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TOWN OF BRISTOL, VERMONT

Selectboard — Minutes of Meeting

Monday, August 10, 2026 • 7:00 PM

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

Staff Present: Gregory W. Faust, Town Administrator; Sharon Lucia, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Kris Perlee, Assistant Clerk/Treasurer

Others Present: NEAT (recording); Peter Hewitt (public); Michael Miller (public)

I. Call to Order.

Chair Ian Albinson called the Bristol Selectboard meeting to order on Monday, August 10, 2026, confirming the meeting was being recorded.

II. Approval of Agenda.

Chair Albinson asked whether there were any additional items for the evening's agenda. Hearing none, the Board proceeded with the agenda as published.

III. Public Forum.

Chair Albinson opened the public forum, noting five minutes per person for anything non-agenda related. No one came forward at this time, and the Board moved on. (Later in the meeting, during Regular Business, resident Peter Hewitt asked to follow up on a prior presentation he had made regarding emotional coaching; that exchange is recorded under Item 5a below.)

IV. Consent Agenda.

Chair Albinson reviewed the consent agenda items:

- **4a.** Approval of past meeting minutes from July 27, 2026.
- **4b.** Approval of a check warrant and any liquor or tobacco licenses.
- **4c.** Acceptance of the final West Street Sidewalk Improvement Scoping Study report.
- **4d.** Acceptance of the resignation of probationary firefighter Koby LaRose.
- **4e.** Authorization to submit the FY2027 Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Transportation Planning Study grant application.

Chair Albinson explained item 4e in detail. The application was due the following day (Tuesday, August 11). ACRPC has a pool of approximately $50,000 to $60,000 and typically funds three studies; Bristol is requesting a study estimated at $25,000 to $30,000 for a downtown Bristol access study. He described the study as growing out of prior discussions stemming from the West Street sidewalk scoping study, addressing speed, traffic patterns, and related issues in town.

Discussion on 4e (grant scope). Michelle Perlee asked Town Administrator Greg Faust about the study's boundaries, noting the draft described the area from East Street to just past Drake Smith

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Road and questioning where that fell relative to the existing speed sign. Chair Albinson explained the intent was to capture the area as drivers come into town past Lord's Prayer Rock, where higher traffic speeds persist before the hill. Jessica Teets suggested defining the boundary as the point "where the speed drops to 30," which prompted a clarification distinguishing the reduced-speed-ahead sign from the radar speed-feedback sign.

Joel Bouvier asked whether the study could also look at bringing down the speed near Lord's Prayer Rock where the limit changes from 30 to 40, referencing the approach past the old Pine Tree Gardens. Jessica Teets recounted that when the radar speed sign was installed, Police Chief Bruce Nason had explained it was placed at the top of the hill to remind drivers to slow down after climbing, out of concern that drivers kept their speed up for the hill; she suggested a second sign could also be considered. Bouvier stated he wanted the study to examine the possibility of moving the reduced-speed point earlier, to before Lord's Prayer Rock where the limit changes. Chair Albinson noted that if the grant is approved, the Town would have full ability to design the study and pose the questions it wants answered.

Michelle Perlee asked what speed limit was being contemplated for the downtown development area (Main Street). Chair Albinson said it would be guided by the study, noting that because of Bristol's downtown designation, the Town has the ability to go lower than 25 mph, which most towns cannot. He observed that few towns have speed limits below 25 directly on their main streets, that traffic and pedestrians already slow drivers there, and that a pickup truck was recently struck. He noted practical limitations, including required posting distances between signs to allow drivers to slow safely.

Michelle Perlee asked whether the eventual request would be 25 mph for the entire village core. Chair Albinson confirmed the focus was the old village area, noting North Street is wider and can carry faster traffic, and that Pine Street was chosen as a likely starting point because density increases there. He said a village-wide reduction would likely be simpler than a road-by-road approach, and that the study would reveal options and comparisons from other towns, producing a solid document to present to the State. Peeker Heffernan remarked that if Huntington can have 25 mph in its town center, Bristol should be able to as well; Chair Albinson agreed.

Jessica Teets asked whether the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) would have a specified role. Chair Albinson said that would be figured out if the grant is received, noting the late timing of the application and that the committee has struggled with attendance, but that the grant seemed like a good fit for the group to be involved with.

Peeker Heffernan reported the check warrant total as $282,247.78 (item 4b). On item 4d, Chair Albinson thanked firefighter Koby LaRose for his service; Peeker Heffernan noted it was a loss but that LaRose was heading off to school.

MOTION: *A motion to accept the consent agenda, moved by Michelle Perlee and seconded by Jessica Teets, passed unanimously.*

V. Regular Business.

5a. Policies & Ordinances Updates — Procurement Policy (Meeting 3, Third Reading and Possible Adoption).

Chair Albinson introduced the Procurement Policy as the third reading and possible adoption meeting. Town Administrator Greg Faust reported that staff had cleaned up the adjustments from the Board's notes and circulated the revised policy the prior week, giving everyone an opportunity to read it, and that little further discussion was needed.

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Jessica Teets sought to recall where the earlier changes had been made, briefly confusing the procurement policy with the conflict of interest policy. Peeker Heffernan noted the changes were basically to meet state statute. Greg Faust clarified that the procurement policy governs who is authorized to spend at what limit and what the purchasing choices are.

Public comment during this item. Resident Peter Hewitt asked to briefly follow up on a presentation he had made at a prior meeting regarding emotional coaching, seeking any feedback. Michelle Perlee said the Board had made notes but had not yet held a discussion on it. Greg Faust noted there may be existing outlets Hewitt could be connected with if he had better awareness of them, and offered to follow up; Hewitt provided his email address to Faust for that purpose.

Returning to the policy, Chair Albinson explained the procurement (purchasing) policy was updated substantially to bring it in line with Vermont statute. He noted many of the previous dollar figures were much lower than appropriate for a town of Bristol's size and its current projects, and were raised to allow the Town Administrator to move on projects at the Town's current scale. He observed the policy had likely not been updated in roughly ten years. Greg Faust added that some thresholds were so low they would have required Board approval even to pre-buy fuel, and that adjustments were made based on the Town's audit to tie up loose ends and position the policy to close those loops in future audits.

MOTION: *A motion to adopt the Bristol Procurement Policy, moved by Michelle Perlee and seconded by Peeker Heffernan, passed unanimously.*

Chair Albinson directed that the policy be finalized, with copies sent out and added to the necessary locations. He previewed upcoming policy work: the Personnel Policy would return for its second reading at the next meeting, and he hoped to have comments back from legal counsel on the Conflict of Interest Policy so it could return, with a third reading and possible adoption to follow.

5b. Selectboard Roundtable.

Joel Bouvier

Bouvier reported he had spoken with Greg Faust that morning and shared photographs of solar-powered illuminated stop signs, including a flashing/lighted stop sign with a solar panel on top installed at a location where fatal accidents had previously occurred and which is now a four-way stop. He proposed similar signage for the Burpee Road intersection ("Boss Corner," at the intersection of Burpee and Monkton Roads) and referenced accident history at that corner. He also raised the intersection of Plank Road and Burpee near the cemetery. Bouvier proposed researching accident counts with the state police and pursuing a grant to fund the signs.

Peeker Heffernan offered context that accidents at Burpee and Plank typically involve drivers who stop and then pull out in front of oncoming vehicles, partly speed-related on Burpee and partly a matter of drivers misjudging available time, with sight distance from the north being adequate but questionable from the south. Chair Albinson asked whether these locations could be addressed with the same flashing technology; the discussion indicated they could. Bouvier committed to doing the research and bringing the item back on a future agenda, noting related pressure from the State and Green Mountain Power's interest in moving a utility pole at the intersection.

Jessica Teets

Teets raised four items she hoped to work on this year.

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Budget reporting tool. She asked for a simpler way to understand the monthly budget reports, suggesting a performance/indicator report that would let members glance at overall progress rather than reviewing full detail. Greg Faust framed this as a performance report. Kris Perlee noted the current budget report includes full detail under every line and suggested providing headers and amounts, with detail available on request. Teets emphasized the value of comparison over time, since some departments spend all at once while others spend at particular points, making it hard to tell whether a given month's spending is normal; Kris Perlee suggested showing a multi-year trend for context. Teets said this would help the Board understand the financial picture as it unfolds rather than addressing it all in the fall when little can be done. During this exchange, Michelle Perlee noted she sends the budget reports monthly; there was brief discussion about whether all members were receiving them.

Town meeting reforms. Teets asked whether the Town could reach out to Lincoln to hear about the reforms they made to their town meeting, including electronic clickers for voting and moving more items to Australian ballot. She noted the current hand-count method is not very accurate and expressed interest in learning what worked and what did not, suggesting Lincoln be invited to present to the Board. Chair Albinson asked whether, given her involvement in promoting town meeting, she would like to handle that research; Teets agreed but suggested inviting Lincoln to present so the whole Board could hear it.

Sidewalk maintenance schedule. Teets asked to update the sidewalk maintenance schedule and ensure regular repairs are built into it, noting the number one question she hears from residents is when their sidewalks will be repaired. She called for a more transparent way for the public to understand the timeline and whether a given stretch would be repaired or fully replaced. Peeker Heffernan characterized this as a master plan. Joel Bouvier reported that he, Greg Faust, and Public Works Foreman Eric Cota had an 11:00 a.m. sidewalk ride-along scheduled for that Thursday, riding every sidewalk with a measuring wheel; Cota would mark sections needing trimming and spot repairs. Extended discussion followed on repair methods, including grinding down raised panels (requiring specialized equipment for the highest ones), patch/ramp material to prevent tripping, and marking hazards with bright orange spray paint as a visual warning. Chair Albinson noted the Town has a still-live Google map from an intern study a couple of years ago mapping sidewalk conditions, which could serve as a starting point to update and build a replacement schedule. Michelle Perlee argued for completing whole continuous stretches (e.g., an entire street such as Church Street) rather than isolated panels; Joel Bouvier partly disagreed, noting the need to coordinate sidewalk work with upcoming water-line projects (e.g., West Pleasant Street) to avoid tearing up newly repaired sidewalks, and acknowledging that emergencies will arise that cannot be planned. Kris Perlee noted that working in sections supports building out a replacement schedule.

Civic outreach. Teets observed that few members of the public attend meetings and proposed outreach, volunteering to help, possibly at the Harvest Festival, to explain why residents might attend Selectboard meetings and what they can learn, emphasizing that participation is now easier because meetings are on Zoom (cameras can be off) and are much shorter than the former four-hour format. Joel Bouvier suggested posting a reminder on Front Porch Forum the Saturday before each meeting. Peeker Heffernan noted the shorter meeting format may make people more inclined to tune in, and that many people watch the recordings. Michelle Perlee suggested posting the minutes, or a link to them, on Front Porch Forum in addition to the Town website. Greg Faust agreed there are major communication gaps, largely a matter of resources, time, and people, and reported the Town has two Middlebury College students, one assigned to communications, to help build out external communications. He said improving communication

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also involves redesigning the Town website to be more user-friendly rather than an archive that requires knowing exactly what to search for, and noted the website work should open up in the next month. Members discussed making YouTube clips and other formats more readily available for people who digest information that way, and noted Monday evenings are difficult for families with children.

Chair Ian Albinson

Chair Albinson reported on items he is working on.

Conflict of Interest Policy. He hoped to receive feedback (from legal) so the policy could return at the next meeting.

Electric vehicle charging (Level 2). He said he would bring the Level 2 EV charging project to the Board at the next meeting for approval. The project would be located on the Town Green at the corner of Park Place, Park Street, and North Street, on town-owned land. He is obtaining updated quotes from Cummings Electric, whose newer quote (from roughly last year) was substantially better than the original quote obtained when the grant was awarded, which had far exceeded the grant amount; he believes the grant will cover everything and is confirming with the State that the funds remain available. The installation would also replace one of the bollards there. He noted that under the (thin) Town Green policy, this would be considered energy/utility use and the Selectboard has preference to improve something. Level 2 is easy to connect (no three-phase power needed) and would encourage people to park and enjoy downtown; the Town Green was preferred over the Walgreens parking lot alternative location, which would have added roughly \$5,000 to \$6,000 to dig under and connect to power. He will bring a mock-up and slides. The Level 3 project is on pause due to a number of complications. Jessica Teets noted that a Level 2 charger would add Bristol to tourism/charging apps.

Signs on the Town Green and entryway signs. Prompted by Peeker Heffernan, the Board discussed temporary signs placed on the Town Green and affixed to the Town's entryway ("gateway") signs. Heffernan objected to organizations attaching signs to the Town's entry signs without permission and to signs stuck around the park, saying they deface the Town's appearance. Chair Albinson and members clarified that certain signs (Bristol Farmers Market; the Pocock Rocks event) had arranged temporary placement through Recreation Director Meridith McFarland, since the side of the covered structure formerly used is no longer available, and that a prior Fourth of July banner request had come to the Board for permission. Sharon Lucia noted there is an existing policy prohibiting signs on Town property, though the specific policy could not be identified in the moment; Kris Perlee offered to locate it. Chair Albinson noted that when the matter arose previously (during his time on CORE), the decision was not to allow signs on the entryway signs because it would open the door to anyone doing so. The consensus was that a limited exception could be made for an organization closely connected to the Town, such as CORE, for minimal signage on the Town Green tied to an event happening on the Green, but that signs attached to the entryway signs should come down. Chair Albinson offered to reach out to the new Bristol CORE director (Lisa Boeckman) about it. Kris Perlee separately noted a state-funded waterline project sign was put up on the front of the park (and will be there for several years) is technically in violation of the Town's zoning; Greg Faust responded that the State that funded it left no option and that it does not violate state policy. The Board also acknowledged that political signs are permitted on Election Day and are appearing as political season begins, with the expectation that they come down afterward.

Michelle Perlee

In addition to her sidewalk comments above, Perlee asked whether the Board would return to the town meeting warning discussion before next town meeting; Chair Albinson said yes.

Peeker Heffernan

Heffernan noted the town meeting warning and the police matter have both been outstanding for about six months, and that while work has been going on behind the scenes on policing, the Board as a group had not been involved. Chair Albinson responded that more would be forthcoming, that there have been events members can attend to support the police department and ask or answer questions (which he has been attending as Chief Bruce Nason holds them), and that surveys and other outreach would be coming.

5c. Town Administrator's Report.

Town Administrator Greg Faust reported:

- **Bristol West water / paving.** Tie-in testing is occurring, and the Town will repave all the affected streets at one time around mid-September once the work is completed.
- **Lawrence Memorial Library.** On Friday, the State amended the Town's contract on the library renovation, increasing the Town's line by $310,000 to cover the mitigation work and "a little bit more."
- **Holley Hall.** Nearly complete; blower door testing was done that day, with some remaining punch-list items (balcony, dormer done, some roofing). A few items will happen after the fact pending certain contractors, but the building is just about done and the Town will begin renting it back out to the public soon.
- **East Street.** House demolition is in progress.
- **Elections.** Elections are the following day (Tuesday), so the meeting needed to wrap up.
- **Firefighter of the Year.** Faust noted that Kris Perlee had been recognized as State Firefighter of the Year. The Board offered congratulations.
- **Construction portfolio reports.** Included in the Board's packet, providing a high-level overview of what has gone out to bid, what is coming back, and current status; more detail is available. Jessica Teets thanked Faust for the reports and reporting, saying it has made the Selectboard's job easier.
- **Road crew hiring.** A road crew member position was posted the prior week on the Town website and in the Addison Independent; the Town is competing with Addison and others for candidates. Joel Bouvier noted the ad allows candidates to carry over their seniority/benefits.
- **Police contract.** As the police discussion continues, Faust said he plans in the next month to review the last contract for opportunities to make the Town more competitive. Members noted roughly one to two years remain on the contract, that the Town could make pay more competitive without necessarily following the contract, and that non-salary levers exist. Faust identified potential room in the insurance opt-out lines that could save the district and help improve officer pay, and said the parties are open to discussing it; more would come in the next couple of weeks.

VI. Other Business.

6a. Correspondence, Reports, and Communications Received.

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Chair Albinson noted one letter from a resident raising concerns about Lord's Prayer Rock, filed in the Board's packet. The letter raised several objections: dangers for pedestrians, bicyclists, and traffic; that it constitutes an illegal billboard under Vermont law; church/state separation concerns regarding a religious inscription on Town-owned property; and that it was made into a monument without a building permit. Members briefly discussed the permit question, observing that historic sites predate zoning and building requirements. The Chair invited members to review the letter and raise any questions.

VII. Executive Session.

Executive session was not anticipated on the published agenda. At the close of open-session business, Peeker Heffernan requested a brief executive session for a personnel update, and the Board agreed.

MOTION: *A motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313, moved by Michelle Perlee and seconded by Jessica Teets, passed.*

The Board entered executive session at 7:53 PM. Town Administrator Greg Faust was invited to remain by the Board. The Board returned to open session at 7:58 PM. No binding action was taken in executive session.

VIII. Adjourn.

Following the return to open session, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ian Albinson, Selectboard Chair

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