

TOWN OF BRISTOL, VERMONT

Bristol West Waterline Replacement — Community Information Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Note on this record. This is a narrative **summary** of a public information meeting, not verbatim Selectboard or committee minutes. There were no agenda motions, votes, or consent items; this was a staff-led public briefing on the Bristol West Waterline Replacement Project (Phase 2). This version was reconciled against the meeting recording transcript.

Meeting Date: May 6, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Location: Bristol Town Hall, 1 South Street, Bristol, VT 05443 (Hybrid: in-person and via Zoom)

Town Staff / Project Team Present:

- Gregory W. Faust, Town Administrator (meeting lead)
- Steve Palmer, P.E., VTM Engineering (engineer of record)
- Darin Revard, Munson Earth Moving Corporation (contractor)
- Jill Marsano, VTUMS (water and wastewater operator)

Others Present: Patty Heather-Lea, Bob Donnis, Gina (Elm Street resident), John, and other residents

I. Purpose of the Meeting

Town Administrator Gregory Faust opened the meeting and explained its purpose: to inform Bristol West residents and water customers about the second phase of the Town's water main replacement program before active construction begins. The session was open to all residents, required no registration, and was offered in hybrid format with a Zoom option (Meeting ID 865 1024 2164, Passcode 300454). Staff and the project team walked attendees through where construction would happen, the phasing plan, what residents should expect during active work, how the project is funded, and an open question-and-answer period.

II. Project Background and System History

Steve Palmer, P.E., of VTM Engineering presented the project background. The work began in 2020, when the Town was losing roughly twice as much water as it was using, far beyond what a normal system experiences. The Town hired Green Mountain Engineering to study the distribution system. The study found roughly **58,000 lineal feet** of water main, about half of it installed in **1905** using unlined cast iron pipe joined by hand with lead-and-oakum joints. Palmer noted the original line was laid by hand, with water historically piped roughly six miles from Lincoln. The 1905 cast iron mains are now **121 years old**, well beyond their 60–70 year useful life expectancy. Palmer showed cut-out samples of original 1905 pipe and a galvanized service connection from Pine Street so clogged with mineral buildup that "you couldn't see daylight from one end to the other."

Green Mountain Engineering recommended replacing all of the 1905 line, approximately **30,000 lineal feet**. The Town determined this was too large to do in one effort, both from a design/permitting and a funding standpoint, and elected to break the work into phases.

III. Phasing Plan and Funding

The overall replacement program was divided into **four phases**, with early whole-program estimates in the range of **\$12 million to \$14 million** — a level Palmer said would have sent water rates "through the roof" if done all at once. The phases are:

- **Phase 1 — Pine Street:** completed in 2023, about 2,600 feet. Prioritized in part so the Town could repave Pine Street.
- **Phase 2 — Bristol West:** all 1905 line west of North Street. This is the current phase, designed and permitted, with construction starting this month.
- **Phase 3 — Bristol East:** all 1905 line east of North Street; targeted to begin in roughly two years.
- **Rocky Dale:** 1905-vintage runs that come down from the water tower across the mountain, one running to Rocky Dale and another tying into East Street near Lord's Prayer Rock.

Funding for the current phase comes from a **\$3,950,000 bond** approved by voters in late 2024 (Palmer described it at the meeting as "roughly \$4 million"), together with financing through the State of Vermont's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. The financing process is complete, and Town Administrator Faust signed the State contract a couple of months before the meeting. The funding carries **50% loan forgiveness** (essentially a 50% grant), so on a project of this size local ratepayers are responsible for roughly **\$2 million**.

IV. Construction Contract

The construction work went out to bid in January 2026. **Nine contractors bid**, with prices ranging from about **\$2.4 million to \$4.4 million** — a wide spread. **Munson Earth Moving Corporation** of Wilson, Vermont was determined the lowest responsible bidder at **\$2.42 million**, and the Town signed a contract with Munson. Munson also performed the Pine Street work in Phase 1. Pre-construction activities (mobilization, material approvals) were already underway. The project is overseen by the Town and its engineering firm, VTM Engineering, with VTUMS serving as the water and wastewater operator.

The team explained that construction must be phased on the ground because water service has to be maintained to existing homes while the new system is built alongside the old one. The transition involves individual switchovers for each home onto the new main before the old line is fully disconnected.

V. Scope and Streets Affected

Phase 2 (Bristol West) will replace water lines on **nine streets**: Taylor, Elm, Maple, Pleasant (broken into east and west but covering all of Pleasant Street), Church, Munsill, West Street, School Street, and Park Street.

This is a **two-construction-season project**. Darin Revard of Munson Earth Moving reported that equipment mobilization was planned for the week following the meeting, with construction start dependent on the arrival of pipe and fittings. He projected substantial completion by the **end of October 2027** and **final completion on November 12, 2027**, for the full Bristol West (all nine streets).

VI. Construction Schedule

Darin Revard outlined the anticipated 2026 sequence (subject to change based on pipe delivery and weather):

- **Elm Street, then Taylor Street** — beginning May/June (mobilization the week after the meeting; active work expected the following week)
- **East Pleasant Street** — August, September
- **West Pleasant Street** — September, October
- **Maple Street** — October, November
- **Munsill Avenue** — October, November

After Elm Street, Munson plans to work Taylor from the intersection of Taylor to Elm to Pine, then from the intersection back toward Pleasant.

For **2027**, the proposed streets are **West Street, Church Street, and School and Park**, with construction likely beginning in April depending on weather and frost conditions. An additional street may be added depending on 2026 progress. Crews will normally work **7 AM to 5 PM**, with earlier arrival to ready equipment and the possibility of later hours if an unexpected break must be repaired so everyone has water before the crew leaves.

Paving will follow construction: whatever streets are completed in 2026 will be paved that year (Munson will batch a few streets, then bring in the paving crew), with the remaining work and full repaving in the following year. Revard noted paving covers the trench area where work occurred.

VII. What Residents Should Expect During Construction

The team described the anticipated impacts of active construction, including:

- **Traffic control:** Most Elm Street work will allow one-way traffic managed by flaggers. A roughly **170-foot section near North Street** will require a full road closure.
- **Water service:** Water will remain available except during specific tie-in operations to existing mains or individual house connections. Affected residents will receive advance notice before any planned water disruption.
- **Boil water notices:** These may be issued when a line is depressurized while still in service.
- **Unexpected discoveries:** Because much of the existing infrastructure is roughly 120 years old and was not well documented, crews may encounter unmarked or damaged lines during excavation, which can cause unplanned interruptions.
- **Tree work:** DJ's Tree Service will perform tree trimming along the route to create safe work areas for equipment. Only **two trees** are scheduled for removal, both on Elm Street; one property owner requested a replanting.
- **General site conditions:** Residents should expect marking paint and flags, fencing, detours, blocked driveway entrances, street closures, noise, dust, and possible traffic delays.

Jill Marsano of VTUMS emphasized the importance of leaving construction markings (paint and flags) intact for safety and efficiency.

VIII. Fire Protection and Safety

The team addressed fire safety during construction. Some hydrants may be temporarily offline as work proceeds; the fire department will be notified in advance and will have alternative coverage plans in place. Residents were asked to keep children away from active construction zones.

IX. Parking and Driveway Access

In response to a resident question about parking and driveway access, the team explained that residents should be able to get back to their driveways by the end of each work day. Steve Palmer noted he and Greg Faust had already spoken with the Police Chief about not ticketing or enforcing parking restrictions in the work area, and that the Chief was understanding and accommodating. For residents who leave for work after crews arrive (e.g., 8–9 AM) or who have midday commitments such as preschool pickups or appointments, the team suggested parking a little down the road outside the active construction zone, or at a neighbor's (Jill referenced parking "at Chris's"), so there is no conflict when leaving.

X. Communications and How to Reach the Town

Residents were directed to weekly construction updates available through:

- Front Porch Forum
- The Town website (which includes a dedicated construction section)
- The Town's Facebook and Instagram pages
- Direct email updates from Town Administrator Greg Faust (residents may submit their email address to be added to the list)

For questions or concerns during construction, residents were asked to contact the **Town Administrator's Office** — Greg Faust at (802) 453-2410, **extension 22**, or by email (the preferred method). The team asked residents to direct all concerns through the Town Administrator's Office rather than to construction crews directly, and asked for patience and courtesy during what will be an invasive but necessary project.

XI. Service Line Replacement

In response to a question from **Bob Donnis** about whether the pipelines to houses would be replaced, Jill Marsano explained that service lines will be replaced **to the curb**, and on the opposite side by a separate contractor, **only if they are galvanized or lead**. Steve Palmer added context on undocumented infrastructure: there are roughly 120 years of pipes in the ground, much of it installed informally, never engineered or mapped. Some buildings that the old services once fed no longer exist or have been moved, so crews routinely encounter unmapped lines — "a couple on every street." Bob Donnis noted the old schoolhouse on School Street was originally at the corner of Maple and Pleasant Streets.

XII. Resident Questions

The session included an open question-and-answer period throughout and at the end. Captured exchanges:

- **Gina (Elm Street)** joined late and asked when work would begin. Steve Palmer confirmed Elm Street is the first street; crews mobilize the coming week, with construction likely the week after, depending on pipe delivery. Gina's property (the first driveway on the south side of Elm) has an established maple slated for removal and a smaller magnolia; Palmer indicated only one tree at that location was scheduled for removal. Because Gina recently bought the house, the prior removal conversation had been with a former owner's family member, so Palmer said he and Gina would discuss a replacement tree.
- **Patty Heather-Lea** asked whether residents would be notified ahead of any tree *removal* (versus trimming). Palmer confirmed only **two trees** in the entire project will be removed, both on Elm Street, that both affected residents were aware and supportive, and that only one of the two owners wants a replant.
- **Patty Heather-Lea** also asked, as a Pleasant Street resident, which end of Pleasant work would start from. Palmer said that is yet to be determined and will not happen until August or September; the phasing will be worked out at construction meetings and communicated well in advance.
- **Bob Donnis** asked whether fire hydrants would be turned off. Jill Marsano explained crews try to keep everything active and switch over at once, so there is essentially never a moment without an active water line — only brief per-connection interruptions during tie-over. Palmer added that if a single hydrant must be taken offline, the fire department is notified, the hydrant is bagged and taped, and the department plans around it; functioning hydrants are generally within about 300 feet.

XIII. Close

After confirming there were no further questions, Town Administrator Greg Faust wrapped up the meeting and thanked attendees, including Patty Heather-Lea, Gina, and John. The team reiterated that weekly updates would be posted and that the Town Administrator's Office is the single point of contact for resident concerns throughout the project.

Summary prepared from the May 6, 2026 community information meeting recording transcript. This is an informational summary, not official minutes.

Respectfully submitted,
Town Administrator's Office, Town of Bristol