

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, January 12, 2026**

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

Staff Present: Eric Cota (Public Works Foreman), Gregory Faust (Town Administrator), Colby Gile (Department of Public Works), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk and Town Treasurer), Meredith McFarland (Rec Director), Bruce Nason (Police Chief), Kris Perlee (Assistant Town Clerk and Assistant Town Treasurer)

Others Present: Peter Hewitt, Marin Howell (Addison Independent), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), Dana Nagy, NEAT, Steve Palmer (VTM)

I. Call to Order. Peeker Heffernan called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

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

An update on the School Street water service line was added.

II. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

III. Department Head Roundtable.

Eric Cota (DPW Foreman):

- Salt shed is low, will need to order more, even though cutting back as much as possible
- Sand is doing ok
- Experiencing a lot of hydraulic hose breakage
- Working on excavator maintenance
- Provided an explanation of state bidding process for salt
- In some cases, snow is being left on sidewalks to make for easier navigation than on ice

Bruce Nason (Police Chief):

- In 2025, addressed 3987 service calls, up from previous year, working on finishing report
- Otherwise, the usual
- Community resource position working out well

Brett LaRose (Fire Chief):

- Has submitted his annual report
- Local and regional annual meetings have taken place
- No update on the pickup that was ordered

Jill Marsano (VTUMS):

- Bristol West water line project out to bid
- Pursuing potential funding opportunity with funds left in a Lead Line Replacement Program

Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk):

- Tyler Technology began reappraisal work, letters are going out to the Grand List

IV. Consent Agenda.

Kris explained the logistics of the Sweep Program with National Bank of Middlebury.

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

- Approve IntraFi Insured Cash Sweep (ICS) Program with National Bank of Middlebury (NBM)
- Approve of past meeting minutes (12-22-25)
- Authorize warrant in the amount of \$108,776.44

V. Regular Business

1. Bristol Fire Department Appointment: Fire Chief Brett LaRose and Firefighter candidate Dana Nagy.

Brett introduced Dana, who then answered some questions from Board members about his interest in serving on the Fire Department.

MOTION: *Joel moved to appoint Dana Nagy to the Bristol Fire Department. The motion was seconded by Ian, and passed unanimously.*

2. Water Commission, Bristol West (Phase 2) Check-in: Steve Palmer, VTM Engineering.

Steve reported that the project had been released for bidding, and that over a dozen contractors have reached out for specification information. He outlined that a pre-bid meeting is scheduled for January 22 and that bids are due on February 12, meaning that there is the potential for a contractor recommendation to be made by late February or early March.

Steve explained that it would be best to have any event dates or other limitations that need to be worked around outlined before bids are due, in order to avoid the likelihood of increased costs being presented due to such events precluding the ability of the contractor to work in the area. The area around the green in particular was discussed, as several things are scheduled there throughout the fair-weather months. Greg indicated that he would put together a list of events.

Steve and Jill then provided some information regarding Jill's efforts to obtain funding for replacement of lead and galvanized service lines, which may provide a 50% subsidy for the entire project. It needs to be determined how much of an impact there will be on individual line replacements; the archeology and environmental work that may be needed would raise the cost of these significantly.

2B. School Street Line

Greg reported that the Mount Abe School District is willing to split the cost of the work needed in the School Street area, and has also agreed that the service line will be turned over to the Town.

3. Discussion on quitclaim deed for McGowan's property in Lincoln.

Greg reported that there had been a request that Bristol give up the ROW that is currently in place across the McGowan property; discussion indicated that the Board plans to retain ownership of the property on which the Town has a potential water source, and has no interest in giving up any rights of way to the property.

4. Town Meeting and Town Report preparations.

Jessica reported that the Masons have agreed to provide food, serving before the meeting begins. She has also recruited volunteers to help with clean up, and Meridith will be taking care of children downstairs, with a movie and pizza to be provided.

Jessica is also working with people who will be posting on Front Porch Forum to promote attendance at the Meeting, and will be providing the Board with potential infographics before they are released for publication.

Sharon noted that petition deadlines are approaching. Ian indicated that Zoom attendance will be available again this year. Jessica has requested of NEAT that the text of motions be provided on screen, there was some discussion of how practical/productive this would be. It was agreed that runners with microphones are beneficial, with the front microphone being necessary either way.

Ian reported that a good percentage of the reports and other content for the Town Report have been provided, and that he is working to draft the Report. He confirmed that the LOT and Police District questions will be voted on by Australian Ballot.

5. Review of preliminary draft Town Meeting and Police District warnings.

The Town Meeting warning was reviewed, with some discussion related to the timing of the completion of the current reappraisal and how that might impact the dates of tax installments and potential need for sending out revised tax bills if the originals are created based upon a draft Grand List. Sharon will look into the logistics of establishing a three-payment structure for the coming year.

The LOT and Police District Articles will be added as Articles 3 and 4.

The Police District Warning was reviewed, with no changes to the language proposed.

6. Budget Review.

No changes to the Water, Sewer, or Police Department budgets had been made since those items were last reviewed.

The General Operating Budget was reviewed, with Ian pointing out that notes were included where there were line items with larger changes in either direction. The following points were discussed:

- The Listers line item, at \$60K, is more than the \$40K typically budgeted for, but may be necessary due to the additional work required related to the reappraisal, associated grievances, and so forth.
- More financial and coverage details are needed in order to have a further discussion of the possibility of including more of the Police Department budget into the General Budget, through the Contracted Services line, in order to make the Department's budget more equitable by accounting for non-District residents receiving Police Department services.
- Covering some expenses over two fiscal years was proposed by Joel, who outlined spending in late June 2026 and early July 2027 for some planned building maintenance work and for tree trimming. Eric explained the logistics of tree trimming, indicating that the work needs to be done between late fall and early spring and noting the number of roadways that need to be addressed.

Greg indicated that there are not likely to be any significant unassigned fund balances from last year's or the current year's budget.

Based on a concern raised by Joel regarding water line work funds being taken from the General Budget, it was explained and confirmed that past and current water line expenses have been and will be reimbursed, and that using these funds is the equivalent of the Town borrowing from itself rather than borrowing from the bank and incurring interest expense.

7. Selectboard Roundtable.

Nobody had anything to bring up during the Roundtable.

8. Town Administrator's Update.

Greg thanked the DPW for keeping the roads safe during the recent storms.

VI. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

The dog bite report which had been submitted was acknowledged, and it was noted that the situation was not ongoing, and would be addressed at the next Board meeting.

VII. Executive Session.

MOTION: *A motion to find that premature general knowledge of confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the public body would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *A motion to enter Executive Session per 1 VSA §313(a)(1)(F) [Attorney-Client Communications] and per 1 VSA §313(a)(3) [Personnel], inviting Kevin Brown and Chief Bruce Nason to join, passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 7:50 pm and returned to open session at 9:14 pm.

Upon returning to open session, the following motion was made:

MOTION: Ian made a motion to approve a single step increase for two Bristol Police Officers, effective immediately, as discussed in executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). Peeker seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary