



**Selectmen's Meeting
MINUTES
Bristol Town Office, December 18th, 2019**

*Selectmen Present: Chad Hanna, Kristine Poland, Paul Yates
Also Present: Chris Hall (Town Administrator); Lindsay Currier (staff), Bob Faunce (consultant) and members of the Bristol Byways Committee: John Lappen, Sandra Lucore, Emile Lugosch, Mary Piasecki, Patricia Porter and Todd Richards; Candy Congdon (Lincoln County News); Charles Hanson and Alex Beaudet (Budget Committee); Phil Congdon.*

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Chad Hanna, at 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was moved by Poland, seconded by Yates, to accept the minutes from the December 4th meeting. Motion passed 3 – 0.

Presentation by Bristol Byways Committee

Lindsay Currier, the Town's Deputy Treasurer, who staffs the Bristol Byways Committee (formerly Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee), presented interim findings from the Committee to the Board, with additional input from the Byways Committee members present. She talked through a PowerPoint slide presentation which focused on six areas of recommendation, based on a survey completed by over 300 people and on the Committee's research and deliberations.

The six areas of focus were:

- Multi Use Paths & Trails – potentially at Old Long Cove Road or elsewhere
- Town Wide Speed Control – additional signs and enforcement
- Bristol Consolidated School – possible sidewalk and crossing to library
- Historic Village Improvements (Round Pond, Bristol Mills, New Harbor)
- Bike Friendly Bristol – bike racks, 'Share the Road' signs and education
- Pedestrian safety between Hardy Boat Parking and Shaw's Wharf.

After considerable discussion, Selectmen agreed to take under consideration the Byways Committee's request for \$25,000 of seed money for projects identified as near-term 'quick hits' and for design and legal preparation for longer-term projects.

Poland asked whether the work of the Committee could be better implemented in the context of a new town-wide Comprehensive Plan. Bob Faunce responded to a question from the Selectboard Chair Hanna saying that in the past few years, the state has become much more willing to accept town Comprehensive Plans that do

not have detailed zoning rules. Hanna noted that a lot of good work had been done in the 2002-04 Comprehensive Plan. While 2020 will be a busy time for the Town's staff with several major projects and committees under way, he felt, 2021 might be a good time to revisit the matter.

Chair Hanna thanked Ms. Currier and the residents serving on the committee for their work and looked forward to the complete Byways Improvements Plan by the time of Town Meeting.

New Business:

Hall noted that with a change in state law to restrict the ability of municipalities to sell tax-acquired properties with senior citizens in residence, additional wording will be needed in the appropriate article empowering Selectmen to sell tax-acquired properties at the 2020 Town Meeting. He will bring wording to the next meeting.

Maine Bicentennial: Hall reported that he understood that the proprietors of the Bradley Inn, Laura and Tony Moskwa, were prepared to volunteer to lead a Town committee for the Maine Bicentennial. He recalled discussions earlier in the summer in which it was hoped to bring a modestly sized tall ship to Pemaquid Harbor. This now looked unlikely, but there remains interest in a time capsule and the idea of burying it beneath a 'Tricentennial Grove,' a planting of white pines that would be harvested at the Tricentennial in 2120 when the time capsule would be dug up and opened. The school should be invited to play a key role in preparing the time capsule, he felt. He hoped to bring forward names for appointment to a Committee in time to be incorporated in the Town Report.

Staff Retirement Provision: Following up on Poland's request, Hall circulated literature detailing possible defined-benefit (pension) retirement plans. He felt, however, that the simplest way to go would be to offer a defined-contribution 401(K) plan, which would limit the Town's exposure to unfunded obligations. He recommended asking First Advisors, who manage the Bibber Trust for the Town, to come and speak to the Board about the options and management fees for such plans. Hanna agreed, and said that this should be considered in depth for a possible 2021 introduction.

Tax-acquired properties: Selectmen reviewed a list of six properties whose liens had matured in December. One of these was already acquired by the Town from an earlier lien maturity, and a second was a mobile home on which the Town has exercised its right to waive foreclosure, given the Board's policy of not acquiring mobile homes. There was discussion regarding one property where the owner is now resident in a home for the elderly; the net proceeds of the sale by the Town of the property could be claimed by the state to pay for the resident's care. Hanna and Hall will try to determine the resident's wishes.

It was agreed that one property, an empty lot, would be sold by sealed bid in the New Year. Staff will try to reach payment agreements with the other former owners.

Old Business:

Selectmen reviewed the latest update of the 2020 Budget worksheets for the Town and Bristol Fire & Rescue. Chief Paul Leeman presented the Fire & Rescue budget. This showed a requested increase of less than 2%, including a cost-of-living increase for the Chief's salary and increases in the cost of certain training subscriptions.

The Chief also raised the idea of hiring an outside firm to seek reimbursement from insurance companies for costs incurred by Bristol First Responders and the Fire Department generally. A growing number of towns are billing for service, although an important question is whether and how to exempt Bristol residents, who are already paying for the service through their taxes. The Board encouraged him to bring further information back to the Board.

Hall then discussed budgets for Service Organizations, the Transfer Station, and the Town infrastructure and government. He asked for guidance regarding the application from New Hope for Women. This year they had initially requested \$995, the amount they requested in 2017; Hall recalled that in 2018, they had requested \$1,045 but the Budget Committee had recommended \$2,000, which was adopted at Town Meeting. Organizations had been told that they need not collect petition signatures if they were requesting the same amount as 2018. After initially submitting a request for \$995, New Hope resubmitted a request for \$2,000. It was determined that this increase for the requested amount would require a petition, of which there was too little time remaining to gather the needed signatures. New Hope submitted another request, for the 2018 amount of \$1,045, with the understanding the Budget Committee could again increase this if it saw fit. The Board concurred.

There was discussion of the request of \$76,612.50 for CLC Ambulance, an increase of \$37,612.50. Calculations by the Town Administrator and the Fire Chief suggest that this is still far below the cost the Town would incur if it had to go it alone – either by upgrading the Bristol First Responders or by hiring a commercial ambulance service. Hanna noted that the service's revenue had begun to rebound, slightly, in 2019 after the major loss of transportation for the hospital in 2018; but this does not bring CLCA to long-term sustainability. There may need to be further increases in future. He expressed support for the new management of CLC Ambulance and its more realistic approach to budgeting. Concern was expressed that in the event of any one of the six towns voting down CLCA's funding, the service could be jeopardized.

Hall drew attention to the lack of any contract between the six owning towns since the inception of the ambulance service in the 1970s. He had discussed the idea of writing a new Interlocal Agreement among the six towns, in a preliminary way with the Town Managers of Newcastle and Damariscotta. The Board agreed that this would be worth exploring, to define the responsibilities and liabilities of the towns.

Hall thought that the future of Olde Bristol Days for 2020 was not clear. Selectmen felt that if progress was not made on establishing an independent organization with its own insurance, the Town would face the choice of bringing it back into the Town Office or letting the event take a break in 2020.

The Bristol / South Bristol Transfer Station's manager, David Poland, had indicated – subject to closing the books for 2019 – a likely increase in the request to the Town of \$18,310, to \$259,000. Past discussions have made the community aware of the difficulties caused by the dramatic changes in the plastics recycling market, and the increase is driven by increased tonnage to landfills, a new contract with the landfill and an increased transportation contract.

A small increase for Animal Control is accounted for by the increased contract fees charged by Lincoln County Animal Shelter.

A major change proposed for discussion was whether to fund the fish ladder by deferring parts of the annual roads maintenance work, and reallocating this money to the fish ladder. The latest estimates, following significant cutbacks in the amount of masonry work planned at the ladder and taking into account donations of stone to the Town, were for the work to take about \$550,000, of which \$275,000 is at present in reserve funds. By cutting back the maintenance paving from 5 miles to about 1.5 miles in 2021, \$200,000 could be transferred to the fish ladder. The remaining \$75,000 would then have to be voted from surplus or taxation, though Hall suggested it might be possible to appropriate other funds such as excise tax on boats, currently directed to the Harbor Committee which has substantial reserves. Hanna agreed that this was a good source for funding as the restoration of the fish run will benefit the fishing community.

In the light of this possible transfer away from the roads budget, the essential work on the town's roads and bridges was reviewed. Maintenance paving was essential, Hanna felt, on Coggins Road; Fogler Road; and a short stretch of Benner Road near the Partridge Bridge. A culvert replacement on Old County Road had received at state grant of \$85,000, but a Town match of approximately \$35,000 would be needed. Erosion control was planned (and had been permitted) for Riverview Road and Round Pond Landing Road; and Hall thought it important to continue planning and engineering for, and seeking public input to, work at the Benner Road Stone Arch bridge. These together with the customary minor gravel and drainage work would account for \$275,000, instead of the typical \$475,000 a year allocated to highways and bridges.

In Town Office costs, a proposed increase of \$26,250 or 6.9% --in payroll was accounted for by a number of things: the fact that 2020 is a 53-payroll year (one out of every seven); the need to staff four (instead of this year's two) elections; cost-of-living increases and one proposed promotion for staff. This amount is subject to staff reviews before the budget is finalized.

In other items of Town expense, one line was proposed to be increased: computer expense, by \$5,000, to reflect increased contract costs of the TRIO accounting system. Town Buildings and Maintenance would also likely face an increase if the Board decides, after reviewing proposals in January, to proceed with installation of heat exchangers at the Town Office, to reduce fuel oil consumption. Hall also asked Selectmen to consider an increase in the Contingency line from \$20,000 to \$25,000, in the light of increased economic uncertainty.

Two possible investments at the Town Office, the purchase of ArcGIS software which would allow bringing interactive tax maps with the ability to view property cards on the Towns Website as well as give functionality to other departments, and a postage meter which would offer postage savings but at a capital and

maintenance cost, were not included in the draft presented, but Hall requested and the Selectmen agreed that Jessica Westhaver be invited to present the pros and cons of these to the Board in January.

Finally Hall presented a list of likely 3-year and 5-year capital spending needs which the Selectmen agreed to take under consideration and return to in January. The Board will continue its review of the Budget on January 8th.

Regular Business:

Selectmen reviewed and approved building permits for the owners of Map 007, lot 11-B; and Map 033, lot 66-A.

An application by CMP for a pole permit on Martha Beck Road was approved and signed.

Selectmen reviewed and signed Warrants for payroll and accounts payable for the Bristol-South Bristol Transfer Station, Bristol Consolidated School, Fire and Rescue, Parks & Recreation and the Town Office.

Under correspondence received, Selectmen reviewed a proposal from stonemason Phil Fitton to repair the stonework and concrete pad on the south side of the Town Office, for \$4,550. Subject to budget authority, the Board were minded to accept the bid for work in the spring.

Executive Session:

It was moved by Poland, seconded by Yates, to enter Executive Session to consider personnel matters, subject to M.R.S. 13, §405.6.a.1. Motion passed, 3 – 0, and the Board entered Executive Session at 9.59 pm.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 10.17 pm. No action was taken arising from the Executive Session.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10.18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Hall
Town Administrator