

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, May 12, 2025**

Members Present: Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier, Peekar Heffernan (Chair), Michelle Perlee (Vice-Chair), Jessica Teets

Staff Present: Eric Cota (Public Works Foreman), Colby Gile (PWD), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief), Aidan Lenihan (Rec Coordinator), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk), Francis Smith (Police Department), Kris Perlee (Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Town Clerk), Freeda Powers (Grant Administrator)

Others Present: Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Steve Palmer (VTM), Jim Quaglino, NEAT

I. Call to Order. Peekar Heffernan called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

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

One item was removed from Consent Agenda.

II. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

III. Department Head Roundtable.

Bruce Nason (Police Chief):

- Chief Nason announced an award for Officer Francis Smith related to his response to a mental health crisis situation; Officer Smith was present, and Chief Nason read the recognition letter for receipt of the Frank Silfies Award from Team Two Vermont and offered congratulations from the Department staff.

Eric Cota (Road Foreman):

- Street sweeping has commenced – broom is broken, but some sweeping already completed
- Unable to hear the rest of what Eric reported on

Brett LaRose (Fire Chief):

- Congratulations to Officer Smith
- Inaugural training using the Conex box structure this week
- Will be building a roof atop the structure as well
- This will increase training opportunities
- A recent electrical surge destroyed the station's alarm panel; a quote has been received for replacement at \$5K and an insurance claim will be submitted
- No decision made yet on purchase of pickup support truck
- Have begun discussions regarding replacing both older pumper and rescue truck with one vehicle
 - Had an opportunity to look at, evaluate, and drive a Bolton truck – won't be adequate because will be overweight

IV. Consent Agenda.

Some information related to the Consent Agenda items was provided.

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda, consisting of the items listed below, passed unanimously.

- Approve letter of intent to participate in the FY2026 VTrans Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program.
- Approve purchase of a vehicle for the Community Resource Specialist position, allocating up to \$23K of unassigned funds for this purpose.

V. Regular Business

1. Town of Bristol Fire Warden Position Update: Brett LaRose, Fire Chief.

Brett explained that Edward Shephard has been Bristol's Fire Warden for over 30 years, and that his current appointment ends on June 30, 2025. Brett further outlined that this program is overseen by the VT Department of Forest Parks and Recreation (FPR), and that FPR prefers to have a Fire Chief or lead officer as the Warden. Brett has reached out to Ed, who is comfortable with no longer serving. Brett has been doing the required permit issuing, documentation, enforcement, and so forth for several years, and is willing to be appointed to the position; he recommended appointing a Deputy Warden or other key personnel as well.

Board members thanked Ed for his many years of service in the Warden position.

MOTION: *Michelle moved to appoint Brett LaRose as Fire Warden, and to appoint as Deputy Wardens those people recommended by Brett, all appointments to begin on July 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Joel, and passed unanimously.*

Brett spoke of the potential for the Board to adopt an ordinance related to outdoor burning, as there are many factors to consider when issuing a permit, and this would provide an avenue for follow up if permit conditions weren't adhered to.

2. Town Green Fountain Restoration Proposal: Aidan Lenihan, BRD.

Aidan explained that a project he would like to complete as part of his focus on the beautification of Bristol's parks is the restoration of the fountain located on the Town Green. He indicated that the fountain functionality is being repaired, and that a pump has been ordered. He would also like to replace the cherub statue that was part of the fountain until it broke in the 1970s, and suggested that a community fundraising effort be a primary effort for raising the \$35K estimated to be needed for the repair. Freeda also outlined some grant possibilities that might be pursued for this project.

MOTION: *Joel moved to approve the Recreation Department's beginning a funding campaign for repair of the fountain cherub. The motion was seconded by Michelle, and passed unanimously.*

VI. Public Hearing - Water and Sewer District Annual Meeting.

Peeker suspended the Regular Board Meeting and Opened the Water and Sewer District Annual Meeting Review and approval of operating budgets, capital budgets:

- Sewer system operating budget
 - Questions were answered regarding grease trap cleaning charges
 - The relationship between previous years' bond payment amounts and the current allocation for appropriations was noted
 - There was some discussion regarding the potential to connect the Library to the system, as it is outside of the service area
 - Ian explained some formatting changes in the budget, mostly related to inclusion of a set administrative fee rather than a more detailed accounting of staff expenses
 - Work continues on developing an education plan for keeping the system cleaner by reducing the amount of high strength waste that enters it
 - Imposition of a surcharge related to grease trap impacts would require enforcement and related expenses

- Difficult to budget for system improvements with only 34 users contributing to expenses
 - Reduction in organic high strength waste would provide more capacity for additional users
- Reserve fund is not large enough to cover any unexpected catastrophic repair needs
- A 3% increase in fees will likely be needed to cover expenses
- \$5K in delinquencies
- Water system operating budget
 - Electricity expenses not down as much as anticipated with having fixed leaks and completed the first line replacement
 - Discussion of potential for turbine for water line coming down the hill; Jill will look into this
 - Water Line Inventory expenses included of \$24,750; these have mostly been reimbursed, and it needs to be determined why this isn't reflected
 - Sharon noted that bills have been sent back as 'disallowed;' Ian will look into this
 - Ian pointed out some other budget lines that can be cleaned up
 - Accounting for the system is accrual based, so recent billings are not fully reflected as all payments not yet received
 - \$66K in delinquencies
 - This will be reviewed again in two weeks

Bristol waterline replacement schedule review:

Steve Palmer outlined the three phases left to complete within the waterline replacement project: Bristol West, Bristol East, and Rockydale. He indicated that things are currently on schedule, with permits in place for Bristol West and submission of the Project Priority List Application complete. Bristol East requires some minor field work to be completed, and then the layout for that segment will be complete and permitting can begin.

Steve noted that bid specs for Bristol West have been drafted, and outlined that related RFPs could be published in the fall, for review and awarding at the beginning of 2026.

It was confirmed that there are still multiple locations that need to provide information in order to complete the Service Line Inventory.

There was a brief discussion regarding the need to perform some tree removal in order to go over land rather than along the roadway for the Rockydale section of the project.

The information gleaned from a call with several State staff members was outlined; currently lead service line replacement is potentially being reimbursed at 50%. Jill and Steve estimate that the cost per line will average between \$3K and \$5K. It was questioned whether there can be a mandate to replace these lines with no funding provided. There are 70 lines currently to be replaced, several financing logistics are available to be explored. It was indicated by State employees that expenses for a project manager would not be reimbursable.

Ian explained the connection between the amount in Bristol's reserve fund and the amount of forgiveness allowed through the DWSRF, and reviewed a spreadsheet containing four scenarios and the impacts on payments and user fees over the coming years. He also explained some of the difficulties involved in making a decision regarding how to proceed with phasing and financing, including unknown State factors and other inputs.

Ian also reviewed DEC's calculation spreadsheet used in determining the loan forgiveness rate, noting that it needs to be known what number will be used for residential units in order to perform the calculations. Ian

explained several financing strategies possible for working to increase the forgiveness rate and reduce payment amounts.

Review of the Capital Improvement Plan will take place at the next Board meeting.

VII. Regular Business continued

1. Review and approval of past meeting minutes.

MOTION: *A motion to adopt the minutes of prior meetings which had been made available for review, incorporating changes suggested by Michelle, passed unanimously.*

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

The warrant was for the amount of \$76,591.34

No liquor licenses were reviewed.

3. Selectboard Roundtable

Joel asked about street tree removal necessary for upcoming projects, and the potential for stump grinding rather than pulling roots.

Joel noted that the landowner of the proposed food truck location at Split Rock asked for assurance that the food truck will not be on his property; Joel will visit the site and confirm.

Joel reported that Pine Street residents have requested that the newly-graveled portions of the road shoulder be reverted to topsoil coverage.

Peeker reported that Four Hills had requested permission to plant corn on Town property at the corner of Hewitt Road; it was agreed to grant this permission.

It was agreed to meet on June 2 rather than May 26, which is Memorial Day.

4. Interim Town Administrator's Update

Ian reported on the following:

- Water system matters have been his primary focus
- TA interviews – Board members are able to watch recorded interviews

VIII. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

IX. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary