

**Town of Bristol, VT
Selectboard
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, January 26, 2026**

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

Staff Present: Gregory Faust (Town Administrator), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief), AZ Larsen (Planning and Zoning Administrator), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk and Town Treasurer), Meridith McFarland (Rec Director), Kris Perlee (Assistant Town Clerk and Assistant Town Treasurer), Freeda Powers (Grant Administrator), Dylan Verner (HUB Director)

Others Present: Linda Andrews, Eric Carter, Monica Carter, Mark Gibson, Marin Howell (Addison Independent), Jill Marsano (VTUMS), NEAT, Ellen Oxfeld, Sally Roth, Jennifer Wagner, Alice Leeds

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).

It was noted that the MAUSD presentation would be postponed until the next meeting. The Harvey Road survey matter was pulled from the Consent Agenda and placed under Regular Business.

II. Public Forum.

Nobody requested time to address the Board.

III. Department Head Roundtable.

Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk and Treasurer):

- Printing for Tyler Technologies appraisal work is complete
- Today was the deadline for filing petitions for Town Meeting

Kris Perlee (Assistant Town Clerk and Treasurer):

- W2 and 1099s have been distributed
- Audit nearly complete – will present at next Board meeting
- Completing work on Water District funds – will present at next Board meeting

Freeda Powers (Grant Administrator):

- Received Municipal Planning Grant for Town Plan work - \$19K for a two-year period, will be drafting an RFP
- Working on application for VTrans money for guardrail replacements, working with DPW to define the scope, grant has no match requirement; authorization included in Consent Agenda

Meridith McFarland (Recreation Director):

- Skatepark discussions are beginning again – upcoming work will be to get safety standards satisfied, likely will cost about \$15K (there is \$17K currently in reserve). There will also be further efforts made toward planning for and funding a concrete park.
- Holley Hall considerations – Dept is being proactive regarding being out of the space from March through September for the upcoming renovations, have arranged for a 40' storage container to be in place at Howden Hall, the office will also be moved. No Hall rentals have been scheduled for after Town Meeting. Related costs were outlined, and it was confirmed that the funds will come from the Capital Building Reserve.

AZ Larsen (Planning and Zoning Administrator):

- Planning Commission is preparing for Town Plan work; a survey is being planned for distribution at Town Meeting
- Slow time of year for permitting, but some DRB hearings still taking place
- Have applied to be part of a Climate Action pilot program, resources and guidance may be helpful in drafting the Town Plan update

IV. Consent Agenda.

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

- Authorize grant application to VTrans Small Scale Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) for up to \$50k with 0% match to support the replacement of guardrails
- Approve of past meeting minutes (01-12-26)
- Authorize warrant in the amount of \$132,517.30
- Approve a 2nd Class Liquor License for Champlain Farms and Walgreens.

V. Regular Business

1. Authorize survey proposal for Harvey Road from LaRose Surveys

AZ explained that surveying the road is part of the requirements for the reclassification process, and that they had reached out to LaRose Surveys prior to realizing that there is preliminary work that needs to be completed before the survey happens. Peeker and Michelle provided some historical information regarding the road, the Town's ROW being relinquished for construction of a private home, and the deed research needed to determine land ownership along the roadway. It was agreed that completion of the survey would be postponed.

2. Approve FY2027 Town Budget & Police District Budget.

It was explained that Detail billings are often delayed, which is why the Detail Revenue line for the current year is at \$0. It was confirmed that the COPS grant money is still available for a fourth officer. The budget reflects a 1.88% increase.

MOTION: *Joel moved to approve the Police District Budget in the amount of \$701,116.41. The motion was seconded by Michelle, and passed unanimously.*

It was explained that Kris had found some health insurance savings, and that there will be no need for a single audit this year. Those reductions resulted in a budget reflecting an 8.51% increase. The need for increased heating/energy costs was explained, as well as the need to budget for window replacements at the proposed level. It was noted that some reserve funds need to be replenished, and that there is an intention to keep all reserve funds at a healthy balance in order to cover known and future needs. A plan will be developed for defining a sidewalk repair schedule; at this point that fund is more than adequate, so Ian explained that \$20K had been designated for the upcoming building renovations rather than being placed in sidewalk reserve.

MOTION: *Michelle moved to approve the Town Budget in the amount of \$4,134,345.73 as presented. The motion was seconded by Ian, and passed with Joel opposed.*

3. Water Commission Budget Review: Approve FY2027 Budget.

Kris explained that he is finalizing some adjustments which will impact the budget, and so approval was postponed until the next Board meeting.

Jill pointed out that the electricity line should be budgeted for to reflect anticipated expenditures, which are \$20K at the midway point in the FY26 year, even though there may be some savings with the Bristol West project work. It was agreed to budget electricity at \$40K.

One item that Kris is addressing is ensuring that DWSRF payments for Pine Street work have been applied correctly.

4. Sewer Commission Budget Review: Approve FY2027 Budget.

Neither Jill nor Board members had concerns regarding this budget; it was agreed to postpone approval until Kris completes some final work.

5. Approve Town Meeting and Police District warnings.

The Police District Warning was reviewed.

MOTION: *Michelle moved to approve the Police District Warning, with the approved budget numbers included. The motion was seconded by Joel, and passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *Michelle moved to approve the Town Meeting Warning with the approved budget numbers included. The motion was seconded by Joel.*

Discussion of the document ensued. Ian outlined the format recommended by VLCT for the delineation of Australian ballot and floor vote items. It was agreed to adjust the language to clarify that the ballot items will not be voted on at the March 3 meeting – the purpose of that meeting is for discussion only.

The minimum percentages for LOT category expenditures were adjusted to total less than 100%, in order to provide some flexibility as necessary.

Sharon confirmed that the tax payment dates are appropriate.

Two petitions had been received for questions to be placed on the Warning.

The first was for a nonbinding resolution expressing support for H.433, related to health care, currently under review at the Legislature. Board members agreed to include this item in the Warning.

The second petition was to ask the voters to request that the Board adopt a pledge regarding equality, including specific references to Palestinian rights and not supporting the Israeli government. Those in attendance spoke in support of and in opposition to including this petition language on the Warning, and Board members and Mr. Faust indicated concerns with the language, including that it may conflict with existing contracts and future funding opportunities. It was agreed that this would not be placed on the Warning, but that the matter might be raised from the floor at Town Meeting.

VOTE: *The motion was amended to approve the Warning as finalized and the amended motion passed unanimously.*

6. Selectboard Roundtable.

Michelle thanked the DPW for road care during the recent storm.

Ian noted he continues to work on the Town Report, and that he participated in a meeting with Silver Maple Construction regarding the upcoming work at Holley Hall and the Library.

Joel provided a reminder to residents that hydrants must be cleared after snowstorms; Jill indicated that this would also be addressed by her team on Tuesday.

Joel asked about the omission in the Warning of a vote on the Police District town-wide coverage question, and it was explained that the issue is more complex than people realize, meaning that there needs to be significant public input regarding what would be expected of the Police Department, which the Board has not had time to address in the past year.

7. Town Administrator's Update.

Greg reported that meetings with Silver Maple regarding the renovation projects have been productive. He thanked Sharon for her work on the reappraisal, Kris and Sharon for helping with budget development, and Kris for working to find potential reductions, the DPW for the many hours of work put in taking care of the roads, and the Rec Department for flexibility to accommodate the Holley Hall renovations.

Greg acknowledged the recognition of Kris as the Addiston County Firefighter of the Year. Brett also spoke of the significance of this award, and offered congratulations to Kris. Brett also indicated that Joel Bouvier and Adrian Ludka had been nomination in other award categories.

Brett will look into a grant announced today for the purchase of firefighter gear.

AZ spoke of the need to put forth an RFP for Town Plan consulting work; they were advised to draft an RFP to publish, and to bring submissions to the Selectboard.

VI. Other Business.

1. Correspondence/reports received were reviewed.

VIII. Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary