TOWN OF BRISTOL, VERMONT

Selectboard Meeting — Minutes

Monday, October 26, 2026

Meeting Date: October 26, 2026

Time: 7:01 PM – 9:19 PM

Location: Conference Room, Town Offices, Holley Hall, 1 South Street, Bristol, VT (remote access via Zoom)

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

Staff Present: Eric Cota (Public Works Foreman), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Bruce Nason (Police Chief), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief, via Zoom). Town Administrator Gregory W. Faust was absent.

Others Present: Kevin Brown (Town Counsel), Nicole Seguljic (HMC Advertising), NEAT and one participant via Zoom identified only by the display name "mdavi"

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1. Call to Order

Chair Ian Albinson called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Joel Bouvier moved to approve the agenda. Michelle Perlee said changes were needed, and Peeker Heffernan said an executive session should be added. Bouvier agreed to amend his motion to add an executive session.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as amended to add an executive session. Moved by Joel Bouvier, seconded by Michelle Perlee. *Passed unanimously.*

3. Public Forum

Albinson opened the Public Forum, five minutes per person for non-agenda topics. No public comment was received.

4. Consent Agenda

Perlee moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and Albinson reviewed each item before the vote.

4a. Approval of past meeting minutes (October 12, 2026)

Albinson thanked Perlee for a correction she had sent on the October 12 minutes. He explained that the draft had referred to "the mill" in a passage where the discussion had moved from one mill to another, and that he had corrected it.

4b. Approval of Check Warrant and any liquor/tobacco licenses

Albinson reported the check warrant total of $441,791.91. Town Clerk/Treasurer Sharon Lucia said a liquor license was also presented, for the Bobcat. In response to Perlee, Lucia confirmed the license is under the Bobcat's name. After the vote Perlee asked whether there were any

changes to the license, and Albinson said it carried the same restrictions as before. In response to Heffernan, Lucia said the license was not for outside consumption.

4c. Acceptance of committee and subcommittee minutes

Albinson noted that no committee or subcommittee minutes had been received.

4d. Better Connections grant application – resolution authorizing the application and 10% local match; Grant Summary Document

Albinson described the application as a downtown study of access, transportation and stormwater, with a requested amount of $35,000 to $67,000 and a 10% local match. He said the details had come from Planning & Zoning Administrator AZ Larsen and Grant Administrator Freeda Powers. Perlee asked whether the project manager decision had been made. Albinson said it had not, and that the Board could approve the resolution pending that decision and update it once made.

4e. Special Event and Street Use permit – HMC Advertising, AOT distracted driving commercial, Lower Meadow Ln dead end, Monday, November 2 (rain date Tuesday, November 3), 5:30 to 7:30 pm

Albinson introduced Nicole Seguljic of HMC Advertising, who attended for questions. He said a number of issues had come up with the application, all had been resolved, and the Town had everything it needed. Heffernan asked what HMC stands for, and Seguljic explained the firm's name and said it works with the Agency of Transportation.

Perlee asked whether residents had been notified, saying she believed she had seen a notice on Front Porch Forum. Seguljic said she had not posted anything there, and that the letters to residents would be delivered once the permit was approved. Albinson said the item may have appeared in his agenda notes.

Bouvier asked whether emergency vehicles could still get down the road. Seguljic said only the fire truck would be at the scene. Heffernan noted that the site map showing where the vehicles would be parked was in the agenda notes. Public Works Foreman Eric Cota said the site is at the end of the road. Seguljic said she had spoken with the homeowner at the end of the road several times and that she was comfortable with the plan. In response to Albinson, Seguljic confirmed the homeowner's horses would be put away during the shoot.

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda, items 4a through 4e. Moved by Michelle Perlee, seconded by Joel Bouvier. *Passed unanimously.*

After the vote Albinson told Seguljic she was all set, and Heffernan noted she could now send the letters out.

5. Regular Business

5a. Department head update – Public Works (Eric Cota, Foreman)

Albinson invited Cota to the table for the first of the department head updates.

Summer work. Cota said the crew had finished the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) grant work, and that he had taken photos for Town Administrator Greg Faust. The crew had also done a good deal of ditching and replaced two culverts, one on Lower Meehan Road and one on Upper Meehan Road. In response to Albinson, Cota said one had only needed to be reset, while

the Upper Meehan Road culvert had failed because its bottom had rotted out with age, and he had not wanted to replace it in the middle of winter.

Heffernan said the Town now uses poly culverts. Asked by Albinson about their lifespan, Cota said that if installed and compacted correctly they should last at least 50 years. He said the department had moved from black culverts to gray double-wall, heavy-duty culverts, because many of the black ones were failing at the joints, which he attributed to compaction not being carried all the way up during installation. Heffernan agreed that installation is what matters. In response to Perlee, Cota said freezing water would not break a properly compacted culvert.

New truck and procurement. In response to Heffernan, Cota said the new truck's chassis was still expected in the October to November time frame and the body was expected to be complete between February and March, so the truck would likely be in service in the spring. Heffernan said lead times of about two years would be a planning issue for both Public Works and the Fire Department.

Cota explained that both body builders, Viking and Tenco, now allow a town to commit to a build slot for a future truck without paying anything, so that the chassis does not sit on a lot waiting for the body. He said the body price is set at the year of the build. He said he had already committed the replacement of the 2019 truck, due in 2029, to Viking, and that Viking had said the slot could be released later if needed.

Albinson asked how that commitment works with the Town's procurement policy and the need to take bids. Heffernan said the Town is only holding a place in the queue, and that what Cota described amounts to a single source. Albinson noted that the number of bidders on past truck purchases had been shrinking. Bouvier asked whether the Town should still get at least two quotes, noting that Tenco is in New Hampshire and that a large price difference would need Board discussion. Cota said Tenco is about two and a half to three hours away, which he considered too far for warranty work and parts, and that on the last Western Star body the two bids were only about $3,000 apart. He said both salesmen were willing to hold slots, and that he uses Viking because the Town buys many parts there and it is close by. Bouvier agreed that a $3,000 difference made sense, but said a difference of $15,000 to $20,000 should come to the Board.

Winter readiness. Cota said two trucks were left to finish: one had a camera problem, and the Mack needed air valves replaced and had a new front spring put in on the driver's side the previous week. Heffernan said that truck should already have been replaced. Cota said he had no concerns about the equipment going into winter, though the plows are worn. He said the department has one spare plow for the big trucks and one for the Freightliner. The fleet is two tandems, one single axle, the Freightliner and a pickup. If a truck goes down, he can shuffle routes, adding perhaps 30 to 40 minutes or more to a plow route, and can use the pickup on a village route as he has done before.

Crew. Cota said the crew was ready. A new employee, his son Matthew Cota, had started that day. Cota said Matthew had two years with the State plowing with a big truck and had run a loader, but had not run the excavator, a grader or roadside mowing, and that he or Assistant Foreman Colby Gile would train him. Albinson and Perlee confirmed the crew was back up to four, and Heffernan and Cota noted it was still down one position.

In response to Albinson, Cota said that if he were out, Gile would run the crew. He said crew members usually come in when sick, finish their routes and go home. He and Gile planned to alternate weekends once the season was under way, with the person on duty making the call-in

decisions and reporting to Cota on road conditions, since responsibility ultimately comes back to him.

Sidewalk plow. In response to Bouvier, Cota said the Kubota sidewalk plow's exhaust fluid problem had not recurred after the dash unit was replaced last winter. The machine had new tires and chains, and a recent regeneration problem was likely because it had not run long enough to reach temperature. Albinson asked whether replacing it was still under consideration. Heffernan said the machine is not that old and that replacement had been considered because of the emissions problems. Bouvier mentioned looking at a V plow that converts to a scoop or an angle. Cota said problems tend to show up early in the season, so he would see how it started out.

Salt and sand. In response to Albinson, Cota said the salt shed was about three-quarters full, with two more loads coming that would bring spending to about $56,000 of what he believed was a $70,000 budget. *[The FY2027 Public Works budget status report shows a salt budget of $78,000.]* He said the price is locked in once announced in August or September, and that he usually tops off in January and replenishes what is used.

Heffernan suggested ordering a load whenever there is room, given last year's shortage. Cota said last year he ordered three loads in December that did not arrive until March. Heffernan said the State's sheds had refilled during the shortage. Cota said he had heard of no supply issues this season and that his supplier usually calls if one is coming. Bouvier and Cota discussed the shed's capacity, with Cota saying it was designed for 1,000 tons. Lucia noted that the school orders four or five loads of salt through the Town each winter, and Cota and Perlee confirmed that is reimbursed to his budget. Cota said a tri-axle load costs about $3,600.

Albinson said that if there was no disadvantage, it would be beneficial to buy the remaining salt now. Heffernan noted it would not spoil, and Perlee said next year's price would not be the same. Cota said he usually leaves room to drive the loader into the shed in storms but would make it fit, and that he would call the supplier in the morning to bring the rest.

Cota said he had gone over on the winter sand line because the price rose a dollar a yard and last year's salt shortage meant using more salt-sand mix, and that he had covered the difference from the gravel line. Heffernan said he favored the mix in the warmer early and late parts of winter, and Cota said sand also provides grit that salt alone does not.

Intersection safety project. Perlee asked about a yellow arrow that had appeared on her road. Bouvier explained that he and Cota were working on a grant application for safety improvements at Boss's Corner and at the Plank Road and Burpee Road intersection near the cemetery. The project would add six stop signs, with double signs at Boss's Corner, and solar flashing stop-ahead signs. Cota said WorkSafe had priced three types of flashing signs (constant flashing, dusk to dawn, and radar-activated), each about $1,000 more than the last, all solar with battery backup. Bouvier said State Police reports showed five crashes at the Plank Road intersection and four at Boss's Corner in recent years. Cota said he was waiting on a price from Lafayette for guardrail on the inside of Boss's Corner near the utility pole, and Bouvier said Green Mountain Power had estimated about $8,700 to replace that pole and had provided a letter of support. Bouvier said he hoped to bring the project to the Board in two weeks so it could go to Powers for a grant. In response to Albinson, Cota said neither he nor Bouvier preferred a particular sign type, and that he did not expect the flashing signs to bother nearby houses.

Fuel. Albinson asked about diesel cost and availability. Cota said he had heard of no supply problems, only cost, and that he would not reduce plowing unless the Board directed him to in writing. Heffernan said he had heard of no shortages of fuel used for equipment.

Road weather cameras. In response to Albinson, Cota said the road weather cameras were working, and that two had been added, one on Monkton Road between the bike touring business and Boss's Corner, and one on Lincoln Road replacing the earlier frost camera, which was returned. The cameras run on 4G and show live images. He said none of the cameras record. After residents in Lincoln raised concerns about the earlier camera, he visited the Lincoln Town Clerk's office to explain that it records nothing and is used only for weather, and the Clerk posted that on Front Porch Forum; he had received no calls since. Albinson said the cameras are purely for safety and are not license-plate cameras.

Budget and facilities. Asked what the Board should think about for the budget, Perlee said the fuel line would likely need to go up. Cota said the fuel line had not been changed in years and had been set with a buffer when diesel was about $5 a gallon, against a little over $6 now, so it might need a modest increase. He said he had ordered a quick-attach bracket for the loader's pusher. Albinson noted that a new Public Works building remains on the Town's list. Cota said the gas furnace in the garage had been serviced by Jackman's the previous Thursday, but its circulating fan was still running for hours after the heat shut off.

Sidewalks and potholes. In response to Perlee, Cota said Greg Butler planned to try cutting a bevel on raised sidewalk sections, starting with Maple Street, using a list of locations and measurements Bouvier had compiled. Bouvier offered to send Cota contact information for a contractor with a concrete grinder. Jessica Teets said everything sounded good, especially the sidewalk fixes. Cota said Butler had also finished the fall sidewalk trimming.

Cota said the Town was out of cold patch, Pike Industries was not yet making it, and he would pick some up from the State the next morning to fill two holes about a foot deep, one on the apron at the Plank Road and Burpee Road intersection and one on River Road at the town line. He said the excavator's tailgate linkage needed repair. In response to Bouvier, Cota said he had reminded Jill Marsano that two water project patches must be repaired before winter, and had suggested coordinating with the paving contractor while it was in town.

Albinson thanked Cota for the update.

5b. Selectboard roundtable

Bouvier said he had already covered his work on the intersection safety project. Perlee had nothing to add.

Teets asked whether the Board planned to share its thinking on the police department with the public before Town Meeting. Albinson said it would, and that details would go out as the work moved forward. He said he had posted the October 12 minutes and discussion to Front Porch Forum and Facebook, and that he needed to reach out to Teets to begin the work.

Albinson reported that the EV charger permitting had been submitted and that Green Mountain Power had installed a new pole and electrical panel, which also serves the larger outlets for food trucks. He said the Holley Hall project was wrapping up with a few items such as acoustic ceiling panels. At the Lawrence Memorial Library, crews had started laying the new hardwood floor that day, expected to take about a week, with no carpet going back in; the downstairs had been cleaned and the ceiling tiles reinstalled in the children's area. He said new network cabling had been run at the Library and he had sent an equipment order to Lucia, and that the Town was also working to improve the Wi-Fi at Holley Hall. He said budget discussions would begin soon, including reserve funds and possible new positions, and that Faust was working backward from the final budget date and the Board would likely hear the schedule at the next meeting. He noted

the upcoming Bristol East bond vote and said the wastewater meeting the previous Wednesday had included Steve Palmer's water line presentation and RCAP Solutions' work with downtown property and business owners on the septic system. He said the meeting drew good questions and useful feedback, and that he would post Palmer's recording on the Town website.

Bouvier asked about the pieces of old pipe that had been on display. Albinson said one might go to the Historical Society and the others would be discarded. Bouvier thanked the five-town fire departments' food drive held that Saturday, which he said collected 4,372 pounds of food and $4,595 in cash donations, of which $3,000 was from Bristol.

6. Other Business

6a. Correspondence, reports, and communications received

Albinson noted there was no other business.

7. Executive Session

MOTION: To enter executive session to discuss attorney-client communications under 1 V.S.A. § 313, inviting Police Chief Bruce Nason and Town Counsel Kevin Brown to remain. Moved by Michelle Perlee, seconded by Peeker Heffernan. *Passed unanimously.*

The Board entered executive session at approximately 7:57 pm and returned to open session at 9:18 pm. No action was taken.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn the October 26, 2026 Selectboard meeting. Moved by Michelle Perlee, seconded by Peeker Heffernan. *Passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ian Albinson, Selectboard Chair