

**Subject:** Re: Town of Bristol Fire Warden Position  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 5:11:26 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Bristol Town Administrator  
**To:** Dillner, Dan, Brett LaRose

Thank you for speaking with Ed, Brett.

I have this on the Selectboard agenda for May 12.

Ian

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Ian Albinson, Interim Town Administrator  
Town of Bristol  
P.O. Box 249, 1 South Street  
Bristol, VT 05443  
(802) 453-2410 ext. 1  
[townadmin@bristolvt.org](mailto:townadmin@bristolvt.org)  
[www.bristolvt.org](http://www.bristolvt.org) | [Facebook](#)

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**From:** Brett LaRose <[chief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:chief@bristolfiredepartment.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 15, 2025 2:57 PM  
**To:** Town of Bristol <[town@bristolvt.org](mailto:town@bristolvt.org)>; Dillner, Dan <[Dan.Dillner@vermont.gov](mailto:Dan.Dillner@vermont.gov)>  
**Subject:** Town of Bristol Fire Warden Position

Hello Ian and Dan,

For your awareness, I stopped by the home of Ed and Sue Shepard on Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup> and visited with them for over an hour about Bristol's Fire Warden position that is coming to term June 30<sup>th</sup>. I intentionally included Sue in the conversation as Sue issues just as many if not more burn permits than Ed. The message I shared with Ed is that moving forward, it would be the preference of Forest, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) that the position of fire warden be filled by a chief officer on the local fire department, preferably the fire chief, for operational response coordination. I asked Ed if he was ok with not being considered for the next 5-year appointment and his response was, "if that is what's best for the Town and State, I'm good with that."

I was not aware of it until my visit with Ed that day that FPR recognized Ed in January 2025 for his 30 years of service as Bristol's Fire Warden. Ed shared the plaque that FPR sent to him which he was clearly proud of and touched by the recognition. Ed said, "30 years of

service, that's a nice round number to finish off my time as fire warden."

Please let me know if either of you need anything else from me.

Thank you,

Brett LaRose, Chief  
Town of Bristol  
P.O. Box 249  
Bristol, VT 05443  
P: (802) 453-3201  
C: (802) 798-2673  
E: [chief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:chief@bristolfiredepartment.org)  
W: [www.bristolfiredepartment.org](http://www.bristolfiredepartment.org)

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**From:** Brett LaRose <[chief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:chief@bristolfiredepartment.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 15, 2025 2:29 PM  
**To:** Brett LaRose <[blarose@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:blarose@bristolfiredepartment.org)>  
**Subject:** FW: Town of Bristol Fire Warden Position

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**From:** Bristol Fire Dept Chief <[chief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:chief@bristolfiredepartment.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 10:27 AM  
**To:** Bristol Town Administrator <[townadmin@bristolvt.org](mailto:townadmin@bristolvt.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Town of Bristol Fire Warden Position

No questions or concerns. My only suggestion would be to wait on including this topic as an agenda item until the Town receives the reappointment paperwork from the VT Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) notifying them that the five-year fire warden appointment is coming to term. This paperwork will include the form that the Town will submit to FPR that will include the Selectboards recommendation for the appointment.

Brett LaRose, Chief  
Town of Bristol  
P.O. Box 249  
Bristol, VT 05443  
P: (802) 453-3201  
C: (802) 798-2673  
E: [chief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:chief@bristolfiredepartment.org)  
W: [www.bristolfiredepartment.org](http://www.bristolfiredepartment.org)

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**From:** Bristol Town Administrator <[townadmin@bristolvt.org](mailto:townadmin@bristolvt.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 14, 2025 12:45 PM  
**To:** Bristol Fire Dept Chief <[chief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:chief@bristolfiredepartment.org)>  
**Cc:** Bristol Fire Dept Deputy Chief <[deputychief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:deputychief@bristolfiredepartment.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Town of Bristol Fire Warden Position

Hi Brett,

Thanks for the detailed update on this position.

I think this makes a great deal of sense, and since you're willing to fill the role, I would recommend that to the Selectboard. I can put this on the March 24 agenda.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Ian

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Ian Albinson, Interim Town Administrator  
Town of Bristol  
P.O. Box 249, 1 South Street  
Bristol, VT 05443  
(802) 453-2410 ext. 1  
[townadmin@bristolvt.org](mailto:townadmin@bristolvt.org)  
[www.bristolvt.org](http://www.bristolvt.org) | [Facebook](#)

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**From:** Bristol Fire Dept Chief <[chief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:chief@bristolfiredepartment.org)>  
**Date:** Thursday, March 13, 2025 at 6:38 PM  
**To:** Bristol Town Administrator <[townadmin@bristolvt.org](mailto:townadmin@bristolvt.org)>  
**Cc:** Bristol Fire Dept Deputy Chief <[deputychief@bristolfiredepartment.org](mailto:deputychief@bristolfiredepartment.org)>  
**Subject:** Town of Bristol Fire Warden Position

Hi Ian,

Yesterday I was contacted by Dan Dillner, State Forest Fire Supervisor from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR), regarding the Town of Bristol's Forest Fire Warden position that it is up for reappointment July 1, 2025.

Bristol's Fire Warden position is currently filled by Edward Shepard and is one of forty-eight fire warden positions in the State that are up for the 5-year reappointment this year. Towns up for reappointment will be receiving information from FPR in the coming weeks reminding them of this and their responsibility to submit their recommendation for Fire Warden to the Commissioner of FPR for review and appointment. Dan contacted me as the Fire Chief and recommended that I speak with the Selectboard regarding Bristol's upcoming reappointment and make the recommendation to the Selectboard that they consider my role as Fire Chief be appointed as the next Fire Warden. Per Dan, it is the preference of FPR that this position be filled by a chief officer on the local fire department, preferably the fire chief.

Today more than ever it is imperative that the fire warden be filled by a qualified person (see attached job description). For the record, I am already performing these duties today. I, along with Deputy Chief Forand, are currently designated as "Key Person's" (see page 8 of the Fire Warden Handbook for definition) regularly issuing burning permits. The fire department has taken on the lead role in the coordination and suppression of forest and brush fires in Bristol and when these meet the state threshold, it is the fire department that is fulfilling the State's reporting requirements via an online portal. The day-to-day responsibility of issuing burning permits is the most time-consuming responsibility of the fire warden, again, something we are already doing. To do this effectively, the fire warden must monitor the Fire Danger Forecast daily that is provided by the National Weather Service in Burlington. These fire danger forecasts and the predicted fire danger levels defined by the state, directly correlate with Vermont's five Fire Danger Response Areas and are the basis for our decision as to whether a permit will be issued. Equally as important, is the enforcement of Vermont's outdoor burning laws and responding to complaints of an outdoor fire, whether it be permitted or not, and enforce these laws, when necessary, to include extinguishing the fire and when required, notifying the Department of Environmental Conservation Enforcement Division to follow up on illegal burning (e.g., trash, construction waste, etc.). This is not a pleasant part the job, but it is an important part and one that I am involved in multiple times a year. My decades of experience working for an emergency services organization and with people in stressful situations, has provided me with the skills and ability to mitigate these situations.

As I noted earlier, Ed Shepard is currently Bristol's Fire Warden. Ed is not an active member of the fire department and is currently classified as an "in-active Life Member". Ed was removed from the fire department's operational roster five years ago as he is not capable of fulfilling the duties and responsibilities for his assigned function. Currently, Ed and his wife Sue issue burning permits on behalf of the Town. Sue is not designated as a deputy fire warden or key person. This is a historical and typical practice in many of Vermont's small towns where the fire warden's

significant other is issuing burning permits on the wardens' behalf. There was a time when this was practice was not looked at closely but in today's ever-changing environment, the responsibility and accountability of the fire warden position is much greater. The fire warden position must be filled by someone who has the training, ability to enforce rules and regulations, and in a position to be able to coordinate and execute a response to a forest or brush fire. Today, that responsibility is handled by the fire department. Ed and Sue are both wonderful people with good intentions however, those intentions are no longer an acceptable practice for the position of Fire Warden.

Should the Selectboard decide to go in this direction, I am happy to stop by Ed's and have this conversation with him.

Thank you,  
-Brett

Brett LaRose, Chief  
Town of Bristol  
P.O. Box 249  
Bristol, VT 05443  
P: (802) 453-3201  
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W: [www.bristolfiredepartment.org](http://www.bristolfiredepartment.org)

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