

Town of Bristol

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Selectboard Subcommittees: Rules and Charges

The governing document for the Selectboard and for anyone appointed to one. Proposed for adoption by the Bristol Selectboard on September 28, 2026, agenda item 5c.

What the Selectboard is asked to adopt

Four motions, taken up on September 28, 2026 under agenda item 5c. Two points of Selectboard direction are built in: every seat other than the Selectboard seats is filled on Town Administrator referral only, and every member of a subcommittee, elected or not, makes recommendations only. Each also carries one Selectboard alternate, so a session goes forward when a member can't attend instead of being cancelled.

Motion	What it does	Status
1. Two seats and an alternate	Two Selectboard seats is the standing ceiling for any committee or subcommittee the Selectboard creates. Each subcommittee has one Selectboard alternate, who attends and votes only in place of an absent Selectboard member. A vacancy in any Selectboard seat, including an alternate, returns to the Board to be filled	Proposed
2. Seat Policy and Governance Review	Two members and one alternate, staffed by the Town Administrator, under Charge A. Referred on the same motion: the Personnel Policy, the Conflict of Interest Policy, the annual review of the Rules of Procedure, and which filed instruments are ordinances	Proposed
3. Seat Personnel	Two members and one alternate, under Charge B. Meets when called. The Town Administrator serves as staff and is not a member	Proposed
4. Close the loop	A standing consent line accepting committee minutes, an appointment calendar, and an annual report due July 31, one month after the fiscal year ends	Proposed

Infrastructure and Capital and Public Health and Safety are the second phase. On September 28 the Board states its intent for their seats for the record and creates neither. Each opens after Policy and Governance Review has met twice, on its own motion.

Proposed appointments

The Chair appoints the Selectboard seats and the alternate under Rules of Procedure Section II.B. This is the lineup the Chair proposed on September 24, 2026.

Subcommittee	Selectboard members	Alternate	September 28
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A. Policy and Governance Review	Michelle Perlee, Jessica Teets	Joel Bouvier	Appointed with Motion 2
B. Personnel	Michelle Perlee, Joel Bouvier	Peeker Heffernan	Appointed with Motion 3
C. Infrastructure and Capital	Joel Bouvier, Ian Albinson	Jessica Teets	Intent for the record only
D. Public Health and Safety	Peeker Heffernan, Jessica Teets	Michelle Perlee	Intent for the record only

No member is both a seat and the alternate on the same subcommittee.

These standing rules go into the March 2027 organizational motion, so they are renewed with the rest of the Board's organization each year.

Standing rules for every subcommittee

Rule	What it means in practice
Recommend only	A subcommittee holds no authority. Every member, Selectboard or not, makes recommendations only. Nothing a subcommittee does supplants the elected authority of the Bristol Selectboard, which still reads and votes on everything
Created by motion	Each subcommittee is created by a Board motion at a warned meeting. The Chair appoints its two Selectboard members and its Selectboard alternate
Other seats by referral only	Every seat other than the Selectboard seats, whether staff, resident or another Town body, is filled on Town Administrator referral only. The referral is the Town Administrator's alone. The Selectboard then appoints by vote, so every member is on record as appointed
Two Board seats, never three	The standing ceiling. A third Board member does not attend a subcommittee session, even to listen, because three members is a Board quorum. That includes the alternate when both members are present
One alternate	Each subcommittee has one Selectboard alternate. The alternate attends and votes only in place of an absent Selectboard member, so a session goes forward instead of being cancelled. The Town Administrator confirms with the agenda which two Selectboard members will sit
Vacancies	A vacancy in any seat, including an alternate, returns to the Selectboard and is filled the same way the seat was first filled
No joint sessions	Members sit on more than one subcommittee, so no two subcommittees meet jointly, or back to back with members staying for both, unless the session is warned as a Selectboard meeting
Disclosure	A member discloses and steps out of any matter involving a relative, a household member or a business associate. The disclosure goes in the minutes
Referral only	A subcommittee takes up only what the Board or the Town Administrator refers to it. Nothing has to clear a subcommittee to reach the Board
One docket, one packet	The Town Administrator sets each subcommittee's agenda, staffs every session, and carries its recommendation in the Board packet
No subcommittee speaks for the Town	No direction to a department, no statement to the public or an outside party. Departments keep one reporting line
Both views reach the floor	When a subcommittee and the Town Administrator differ, both recommendations go to the Board. The Board decides
Warned and minuted	Each subcommittee follows the Open Meeting Law like any public body. The Town Administrator handles the warning and the minutes
Reporting	Each recommendation is written and carried in the Board packet. The Selectboard will be informed of the

	subcommittee's recommendations within one Selectboard meeting cycle
Minutes	Placed on the Selectboard's standing consent line
Annual report	Covers the fiscal year ending June 30. Filed with the Town Administrator by July 31 for the August packet
Term	Each charge runs from adoption to the next March organizational meeting and lapses there unless the Selectboard renews it

The four subcommittees at a glance

Subcommittee	Opens	Meets	Charge
A. Policy and Governance Review	This fall	Monthly, cancels when nothing is referred	For adoption September 28
B. Personnel	This fall	When called	For adoption September 28
C. Infrastructure and Capital	After A has met twice	Monthly, mornings	Draft
D. Public Health and Safety	After A has met twice	Quarterly	Draft

Charge A: Policy and Governance Review

Purpose

Take a draft the Board refers, work it between meetings, and return one written recommendation the Board can read and vote on. The Board keeps the reading and the vote. The line-by-line editing moves out of the Board's evening.

Who sits

Seat	Filled by
Selectboard	Two members and one alternate, appointed by the Chair
Staff	Town staff

No resident seats.

What it takes up first

Item	Where it stands
Personnel Policy	Revision drafted, referred with Motion 2
Conflict of Interest Policy	Revision in progress
Rules of Procedure	Section V calls for review each year at the organizational meeting
Ordinance and policy filing	Which items filed in the ordinance series are actually ordinances

What it holds

- Drafts of policies and ordinances the Board refers
- The annual review of the Rules of Procedure before the organizational meeting
- The yearly check of which instruments are in force
- Ethics procedures, when referred

What stays with the Board

Adoption of any policy or ordinance, and every reading the Board chooses to hold.

How it meets

Monthly on a schedule the Selectboard designates. A session cancels when nothing is referred. Two Selectboard members must be present for a session to go forward, the alternate sitting in for an absent member.

How it reports

One written response for each referred item, under the standing rules.

Charge B: Personnel

Purpose

Put two elected members on hiring panels and position work, so no interview or position decision is carried by one person, and bring the Board something it can act on.

Who sits

Seat	Filled by
Selectboard	Two members and one alternate, appointed by the Chair
Staff	The Town Administrator, as staff. Not a member

No residents sit on this subcommittee.

What it takes up first

Item	Where it stands
The next open position	Panel, interviews and a recommendation to the Board
Position descriptions	Each adopted on its own motion, not through the Personnel Policy
Hiring panels	A standing practice so no interview is carried alone

What it holds

- Hiring panels and interviews
- Position descriptions
- Personnel rule questions the Board refers
- Compensation recommendations, when referred

What stays with the Board

Final hiring decisions, discipline, evaluation of the Town Administrator, the Town Administrator's own position description and compensation, and anything the Board takes up in executive session.

How it meets

When called. Its sessions are special meetings, warned 24 hours ahead. Two Selectboard members must be present, the alternate sitting in for an absent member.

How it reports

Under the standing rules.

Charge C: Infrastructure and Capital

Draft, for when the Board seats this subcommittee in phase two.

Purpose

Carry questions about buildings, roads, equipment, and water and sewer investment far enough that the Board sees a proposal rather than a blank page.

Who sits

Seat	Filled by
Selectboard	Two members and one alternate, appointed by the Chair
Planning Commission	One sitting Commissioner, by Town Administrator referral
Staff	Staff TBD

When this subcommittee is seated, the Equipment Committee folds into it by the same motion rather than continuing alongside it.

What it takes up first

Item
The FY2027 to FY2036 capital plan
Facility siting for Public Works, Recreation and Police
The equipment cycle, and water and sewer capital
Bid recommendations over \$15,000

What it holds

- The rolling program and the reserve funds
- The equipment cycle
- Water and sewer projects, as advice to the Board sitting as the Water and Sewer Commissions
- Buildings and facility siting
- Advice on bids above \$15,000

What stays with the Board, and with staff

Awards and appropriations are the Board's. Purchases inside the Town Administrator's delegated authority under the Procurement Policy stay with staff and don't come to this subcommittee.

How it meets

Monthly, in the morning, and only when something is referred.

How it reports

Under the standing rules. The Planning Commissioner also carries the discussion back to the Commission, which may send the Board its own annual advice on the capital budget under 24 V.S.A. section 4430(c).

Charge D: Public Health and Safety

Draft. The Board seats it on its own motion, alongside Infrastructure and Capital.

Purpose

Give the Board the public input it has said it needs on policing, and hold the safety items that fall between departments.

Who sits

Seat	Filled by
Selectboard	Two members and one alternate, appointed by the Chair
Residents	Three residents, referred by the Town Administrator and appointed by the Selectboard. A resident chairs
Public safety and community, by Town Administrator referral	Bristol Fire, Bristol Police, Bristol Rescue, EMD, School, Community Resource Officer

What it takes up first

Item
The town-wide police question
Hardscrabble Road speed and traffic study
Park hours and overnight use
The VOSHA workplace safety program

What it holds

- Community input on what residents expect of the Police Department
- Traffic, speed and crossings
- Sidewalk, bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Emergency preparedness
- Workplace safety
- Park hours and use

What stays with the Board, and with the departments

Police operations, discipline and every personnel matter stay where they are now. Any ballot question on police coverage under charter section 108-701(d) is warned by the Board.

How it meets

Quarterly, on a set schedule.

How it reports

Under the standing rules. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory, Energy Committee and Conservation Commission may bring items to it.

How Town committees connect

Bristol's nine appointed bodies are not replaced. Each gets a defined way in.

Body	Connects through
Planning Commission	A sitting Commissioner, referred by the Town Administrator, sits on Infrastructure and Capital, carrying the capital route in 24 V.S.A. section 4430(c) back to the Commission
Energy Committee, Conservation Commission	Feed Infrastructure and Capital and Public Health and Safety
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory	Feeds Public Health and Safety
Equipment Committee	Folds into Infrastructure and Capital by motion when Capital is seated
Revolving Loan Fund Committee	Keeps its own Guidelines and gets a reserved line on the agenda
Development Review Board, Design Review Commission, Library Trustees	The consent line and the annual report
Every body	Its minutes come to the Board on the consent line whether or not anything moved

How the loop closes

Motion 4 puts these in place.

Piece	How it works	Borrowed from
Consent line	A standing line on every regular agenda accepting committee and subcommittee minutes, "if any." It costs nothing on a night when nothing arrives, and no body ever has to ask for a slot	Middlebury, consent item 3b
Appointment calendar	Seven fixed steps each year: notice to incumbents, statements of intent, Board review, advertising, applications, interviews, appointment	Built for Bristol

The weekly Selectboard Brief and the TA Department Head Brief continue to carry the department side. The consent line carries the committee side.

Open Meeting Law, for each subcommittee

Requirement	Rule	Source
Agenda posted	48 hours before a regular session, 24 hours before a special session	1 V.S.A. section 312(d)(1)
Open to the public	Every session	1 V.S.A. section 312(a)
Minutes	Available after five calendar days	1 V.S.A. section 312(b)(2)
Who does it	The Town Administrator, as for the Board	Stated in the presentation

A session is a regular meeting only once the Selectboard designates its day, hour and place. Until the Board does that for Policy and Governance Review, it meets on 24 hours notice like any special meeting. Personnel meets when called, so it never holds a regular session.

Where the authority comes from

Each piece rests on an instrument already in force, listed here, which is why the motions need no charter amendment under section 108-201 and no new policy.

Instrument	Text	What it settles
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Charter, 24 V.S.A. App. ch. 108, section 108-201	Bristol holds every power granted to towns "except when changed, enlarged, or modified by these charter provisions"	How the Board organizes itself comes from general law and Bristol's own rules
Rules of Procedure, adopted March 29, 2021, Section II.B	The Chair shall "appoint members to any committee of the Board"	The Chair appoints the two Selectboard seats and the alternate on each subcommittee
Rules of Procedure, Section II.D	"No single Board member shall have authority to represent or act on behalf of the Selectboard unless, by majority vote, the Selectboard has delegated such authority for a specific matter"	A member on a subcommittee cannot direct a department or speak for the Board
Rules of Procedure, Section III.E	"A quorum shall consist of a majority of the entire Board"	Three members is a quorum. This sets the two-seat ceiling
Rules of Procedure, Section III.I	"The Chair shall determine the content of the agenda after consultation with Town Administrator"	Subcommittee agendas follow the same pattern
1 V.S.A. section 310(6)	A public body includes "any committee or subcommittee" of a board	Every subcommittee is a public body under the Open Meeting Law
1 V.S.A. section 310(5)(A)	A meeting is "a gathering of a quorum of the members of a public body for the purpose of discussing the business of the public body or for the purpose of taking action"	Three Board members together on Town business is a Board meeting
Precedent	The Equipment Committee and the Revolving Loan Fund Committee each already seat a Selectboard member	Bristol already runs this model in two places