

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, December 16, 2024**

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

Staff Present: Valerie Capels (Town Administrator), Eric Cota (Road Foreman), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk), Bruce Nason (Police Chief), Kris Perlee (Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Town Clerk)

Others Present: David Brynn (Vermont Family Forests), Sally Burrell, Don Gale (Twin Maple Sugar Works), Myke Kinsella, Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Steve Palmer (VTM), Jim Quaglino, Daniella Sutherland, Mike Winslow (ACRPC)

I. Call to Order. Joel Bouvier called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. Executive Session re personnel matters per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3).

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

The meeting entered Executive Session at 6:00 pm and returned to Open Session at 6:30 pm.

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

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

A fourth item was added to the Consent Agenda.

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

IV. Public Forum.

Jim Quaglino offered best wishes to Valerie, as this would be her last official Selectboard meeting. Joel and the rest of the Board also expressed their thanks and best wishes.

V. Department Head Roundtable.

Eric Cota (Road Foreman):

- No updates to report

Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk):

- Crossover category work with NEMRC completed

Bruce Nason (Police Chief):

- Things have been busy, expressed his thanks to the public for information provided in a current investigation

Kris Perlee (Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Town Clerk)

- Working on employee health coverage options
- Preparing for end of year financials
- Water rate conversion has been completed for upcoming billing

VI. Consent Agenda.

MOTION: Jessica made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, consisting of the items listed below. The motion was seconded by Peeker, and after some clarification of the items included, passed with Michelle and Joel opposed.

- Approve GPI Basin Street Improvement Municipal Project Manager (MPM) contract amendment to extend it from ending December 31, 2025 to December 31, 2027.
- Authorize closure of the Town Office from noon, Tuesday, December 24 through Friday, December 27, 2024 and Wednesday, January 1 through Friday, January 3, 2025.
- Approve request to install a memorial plaque on a refurbished bench at Holley Hall for Megan Thomas: Aidan Lenihan.
- Authorize submission of a grant application to Vermont Afterschool for skate park and staff funding.

VII. Regular Business

1. Consider appointment of candidate to fill Library Trustee vacancy: Daniella Sutherland.

Daniella introduced herself and explained her interest in serving as a Library Trustee. It was explained that typically the Trustees recommend appointees, but the Board indicated their comfort with appointing Daniella for this short period without that recommendation.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to appoint Daniella Sutherland as a Library Trustee through Town Meeting Day, 2025. The motion was seconded by Jessica and passed with Joel and Ian abstaining.

2. Consider renewal of Twin Maple Sugar Works' five-year lease at the Seth Hill Waterworks; discuss access concerns from recent erosion management installations.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the renewal of Twin Maple Sugar Works' lease at the Seth Hill Waterworks property. The motion was seconded by Ian.

Valerie noted that the lease end date should be December 2030.

Don Gale, owner of Twin Maple Sugar Works, and David Brynn of Vermont Family Forests were present to discuss erosion concerns related to recent road work at the Waterworks property. Myke Kinsella, who administers the grant funding for the operation, was also present.

Don reported that he had removed some downed trees from the roadway, as he thought they were in place to keep bikers and horses from using the site. He noted that he has heard concerns from hikers and cross-country skiers who have difficulty using the roads due to the size and steepness of the water bars which have been created. He expressed that he believes the water bars are dangerously deep, and that of the 34 that are in place between the gate and the top of the road, 8 contained water, with 2 having running water.

David explained why the water bars were constructed this way, and that the Clean Water grant which provided the funding for their development outlined that Forestry AMPs must be complied with. He explained that the Forest Service road, at 17-25% grade, is too steep to use long term. He noted that the road isn't experiencing erosion, but that it does need to be maintained; the water bars are to prevent erosion from the heavy rainstorms being experienced in recent months/years. David indicated that the Forest Service road should be abandoned, and a new access developed. Don explained that there is no way to do so without creating numerous switchbacks. He also noted that he has 4500 taps on Forest Service land in addition to the 800 that are on the Waterworks property, and that the roadway through the Bristol property provides access to the federal land.

Don confirmed that he has cut up the felled trees and placed the logs in the bottom of the water bars as instructed. Board members indicated that they were not opposed to Don's putting in poles to make the bars easier to navigate. Don pointed out that one purpose of the property is to provide recreation opportunities, and that the deep water bars as well as the stone which has been packed in place below them makes it difficult to navigate, particularly for skiers. Don also spoke of the stone lining in the water bar below the bridge at the bottom of the road, noting that if the water jumps the bridge it will wash away the road.

Board members discussed visiting the site; Valerie suggested that involving the Conservation Commission might be beneficial.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

3. Consider acceptance of Addison County Regional Planning Commission proposal to serve as Airport Drive Sidewalk Project Municipal Project Manager pending VTrans approval: ACRPC Transportation Planner Mike Winslow.

Valerie explained that the grant requirements include that a Project Manager be appointed, and that all the documentation is in place for the RPC to fill this role.

Joel expressed concern that other sidewalks in Town need attention as well and that sidewalk reserve funds should not be used for this project. Valerie explained that the school has reserve funds available for this project, and that VTrans is funding the work due to its being on State-owned land.

MOTION: Jessica made a motion to approve ACRPC's serving as Municipal Project Manager for the Airport Drive Sidewalk Project. The motion was seconded by Ian.

An associated MOU was discussed, and Valerie confirmed that the school will be responsible for sidewalk maintenance. There was some discussion of a gate for plow turn-around access; this and other details such as lighting will be outlined during the design process.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

4. Consider results of and next steps for the ACRPC's North Street traffic and village speed limit studies: ACRPC Transportation Planner Mike Winslow.

Mike Winslow reviewed the results of the traffic study completed earlier in the year, noting that there are no greater numbers of trucks on North Street than on other roads in Bristol, and that the speeds noted were also not out of line with other local roads.

There was discussion of potential changes to posted speed limits in Town; Mike had results from studies related to this topic as well. He explained that, if a problem could be outlined more definitively, he would be able to proceed with gathering further data in order to help with decisions regarding this matter. The following points were made during the discussion:

- All studies must be retained if speed limits are changed; this is needed in the event of a challenge to the change
- Discussion of what benefits might be seen by lowering from 30 to 25 mph
 - Studies indicate that most drivers are under the 30 mph limit, which supports lowering the speed limit
 - Sally Burrell pointed out that Pine Street, with no sidewalk, is popular for bikers and walkers, and would benefit from slower speeds, which would be less expensive than adding advisory lanes
 - Eric noted that there is enough width along Pine to demarcate those lanes
 - Signage considerations
 - Will need signs at end of each road where limit is lowered
 - Potential for village limit posting, potentially making other signs not necessary
- Other strategies may be more beneficial
 - Move signs at entrance to Town out further to slow traffic earlier as they approach
 - Flashing crosswalks where beneficial, particularly at Pleasant and North Streets

Mike reiterated that he is able to gather more data if it would be helpful, but that any problems need to be outlined before solutions can be discussed.

It was expressed that the Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee might have some useful input. Jessica offered to consult with the group to help determine existing problems and outline potential goals.

It was agreed to make no speed limit changes at this point.

5. Consider suspension of STOP sign enforcement at the intersection of Briggs Hill Road and Lincoln Road during road closure, at least for the winter months.

There was some discussion regarding the original purpose of the stop sign on Lincoln Road, serving to prevent traffic backing up. Bruce Nason expressed that, while there continues to be access to that end of Briggs Hill Road, the stop sign on Lincoln Road should be kept in place for safety reasons.

Marshall and Kelly Hammond, owners of the driveway being served by this section of Briggs Hill Road, indicated that they were uncertain why anybody other than themselves were using the road at this point; they expressed that they did not see a need for the stop sign on Lincoln Road.

Board members agreed that a temporary removal of the sign was not practical.

The Board decided to take no action on this matter.

6. Continued discussion of Briggs Hill Road repair: brief update on FEMA funding and next steps.

Valerie reported that she had posed the questions raised by the Board to FEMA representatives, and they had indicated that they will not support funding for any options other than the one plan which was already presented to them. She noted that it is still being determined why the Dubois & King estimates are so far off from what FEMA has calculated for the same project. She also spoke of abandoning the project and beginning again as an option, or to adjust the application so that it encompasses architecture and engineering only, although it is unclear whether the \$145K already expended would be covered under this strategy.

It was discussed that it is also unclear whether the area of damage from the July 2024 storm has been encapsulated into the existing design, and unknown how much work is required between the two areas of erosion to ensure that the entire roadway is safe for vehicular traffic.

It was confirmed that FEMA will cover 90% of the project as currently submitted, for which the cost has been outlined to be \$2M. Valerie summarized that it needs to be understood what additional work is needed, and that the cost discrepancies need to be explained.

For determining additional needs for repairs and site work, Valerie noted that there is a FEMA report for the 2024 damage, from which Dubois & King may be able to complete a desktop evaluation. Board members agreed that the next step taken should be to send this report to DuBois & King and ask if they can determine how much of the total damage is addressed in the scope of what has already been designed.

7. Presentation of proposed consolidations and other adjustments to Bristol's accounting structure: NEMRC and Kris Perlee.

Kris provided a budget status report, pointing out where the accounting codes have been tightened up and the improved grouping of expenses. He explained that this report will be used in working with Department heads when building the upcoming budget. He confirmed that this new structure has been reviewed with the auditors, who provided some suggestions regarding formatting but otherwise were generally in approval of the new system.

Some specifics which need to be addressed were discussed.

Kris noted that he will update all the information included, and work with the auditors before the publication deadline for Town Meeting Warnings, noting that some journal entries are still needed in order to have current information included in the next iteration of this report.

8. Consider contractual arrangement with soon-to-be former Town Administrator for support or other assistance as needed.

Valerie provided the Board with a proposed agreement for her continued support following her retirement. Ian suggested that the agreement be approved, and that Valerie's participation in work on specific projects be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the proposed support agreement with Valerie Capels. The motion was seconded by Ian, and passed unanimously.

9. Consider appointing a new Bristol representative to serve as an Alternate on the Addison County Solid Waste Management District Board of Supervisors to complete the term through April 10, 2025.

It was agreed to leave this position vacant until a new Town Administrator is hired.

10. Consider appointing a new Bristol representative to serve on the Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC) for a one-year term beginning January 1, 2025.

It was agreed to postpone filling this position, due to the changes currently being experienced at the ACEDC and minimal likelihood of any upcoming meetings.

11. Review of meeting minutes.

This item was postponed.

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

The warrant was for the amount of \$292,056.07

No liquor or tobacco licenses were up for review.

13. Selectboard roundtable.

Jessica mentioned a recent *independent* article regarding the Teen Hub.

Michelle noted that she had reached out to Sharon regarding a basketball hoop in the roadway on Church Street.

It was agreed to add the Library sidewalk section to the Town plowing routine, and to determine if there are negative impacts regarding where the snow is pushed/blown to along the roadway.

Joel suggested providing Department heads with a 'not to exceed' number for their budget preparations; others expressed that the staff exhibits responsibility for keeping planned expenditures in line.

14. Town Administrator's report.

Valerie had nothing to add to her written report.

She highlighted her interactions as TA with Bristol's outstanding community of citizens, both volunteers and staff members, and the success resulting from the efforts of the many people involved in Town functions.

VIII. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

Valerie highlighted a letter received regarding sidewalk concerns and noted that the PC and Zoning Administrator AZ Larsen will be putting some focus on sidewalk matters. She also indicated that the RPC has completed a sidewalk inventory, linked to in the TA Report for this meeting. There was some discussion regarding water main replacements/galvanized service line replacements, and associated sidewalk repairs, payments, etc.

IX. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary