

Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, December 22, 2025

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

Staff Present: AZ Larsen (Planning and Zoning Administrator), Freeda Powers (Grant Administrator)

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

I. Call to Order. Peeker Heffernan called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

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

No adjustments were made to the agenda.

II. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

III. Department Head Roundtable.

Freeda Powers (Grant Administrator):

- Continuing work on closing grants out and drawing down funds as possible
- Received FEMA reimbursement for 2024 flooding, primarily for Ireland Road, still waiting for State payment
- Expecting same set of payments for 2023 storm, which will close out all FEMA events
- The State has announced another award for tree money, which will be discussed in January
- The State has granted an award for the burying of retaining walls, which was applied for as part of the Basin Street project. Whether to take this on as a separate project can be considered and decided upon in January; there was some discussion of the logistics of the work, and that the matching funds are available in the Capital Road Fund.

AZ Larsen (Planning and Zoning Administrator):

- A Municipal Planning Grant was awarded for the PC's upcoming Town Plan work.
- Continuing to work on updating application forms, related FAQs, and so forth
- GIS system is now ready and available for the public on the Town web site
- Working with VHB to draft a letter to Champlain Farms owners to request input on sidewalk scoping study options at the gas station site. It was discussed that it should be noted that the Selectboard prefers the alternative of a sidewalk continuing straight across rather than jogging in toward the building.

IV. Consent Agenda.

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

- Approval of past meeting minutes (12-08-25)
- Authorize warrant in the amount of \$70,128.94

V. Regular Business

1. Water Commission: Review engineering contract amendment #2 for Phase 2 Bristol West Water Line Replacement Project.

Steve Palmer outlined the progress to date for this project, noting that the end of the design/permitting stage has been reached, and that the project is basically on schedule. He explained that he is waiting for the State to complete review of the bid documents, and that he is working with State staff to receive a corrected letter of approval for the construction oversight engineering costs, with a goal of increasing the eligibility level to 100% of those costs. Steve indicated that the pre-bid meeting scheduled for January 15, 2026 might be postponed a week to accommodate the approval logistics, but it was agreed after discussion to not make this change.

MOTION: *Ian moved to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the documentation covering Amendment #2 of the Bristol West Engineering Agreement, once it has been reviewed and deemed satisfactory. The motion was seconded by Michelle, and passed unanimously.*

2. Water Commission: FY2026-2027 Draft Water Budget Overview.

Ian presented the draft budget and reviewed its contents with the Board. During the discussion, Jill noted that it is prudent to use Capital funds as available to reduce the amount of the Bond taken out when the project is complete. Also, Joel explained that the transfer to the Capital Roads Paving Fund is to account for the reduction in road quality caused by the water line replacements, and that it is not intended for use in paving needs directly related to the line replacement work.

3. Sewer Commission: FY2026-2027 Draft Sewer Budget Overview.

The draft budget was reviewed, and there was some discussion regarding how to address the continued high organics content of the wastewater. Jill outlined that a partial solution would be the installation of a grease trap before the system's splitter box; there was some discussion of the practicality of and costs associated with this. Jill explained that there may be grant money available for this infrastructure, and there was also some discussion of the potential for adjusting the billing structure to allow for charging users based upon the strength of the wastewater produced.

4. Budget Review: continued budget review for FY2026-2027 Town Budget.

The current draft budget indicates an overall 12.8% increase, about which there was some discussion. Points raised included the following:

- Potential for requesting Department Heads to provide reductions
- Continuously incorporating minimal increases to the budget will at some point require that an uncomfortably large increase is necessary
- It may be necessary to have discussions regarding the level of services provided
- The option of presenting the budget reflecting the needs as currently outlined, and have the budget vote dictate if reductions are necessary

The Police Department budget was also reviewed briefly.

5. Consideration of a separate article for Bristol Rescue Squad budget for Town Meeting Day 2026.

Ian explained that, due to the new per capita budgeting strategy of the Rescue Squad, the amount requested

each year will be adjusted. He outlined that, in order to avoid the burden of the Squad needing to get the appropriate number of signatures each year to have the amount allocated changed, it is proposed that the Squad be removed from the list of non-profit allocations, and instead have their requested amount be presented to the voters each year in a separate Article. It was agreed that the Rescue Squad should present their budget information to the Board each year, particularly if the amount per capita changes, if this change to a separate Article is approved.

MOTION: *Jessica moved to approve inclusion of a separate Article for Town Meeting 2026 to present the Bristol Rescue Squad financial request, and to concurrently exempt the Squad from providing signatures to back up a change in the amount funded. The motion was seconded by Ian, and passed unanimously.*

6. Continued discussion on implementation of a local option tax for the Town of Bristol for July 1, 2026.

The documents created by Ian, providing information about the adoption of a LOT, were reviewed. Some edits were suggested, and some answers and clarifications were provided.

7. Selectboard Roundtable.

Jessica reported on an inquiry from a Briggs Hill Road resident, whom she had advised to contact Greg Faust if they would like to request that Briggs Hill road repairs be placed on an upcoming agenda.

VI. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

VII. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary