the State regarding the delay in processing Bristol's water loan documents, for which she acknowledged Jill Marsano and Steve Palmer's input, had triggered a response stating that the paperwork will be reviewed during the coming week.

VIII. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

Valerie highlighted that a response had been received to her inquiry regarding horses leaving their owners' property, and that a civil action is currently the only remedy.

IX. Executive Session

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3). Joel recused himself and left the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

The Selectboard met in executive session from 8:22pm to 8:48pm. Upon returning to open session, the following action was taken:

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to hire Justin Bouvier as the Bristol Town Treasurer at the rate discussed with a review after six months. Ian seconded. All voted in favor.

IX. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator