

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, December 30, 2024**

Members Present: Ian Albinson, Peeker Heffernan, Michelle Perlee (Vice-Chair), Jessica Teets
Staff Present: Eric Cota (Road Foreman), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk and Town Treasurer), Kris Perlee (Assistant Town Clerk and Treasurer), Freeda Powers (Grant Administrator)
Others Present: Sally Burrell, Theresa Gile, Jim Quaglino, Dennis Hasko

I. Call to Order. Ian Albinson called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

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

No adjustments were needed.

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

II. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

III. Department Head Roundtable.

Brett LaRose (Fire Chief):

- Completed his submission for the Town Report
- Working on budget, and will be meeting with Kris and Sharon
- Preparing roster information for PACIF
- Submitting payroll for first six months
- Has had somebody volunteer to help in the work to locate a utility pickup truck for purchase
 - Looking in Addison and Chittenden counties, so that servicing is accessible
 - Will be outfitted after purchase
- Looking into replacing 1993 mini pumper and how to move forward with that effort

Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk):

- Year end, month end, bills going out

Kris Perlee (Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Town Clerk)

- Has been looking into insurance comparisons

Eric Cota (Road Foreman):

- Routine truck maintenance
 - Wing blades, sidewalk blades
- Weather mini station delivered and installed
- Suggested that the 8-year cycle for vehicle replacement be discussed, as many issues arise in last two years of vehicle life
- Bids are in for replacement of the Mack, which is due now
 - Two bids, one for the entire unit pre-outfitted and one for a chassis with equipment specified for a custom build

- Opening on Friday, Ian and Peeker may attend
- Timeline for delivery differs for the two options
- Ian noted there are broken salt barrels; Eric will look into the road crew repairing these

IV. Regular Business

1. Consider health insurance coverage option(s) between Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) and MVP; select plan, determine municipal contributions.

Kris outlined the information received from both vendors, explaining that the plans are very similar, that the deductibles are slightly different, and that the MVP plan will have less of an impact on employees' premium contributions. The Town's cost would increase about 26% if BCBS coverage is continued, and about 15% if coverage is switched to MVP; Kris recommended that MVP coverage be in place for the coming year, and suggested that the change be made immediately so that a second round of deductibles doesn't need to be covered due to switching plans after the first of the year. He indicated that the staff is supportive of the change to MVP; it was noted that this has also been presented to the Police Department, and those staff members are also comfortable with the recommended change in providers.

MOTION: Peeker made a motion to provide employee health insurance through the MVP plan discussed for calendar year 2025. The motion was seconded by Jessica, and passed unanimously.

2. Review and consideration of Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee candidate Sally Burrell to fill a vacant seat that runs to March 2026.

Sally explained her interest in facilitating biking and pedestrian forms of transportation in Bristol and confirmed that she feels one necessary aspect of these efforts is continued education of bikers and pedestrians; she has been working on similar matters with an Addison County group.

MOTION: Jessica made a motion to appoint Sally Burrell to the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Peeker, and passed unanimously.

3. Consider approval of the Listers Errors and Omissions Report.

The two proposed changes were reviewed.

MOTION: Jessica made a motion to approve the Listers' Errors and Omissions Report. The motion was seconded by Peeker, and passed unanimously.

4. Consider officially adopting Basecamp, a cloud-based project management platform, for the Town.

Ian outlined that he has been beta testing the application with staff and volunteers, and that there is consensus that the software is useful in keeping a variety of information organized and readily available through the interface. If used consistently, the program should provide benefits to the various people needing to access documentation related to Town projects.

The costs associated with the platform were reviewed; there is a \$16 monthly fee for those individuals granted access at the Administrator level and provided with permissions such as the ability to create

new projects. Others who would be either accessing or adding documents are able to participate through a no-cost membership. Access can be configured appropriately for each individual provided with an account in the system. Ian pointed out that no long-term commitment is necessary; costs are on a monthly basis.

Ian demonstrated some of the system's functionality for those present.

It was determined where in the Town's technology budget funds are available to cover a preliminary period of use of the software.

MOTION: Jessica made a motion to authorize use of the Basecamp software for an initial six-month period. The motion was seconded by Peeker, and passed unanimously.

5. FEMA and Grants Update.

Freeda Powers had provided a written summary of the status of the Town's grant activity, which she reviewed with the Board, noting which projects are closing out, where funds are coming in, and for which grants applications are being prepared. She noted that the Mountain Street engineering work should be moved forward, either through publishing an RFP or contracting the entire project out; this grant closes in November 2026.

FEMA grants were discussed, particularly as they relate to the Briggs Hill slope failure. Freeda indicated her preference for treating the 2023 and 2024 storm impacts to the road as one event, noting that this is FEMA's preference as well. One benefit is that this allows for the higher reimbursement rate of 90% for all the work to be completed. This strategy is possible if it is confirmed that the engineering plans/costs already submitted have addressed the area impacted by the 2024 storm event.

Board members noted that there is also work in progress to determine if the same type of solution can be applied to the Briggs Hill area as was used to address the similar situation on Lincoln Road, where the work has already been completed at less than half the cost of the \$2.4M which has been outlined for Briggs Hill.

Eric noted that the blocks in place at the top of the Briggs Hill slope, near the upper roadway, have begun to separate; he will monitor the situation, including photo documentation, and will bring in equipment to get the blocks brought up onto the road if that becomes necessary.

Kris pointed out that the people living on Briggs Hill Road would like to be kept informed, and would appreciate receiving updates and notification of when the matter will be discussed at upcoming Board meeting. Freeda agreed that a mailing list would be put together and a subsequent email list for those who would prefer that method of communication.

Board members thanked Freeda for her report, and agreed that this will be a useful regular update going forward.

6. Municipal Energy Resiliency Program GRANT AWARD update and next steps.

Ian reported that the group working on this project has met and it has been determined that the grant awards received for these projects will not cover the more expensive option for Holley Hall that the Board decided to proceed with, but that there are Reserve funds available to make up the difference.

He explained that it had been suggested to engage contractors at the beginning of the design finalization work; he had reached out to a couple of firms and others were also suggested for inclusion during the meeting. Peeker pointed out that it is best to have all potential bidders at these preliminary meetings, so that all parties are hearing the same information/answers to questions raised.

The Board then looked at the scope of work which Ian and the group had drafted for Holley Hall; it was confirmed that staff from Historic Preservation has reviewed the project and signified their approval. The scope of work for the Library, with similar types of work to be completed, was also reviewed.

7. Continued review and possible adoption of a new Livestock Running At Large Ordinance.

Jessica confirmed that the changes suggested during the previous review had been incorporated into the draft, explaining that the matter of allowing for future determination of enforcement officers is provided through the allowance for the Selectboard to authorize individuals to fill this role.

It was agreed to broaden the definition of livestock so that it is not limited to the specific animals listed, and to put the fines in a separate document/appendix so that they may be adjusted separately from modifying the Ordinance. Once Jessica includes these changes in the draft, she will ask Kevin Brown to review the language before adoption.

8. Authorize submission of a grant application to the Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports for approximately \$8,000 to support Recreation Dept. programming..

MOTION: Jessica made a motion to authorize submission of a grant application to the Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports for approximately \$8K to support Recreation Department programming. The motion was seconded by Peeker, and passed unanimously.

9. Review of meeting minutes.

MOTION: Michelle made a motion to approve the minutes of November 4, November 18, and December 2, 2024. The motion was seconded by Jessica, and passed unanimously.

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

The total for the warrant was \$81,868.72

No licenses were up for approval.

11. Selectboard roundtable.

Jessica indicated that she will be reaching out to some people who have expressed interest in increasing

Town Meeting attendance in order to generate ideas for doing so; other Board members supported this effort.

Peeker pointed out that the time is getting short for budget preparation. Kris and Sharon explained that they will have information available shortly for Board review.

Peeker commended the road crew's plowing efforts.

12. Town Administrator's report.

Ian had nothing to add to what had already been covered during the meeting.

V. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

Ian highlighted some items, particularly an email received with questions regarding deportation possibilities. Jessica confirmed that this is not a local or even a State issue at this point.

VI. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary