

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, July 24, 2023**

Members Present: Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier (Vice-Chair), Pecker Heffernan, Michelle Perlee
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Valerie Capels (Town Administrator), Eric Cota (Public Works Foreman), Meridith McFarland (Rec Director), Bruce Nason (Police Chief), Kristen Underwood, Taylor Welch (Teen Center Director)
Others Present: Brian Cote, Ken Johnson, Ted Lylis (Historical Society), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Jim Quaglino, Roy Schiff.

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

II. Executive Session

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to enter executive session in order to discuss personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) and potential contract negotiations per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A). Police Chief Bruce Nason was invited to participate. Joel seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard met in executive session from 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Upon returning to open session, no action was taken and the executive session was continued at the other end of the meeting.

III. Call to Order. Joel Bouvier called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

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

The items to be approved through the Consent Agenda were removed so that they could be considered individually. Valerie asked that the matter of the American Legion water billing update be added to the Water and Sewer Commission Consent Agenda.

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

IV. Public Forum.

Ted Lylis presented information regarding the new sign that the Historical Society would like to install to replace the existing sign on West Street. He explained that the Historical Society will undertake the work involved for installation and future maintenance and would also like to be assigned full financial responsibility for the project. Valerie recommended contacting the Zoning Administrator to determine if a permit is necessary. Joel indicated that the matter can be placed on the agenda for the first August Selectboard meeting.

V. Department Head Roundtable.

Meridith McFarland (Recreation Director):

- Swim program is active, roller event was well attended, some music and theater shows are coming up
- Camps are still underway, and all spaces are sold out
- Holley Hall steps project is almost complete
- Planning for Harvest Fest has begun
- Memorial Park sign is ready to be hung, Meridith has it available

- Pocock will be on August 19, Town permitting is all set, Meridith will follow up re liquor licensing

Eric Cota (Public Works):

- Rain-related road work is ongoing, although most roads got through the recent rain event OK
- Mowing continues

Taylor (Teen Center Director):

- Hub is open, camps are running
- Found a van, at cost - 2019 Ford Transit for about \$43K in good shape with no rust

Bruce (Police Department):

- A new dog complaint will be coming in

VI. Consent Agenda Items

1. **Approve grant authorization request from Kristen Underwood's proposal for a Flood Resilient Communities Fund grant to conduct a scoping study/alternatives analysis of the New Haven River from the Hewitt Road bridge to the Saunders River Access to improve flood resiliency, improve water quality, and enhance habitats. No matching funds are required.**

Kristen Underwood provided an overview of recent and regularly occurring flood damage. She indicated she has consulted with Agency of Natural Resources Department of Environmental Conservation (ANR DEC) regarding permit requirements and has been pointed to Vermont Emergency Management's Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF). Kristen also noted that she has been in touch with the area's landowners, who are in support of applying for an engineering study through the FRCF. The Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) is able to help with the application and serve as grant administrator; these services would add 5% to the grant amount required, which would be approximately \$42K. The application is due by July 31.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve applying for a grant through the FRCF program, to have ACRPC serve as the grant administrator, and authorize Kristen to serve as the primary contact. The motion was seconded by Pecker. All voted in favor.

2. **Approve curb cut driveway access permit application 2023-03DA for the Masonic Libanus Lodge #47 for a new ADA entrance on North Street per DPW Foreman Eric Cota's recommended conditions.**

It was outlined that this new drive will be ADA access only and is planned to provide better vehicle access to the elevator area. A new driveway will be created. There was discussion of the sidewalk and water system impacts of the new access point. Jill proposed a solution for integrating the water supply curb stop at the site, and it was agreed that any cracked sidewalk tiles resulting from the project will be replaced to match the current dimensions. Joel expressed some concerns regarding water runoff that may ice up. A closer look at images of the property relieved some of that concern.

MOTION: Pecker made a motion to approve the new access permit, incorporating both the Road and Water Department conditions as outlined. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

3. Approve curb cut driveway access permit application 2023-04DA to relocate a driveway at 605 Cove Road per DPW Foreman Eric Cota's recommended conditions.

Eric explained that this move is planned so that the new driveway will be less steep than the existing one. He noted that there is good site distance at the proposed location, that undergrowth at the road will be cut back, and that a culvert and hidden drive signage will not be necessary. The old drive will become unusable, as the culvert will be removed.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to approve the access permit with the Road Department conditions incorporated, including removal of the culvert and existing access at the current site. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

VII. Water and Sewer Commission Consent Agenda

MOTION: Ian made a motion to approve the Water and Sewer Commission Consent Agenda, consisting of the items outlined below. The motion was seconded by Michelle and passed unanimously.

1. Authorize submission of the Step III construction loan application to the DWSRF program for the Pine Street waterline replacement and designate Town Administrator Valerie Capels as the authorized representative. Will require Selectboard signatures on the Certification form.
2. Authorize submission of the Step II loan application to the DWSRF program for the Bristol West waterline replacement design and designate Town Administrator Valerie Capels as the authorized representative. Will require Selectboard signatures on the Certification form.
3. Approve new residential water connection application for 65 W. Pleasant Street per Water Operator's recommended conditions.
4. Approve minor modification to the previously approved Sewer Department budget so it is level-funded with the previous year rather than decreased.
5. Added: Authorize the Town Clerk/Assistant Treasurer to adjust the American Legion's water bill following resolution of a meter and billing error.

It was noted that 65 West Pleasant Street has broken sidewalk tiles and still requires an access permit.

VIII. Regular Business

1. Consider Lincoln Road River Restoration Project bids and award of contract.

Valerie noted that three bids had been received and that details were included in her written report. Roy Schiff and Brian Cote noted that they have met with Jim Cota of VTrans regarding the options possible for this work, and he indicated that the Agreement may be extended by a year if necessary, and that the amount available may be increased to \$200K, which is the maximum allowed. The bids received were all over \$500K, and it was discussed that either adjusting the scope of work or seeking further funding would push the project out until next year. Additionally, the low bidders were consulted, and they expressed concerns regarding the cost of materials increasing in the coming months and potentially needing to adjust the bid price accordingly if delayed.

There was some discussion of the necessity for pinning at both sections of the proposed project, and it was confirmed that the placement of rip-rap alone would not be as effective or provide as long-term a solution as will inclusion of the pinning in the work to be completed. It was explained that because the two sections to be addressed are only half a mile apart, they should be addressed as one project.

It was agreed to investigate other funding possibilities and make a final decision regarding this work at the August 14 Selectboard meeting.

2. Consider Eagle Park Universal Fishing Platform Project bids and award of contract. *May include deliberation in executive session regarding contract negotiations.*

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to award the bid for this project to Masterson and Son for the amount of \$70,600 with the caveat that this project may be decoupled from the Lincoln Road River Restoration project. The motion was seconded by Peeker. All voted in favor.

3. Discussion of potential long-term options to stabilize the Briggs Hill Road slope failure.

Eric reported on current conditions, noting that there are two sections of the road that need to be addressed. Part of slope has washed away and the road is partially undermined in at least one of the locations. He explained that he has been exploring different approaches for repair with contractors, for both temporary stabilization and subsequent long-term solutions. He indicated that it will be necessary to work through potential assistance and necessary procedural steps with FEMA representatives.

The temporary work includes the use of concrete blocks to stabilize the slope, Eric confirmed that these should provide a year's time to get the longer-term work completed, and that the blocks will become Town property once installed. He noted that another temporary option is to rip-rap a larger area of the slope, and that there will be additional work and costs associated with a decision to use the concrete block solution.

Areas in town that potentially could see issues with more rain were discussed, with Peeker noting one section of Lower Notch Road to watch.

4. Consider applying to the ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee for a scoping study for upgrading LaFrance Road from Class 4 to Class 3.

Valerie explained this is the ACRPC's annual planning grant program, and proposed applying to study whether LaFrance Road should be reclassified from a Class 4 to a Class 3 road. She explained that this would be an information-gathering study. Eric indicated that the town is responsible for bridges and culverts on Class 4 roads, and that the cost of a new culvert will need to be incurred whether or not the road classification is changed. However, a Class 3 road qualifies for FEMA reimbursement and annual funding from the State. Board members expressed that the upkeep costs – plowing, grading, etc. – would outweigh the costs associated with the current repair needs and did not feel that the potential for reimbursement was worth taking on the road maintenance.

Valerie reviewed some of the past uses made of this RPC funding. Ian offered to look into other potential projects for the funds.

5. Consider options for updating the Town-owned Seth Hill Waterworks (Lincoln, VT) Forest Conservation Plan that expires April 2024.

Valerie reported that David Brynn with Vermont Family Forests provided a proposal for updating the Conservation Plan that they originally prepared almost 10 years ago. The scope of work for the proposed update includes an estimated cost of \$1,750 for re-inventorying the area, assuming all objectives remain the same. Peeker explained the history of the 113-acre property. There was brief discussion about whether the Town should consider selling it. Jill indicated it would be best for the Town to maintain ownership as the land does provide a back-up water source.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to hire David Brynn to update the Forest Conservation Plan for an amount not to exceed \$1,750. The motion was seconded by Ian. All voted in favor.

6. Review and approval of the June 26 and July 10, 2023 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the July 10 minutes with suggested changes incorporated. The motion was seconded by Peeker. All voted in favor.

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

The warrant was for the amount of \$ 268,022.72.

MOTION: There was consensus to approve the Liquor License for Cubbers.

13. Selectboard Roundtable

Ian reminded the group that he had presented Howden Hall sign design options at a recent meeting and that his involvement in the project was meant to ensure that the new sign is visually compatible with other signs in town.

Joel asked for an update on the bus shelters. Ian indicated that two have been received, one permit is in place, and that the bell box conundrum at the old high school site is still being sorted out.

Joel noted that he is waiting for a response from the school regarding the blinking sign at the top of Spring and Mountain Streets. He also noted that Barbara Brown had passed away and expressed condolences to her family.

Jill reported that the kick-off meeting for the Pine Street Water Line Replacement Project with Jill and others is scheduled for the coming week. Dig Safe markings are in place, and service line information from residents is coming in. About 25% have been received. Jill noted that there are potentially some lead lines to be removed, for which there is funding available for replacement.

Ian suggested a sidewalk scoping study at the Post Office area might be suitable for Transportation Planning Grant from the RPC. Valerie noted that a Bike/Ped Grant might be more suitable there, as there will be several needs that should be addressed in that area and the scope would be beyond the ACRPC TAC program.

14. Town Administrator's Report.

Valerie had nothing to add to her written report.

IX. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

X. Executive Session

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to enter Executive Session in order to discuss potential contract negotiations per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A), real estate negotiations per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(2), and personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3). Ian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard met in Executive Session from 9:19pm to 10:00pm Upon returning to open session, the following actions were taken:

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to adjust Police Officer Francis Smith's hourly compensation as recommended by Police Chief Nason. Ian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ian made a motion to accept the Town Administrator's recommendations to hire Freeda Powers as Bristol's new Grant Writer / Administrator, with a review after six months to see how it is going. Michelle seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Valerie Capels, Town Administrator