TOWN OF BRISTOL, VERMONT

Selectboard Meeting — Minutes

Monday, November 9, 2026

Meeting Date: November 9, 2026

Time: 7:02 PM – 9:17 PM

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

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

Members Absent: John "Peeker" Heffernan

Staff Present: Gregory W. Faust (Town Administrator), Sharon Lucia (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Kris Perlee (Assistant Clerk/Treasurer), Brett LaRose (Fire Chief, via Zoom), Bruce Nason (Police Chief)

Others Present: Kevin Brown (Town Counsel), Brian Cote, PE/CFM (SLR International, via Zoom), Michael Miller (via Zoom), Bruce Beeken, NEAT (via Zoom) 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 7:02 pm.

2. Approval of Agenda

Albinson said there were no changes to the agenda. Albinson told Town Clerk/Treasurer Sharon Lucia that the Turkey Trot street permit would not be added, as noted by email, and would be taken up at the next meeting in two weeks. Lucia said the applicant had responded, and Albinson said that was fine because it was still before the event.

Albinson said the agenda was all set. No motion to approve the agenda was made.

3. Public Forum

Albinson opened the Public Forum, five minutes per person for non-agenda items, in the room and on Zoom. No public comment was received.

4. Consent Agenda

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

4a. Approval of past meeting minutes (October 26, 2026)

Joel Bouvier said the minutes were really good and that they were being broken up as had been asked. Albinson said newer technology makes very detailed minutes possible, that Perlee then has to read them, and that the Town often relies on minutes years later, so it is useful to have that content. Bouvier said people look back at minutes to ask what the Board was really trying to get at, and expressed hope that they would not have the same questions with these. Albinson said each draft is read and checked before it goes to Perlee, and that the Town has good control over both the video and the minutes.

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

Albinson reported the check warrant total of $232,554.92. No liquor or tobacco licenses were mentioned.

4c. Acceptance of committee and subcommittee minutes

Albinson noted that there was nothing in committee or subcommittee minutes to be filed.

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

5. Regular Business

5a. Mountain Street stormwater improvements – final report, alternatives and conceptual cost estimates (Brian Cote, PE/CFM, SLR International)

Albinson introduced Brian Cote of SLR International, who joined by Zoom to present the final report. Albinson noted that the Board had seen the material a few weeks earlier and allowed about 20 minutes for the item.

Cote said the project area focuses on Mountain Street and Spring Street. Cote listed the alternatives from the prior presentation: a do-nothing baseline that maintains the existing system, changing the three-sided inlet at the upstream end across from the school, changing catch basin tops from single grates to double grates, expanding the drainage system and extending the system upstream into the watercourse. Since the last meeting SLR had also looked at combining the last two as Alternative 5.1. Cote also mentioned a sediment trap, which is not a drainage system as such but could help collect the sediment and debris that now clog the system.

Using modeling results on the concept plans, Cote said that replacing the three-sided inlet with a larger, more efficient structure and upsizing the pipe to 24 inches made little change in flooding or bypass flows. *[The SLR Alternatives Matrix dated November 9, 2026 describes Alternative 2 as upsizing the existing 24-inch pipe to a 48-inch pipe.]* Double grates showed a little local improvement, but water could still discharge onto Mountain Street and spread across the street, which Cote called a known and ongoing issue.

Cote said the alternative expanding the system, referred to at that point as Alternative 3, had a good deal more impact, especially in the low flat area, but water could still spill onto Mountain Street above. *[The SLR Alternatives Matrix dated November 9, 2026 lists expanding the Mountain Street drainage system as Alternative 4. Alternative 3 is the catch basin inlets.]*

Cote said extending the system upstream would move the inlet up the watercourse, with catch basins and pipes carrying the water down Mountain Street. Cote said this was the alternative that most addresses water flowing onto Mountain Street at the upstream end. Comparing existing and proposed conditions showed much less water on Mountain Street, because it would be collected in the system, along with improvements in the backyards. The combination alternative would add a measure of insurance, leaving a system on the other side of the street if the grates clogged, at added cost and complexity.

Cote then reviewed the alternatives matrix, which compares each alternative on whether it reduces discharge onto the roadway on Mountain Street across from the school, whether it helps with surface flooding and uncontrolled or bypass flows, permitting requirements, temporary construction impacts, constructability including utility conflicts and construction cost.

Under Alternative 1 there would be no change. Under Alternative 2 the amount of water flowing onto Mountain Street would not change and there would be some localized change. Permitting would be very limited, the work could require temporary impacts and easements on nearby private property, and the cost of one pipe and one structure would be relatively low. Alternative 3 would bring no real change across from the school and minor change at the structures being altered, with minor permitting, minor construction impacts, minor utility conflicts and a relatively low cost.

Alternative 4 would bring no real change at Mountain Street but would collect more water, with less ponding and less bypass. It would involve little permitting and possibly temporary easements and more utility conflicts in the street. Cote estimated its construction cost at $275,000 to $300,000.

Cote said Alternative 5 was the most substantial change in performance, because it would collect water before it flows onto Mountain Street. Permitting would be minor. A permanent easement would likely be needed for maintenance and drainage on private property, because the upstream inlet would be located on the watercourse. Constraints in the street and conflicts with utilities would be moderate, and the cost would be very similar to Alternative 4, since the system would be built on the east side of the street rather than the west.

Cote said the combination showed the biggest benefit in performance with not much change in the constraints, and that it was the largest cost. Cote said there was a little savings in combining them, about $200,000 worth, but that it was the most expensive option. *[The SLR Alternatives Matrix dated November 9, 2026 lists Alternative 5.1 at $475,000 to $500,000, about $200,000 above Alternative 5 at $275,000 to $300,000 and below the $550,000 to $600,000 combined total of Alternatives 4 and 5.]*

Albinson asked Cote to return to Alternatives 5 and 5.1 and describe the gains. Cote said Alternative 5 would be right at the edge of the properties, with a four-foot diameter pipe matching what is in the street below it and structures at least six or seven feet deep, so there could be impacts along the street. The upstream structure would be just onto private property and in line with the watercourse, which is where a drainage easement may be needed. Cote said collecting the water before it reaches the street addresses one of the largest impacts, an unsafe condition with water flowing onto the street. Comparing existing conditions with Alternative 5 in what Cote described as about a 25-year rainfall event, less water was able to leave the street and enter the backyards.

Cote said the results for Alternative 5.1 were fairly similar and that it adds insurance, since there is otherwise no drainage to pick up stormwater on the west side of the street until farther down. Cote said the new structure would be designed with a more efficient trash rack that pushes debris, gravel and cobble to the side, reducing the risk of clogging, though the risk remains in a very large event. In response to Perlee, Cote said the new system would connect into the existing system, which now starts near the existing inlet and flows down Mountain Street and Spring Street to North Street, with a similar size pipe.

Bouvier favored Alternative 5.1, recalling a night up there when the debris was in the middle of the road and the water went right over the top. Bouvier expressed surprise that the map did not show less water in the backyards under 5.1, since water reaching the west side of the road slides down that side and into those yards. Cote said that was a good point and that the area does not change much. Albinson recalled from the prior presentation that those low areas collect rainfall regardless of what is done on the street.

Bouvier asked whether, with an easement, it would make sense to line the watercourse up the hill 100 to a couple of hundred feet with something like four-inch stone. Cote said the intent would be to create a small scour hole or sediment forebay in front of the structure, which Public Works would keep an eye on. It would fill over time, could be checked after a big storm and could be cleaned out with a backhoe.

Jessica Teets noted that the land where the water comes down the mountain is private and that the Town would need an easement, and asked what maintenance would look like for Alternative 5 compared with existing conditions. Cote said it would involve monitoring the trash rack and making sure it is clear after a larger storm, similar to the grate on the upstream end of the existing pipe, which was open when Cote visited. Cote said it is a similar maintenance item that moves the inlet a little farther upstream, at the corner of that property.

Bouvier recalled the 48-inch pipe from the existing grate down Spring Street being installed in 2008. Cote confirmed the pipe is 48 inches from that structure to North Street. In response to Bouvier, Cote said SLR had not run a camera through it. SLR had popped the tops off the structures and found some sediment in the bottom, but not past the inverts of the pipes. Asked by Bouvier whether annual cleaning would be recommended, Cote said many towns hire a vacuum truck to clean structures every so often. Cote said most structures have at least a two-foot sump, that the larger pipes tend to keep themselves flushed and that smaller pipes seeing less water might clog or build up.

Town Administrator Greg Faust asked whether upsizing from 24 to 48 inches, which would increase flow five or six times, required any downstream adjustments. Cote said that so much water now stays on the surface that the pipes have a lot of extra capacity, and that the large pipes could carry the additional water without being upsized.

Bouvier recalled that in 1981 the Town had a chance to buy the two houses across the road from the elementary school for $5,000, for staff parking, and that voters turned it down at Town Meeting. Teets said diverting the water while it is still on the mountain would be the cheapest and best solution. Cote said the location was chosen partly because of a good drop where the water comes out and spills into the swale on that side of the road. Moving the structure into the right-of-way would still need grading and would create a steep section that could be difficult to stabilize. Cote said final design could look at avoiding the permanent drainage easement in favor of a temporary construction or grading easement.

Cote presented the opinion of probable project costs, based on a 30% conceptual design, with construction costs including a 20% to 25% contingency. Total project costs, including data collection, final design and permitting, were shown as $185,000 to $220,000 for Alternative 2, $150,000 to $185,000 for Alternative 3, $330,000 to $370,000 for Alternative 4, $330,000 to $370,000 for Alternative 5 and $540,000 to $580,000 for Alternative 5.1. Construction costs for Alternatives 2 and 3 were shown as $150,000 to $175,000 and $125,000 to $150,000. Alternative 5 was highlighted on the slide as SLR's recommended alternative, and Cote said Alternative 5.1 adds a bit of additional insurance at greater cost.

Cote said the figures are rough cost opinions drawn from recent bids and do not include utility relocation or the cost of easements. Data collection would include survey in key areas, mapping of utilities in the street, wetlands and natural resources where the watercourse comes off the hillside and right-of-way or boundary survey. In response to Cote, Bouvier said sewer runs only along Main Street. Cote said next steps after the Board selects a preferred alternative would be

data collection, final design and specifications, permitting, which would likely be limited to local permits, and construction bidding and implementation.

In response to Bouvier, Cote said Alternative 5.1 would add a 24-inch insurance system on the school side of the street, which would likely get past the telephone pole there and would need to pipe across to connect to the main system. Bouvier asked Faust whether the Bristol East waterline replacement would run past the school, and Faust said it would. Faust said Steve Palmer had recommended not doing the two projects at the same time. Bouvier suggested that getting the pipe across the street could still be done while the waterline work is under way, and Faust agreed.

Bouvier said Addison County Regional Planning had that day circulated notice of $4.6 million statewide in TAP money for stormwater mitigation, due December 4, and that the Town might apply.

Albinson said Alternative 5.1 was the greatest expense but offered the best future-proofing, and that even Alternative 5 was a tremendous difference from what the Town has now. Perlee said the Town could do Alternative 5 and add on later. Albinson noted the considerable price difference between the two. Albinson said the grant for the study was ending very soon and that the Board needed to accept the study that evening. The Board did not select a preferred alternative.

MOTION: To accept SLR's Mountain Street stormwater scoping study. Moved by Michelle Perlee, seconded by Joel Bouvier. *Passed unanimously.*

After the vote Perlee noted that the packet copy of the report did not include the material presented, and Albinson said he had just put these materials on the website.

5b. Selectboard roundtable

Teets and Perlee had nothing to report.

Bouvier said that, as part of continuing work on the two intersections, a letter of support had come from St. Ambrose Church because of the cemetery fence at the corner of Plank Road, where the Board may put up stop signs. Bouvier said the church reported that each repair of the fence costs between $1,000 and $1,500. Bouvier said support had been needed for the second corner, since the first has a Green Mountain Power letter, and said the letter would go to Albinson.

Albinson had nothing to report.

5c. Town Administrator's report

Faust said this would be a brief report and that a larger one would come at the end of the month.

Faust reported that the District Coordinator for Act 250 found on November 3 that Phase 3 of the water project is not a development and needs no Act 250 permit, the same finding as Phases 1 and 2. The 90% design review with the State is under way, environmental documents are to be filed before Thanksgiving and the plans will go to the State. The Town is assembling a bond article for March 2, 2027, working with the Bond Bank and on Step 2 payoff figures.

Faust said the Lawrence Memorial Library expects to move back in around November 17, and that the final air sealing test came back with a 37.5% reduction. Albinson said the Library will open December 5 and is excited for a celebration.

6. Other Business

6a. Correspondence, reports, and communications received

Faust mentioned some questions about the water projects. Nothing further was reported.

7. Executive Session

Albinson said the Board had an executive session that evening for contracts, and Perlee began a motion under 1 V.S.A. §313.

Before the motion was completed, Faust thanked Lucia for doing a really good job with the prior week's election. Lucia reported 2,015 total voters, compared with fewer than 1,900 at the midterm election four years ago and in the 2,400s at the presidential election two years ago. Teets said that was good.

Albinson said a motion on contract matters has two parts, and read it in full.

MOTION: To find that premature general public knowledge of contract matters concerning the Police Department would clearly place the Town at a substantial disadvantage, and to enter executive session under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A) to discuss those contracts, with the Town Administrator, the Chief of Police and Town Counsel invited to attend. Moved by Ian Albinson, seconded by Michelle Perlee. *Passed unanimously.*

The Board entered executive session at 7:45 pm and returned to open session at 9:16 pm.

Upon returning to open session, the Board took the following action.

MOTION: To pursue a side letter with NEPBA to revise the salary step adjustments in the current agreement, to set the FY27 dollar ceiling for that side letter at the amount in the FY27 budget and to authorize the Town Administrator and Town Counsel to open side letter talks with NEPBA. Moved by Michelle Perlee, seconded by Joel Bouvier. *Passed unanimously.*

8. Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn the November 9, 2026 Selectboard meeting. Moved by Michelle Perlee, seconded by Joel Bouvier. *Passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ian Albinson, Selectboard Chair

DRAFT