



**Selectmen's Meeting  
MINUTES  
Bristol Town Office, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

*Selectmen Present: Chad Hanna, Kristine Poland, Paul Yates.*

*Also Present: Chris Hall (Town Administrator)*

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 March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Motion passed 3 – 0.

**COVID-19 coronavirus issues:**

The Town Administrator noted the Governor's Civil Emergency Orders of March 25 and March 31. One member of Town Office staff continues to work from home, while the other staff are practicing social distancing.

Hall read brief updates on the status of operations under the Civil Emergency from Bristol Parks and Recreation (Parks Director Lara Sargent); Bristol Fire & Rescue (Chief Paul Leeman, Jr.); Bristol/South Bristol Transfer Station (David Poland, Manager); Bristol Consolidated School (Craig Jurgensen, AOS 93 Superintendent); and Lincoln Academy (Jeffrey Burroughs, Headmaster).

In discussion, it was noted that Lincoln Academy reported distributing equipment for more than 30 hotspots to students whose homes did not have internet access. This may be an effective work-around for some students but much of Bristol does not have adequate cell phone coverage. In the current circumstances the schools have highlighted the problem of lack of uniform access to the internet from homes across Bristol, forcing teachers to effectively have to prepare two sets of lessons – for students with home internet access, and for those without. Hall reported that he had seen about 30 responses the Broadband Committee's survey, and (in addition to needs for students) almost all respondents specified the need for telemedicine – perhaps because at the present time, primary care physicians are trying to see their patients by video call rather than in person.

Hall will be sending another Bristol Notes electronic newsletter soon, and will highlight the good work being done by the School kitchen staff and the Transfer Station employees, as mention in the respective reports from those bodies.

Treasurer Jessica Westhaver had this day signed papers establishing a tax anticipation Line of Credit with First National Bank of Damariscotta, for \$1.5 million, as authorized by the Board on March 18<sup>th</sup>. This will fund around 5 months' of net cash flow, at the current rate of expenditure, and give some protection if the property tax billing is delayed. Hall reported the Treasurer's concern that the state has deferred the deadlines for applications for various types of tax exemption. Homestead and Solar Energy exemptions are permitted to be filed until the municipality's tax commitment date, but certain types of exemption – Tree Growth, Open Space, Farmland and Working Waterfront – now have a specific cutoff date of July 1<sup>st</sup>. Hall's belief is that there are unlikely to be significant numbers of new applications for these between setting the mill rate in May, and July 1<sup>st</sup>. We can provide for any such new exemptions within the overlay when the selectmen set the mill rate, and grant abatements retroactively to cover any such cases.

The Board discussed the use of teleconferencing for the Town's several Boards and Committees. Hall reported that certain Boards are planning to use Zoom, subject to the guidelines for public participation. When notice of a Zoom meeting is published, members of the public wishing to attend will be asked to send their email address, and an invitation with a password will be sent to them. Poland noted that the Fish Committee will hold an outdoor meeting on Friday April 3, at 6 pm, at the fish ladder where social distancing can be practiced. Hall noted that the Planning Board is expecting to review a subdivision plan, which will probably require face-to-face discussion of large-scale plans and attract public interest; it is hoped that this can be postponed until it is safe to hold an open meeting.

The Board agreed that, for the time being, they will continue to meet in person, using the new 'social distancing' layout, and with LCTV publishing the video proceedings on line and on cable the next day. Members of the public who have questions or issues can submit them to the Town Office up to 4 pm on the day of a meeting, and be contacted by telephone during the course of the meeting.

### **New Business:**

The Board considered a request made by telephone, from Sandra Lucore who asked the Board to rename itself, and the titles of its members, from 'Selectmen' to a more gender-neutral term such as 'Selectpersons.' Poland and Hanna expressed their concern that Maine statute uses the term 'Selectmen' and this is specified in requirements for, for example, publication of agendas and minutes. Hall recalled that the Legislature has addressed this at least twice but has not changed the several laws that reference 'Selectmen.' He suggested that Lucore could contact our Legislators and request their support of such a change in the new (2021) Legislature, and also petition the next Town Meeting to make such a change in Bristol as soon as authorized by the Legislature. She will contact the Town Clerk to discuss petition rules.

Calderwood Engineering had asked for guidance regarding the timeline for design of the restoration of the Benner Road Stone Arch Bridge, including public

input. Marshall Cole of Calderwood joined the meeting by telephone. It was agreed that the concept discussed in 2019, of constructing a new deck across the top of the stone arch, which would be conserved in place and relieved of its load carrying burden, was still the preferred route to balance historic preservation with traffic requirements. It was agreed that public input will be sought once it is safe to hold a public meeting, probably in the fall. The matter will be reviewed before July 4<sup>th</sup>, when Calderwood can be given guidance based on better information about the state of the Town's finances as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

Hall had been contacted by Selectmen Hank Nevin of Bremen to try to coordinate the date of taking down the Posted Road signs. Nevin had discussed this also with Damariscotta, who had suggested April 8 or 15. Hanna thought that, given the rain forecast over the coming week, April 15<sup>th</sup> would be a better date. He thought it is a good idea to coordinate dates, given the roads our Towns have in common.

### **Regular Business:**

Selectmen reviewed and signed three entertainment permits for events to be held later in the year.

Selectmen reviewed and approved a Building Permit for work at Map 010, lot 049-F; and two Permits for Map 002, lot 097-A-2.

Selectmen reviewed and approved Warrants for accounts payable and payroll for the Town Office, Fire Department, Parks and Recreation, and the Bristol/South Bristol Transfer Station.

Under Correspondence, Hall reported that the Fire and Rescue Department had received bids on the Munro Bridge Dry Hydrant project, with the low bid being \$36,480.00 from Hagar Enterprises. It was moved by Poland, seconded by Yates, to accept the bid in the amount of \$36,480.00. Motion passed, 3 – 0.

Sheriff Todd Brackett had sent an update on the work of his office. He noted that service of civil notices has ceased where the courts' work has been suspended, and he has sworn Deputies from Knox and Waldo Counties in case of the need to draft in personnel, in the event of widespread sickness or quarantine.

Public Meetings: The Chair gave notice of forthcoming public meetings:

- Parks and Recreation Commission: Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 6 pm at Ellingwood Information Center *if urgent business requires it.*
- Selectmen: Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm at the Town Office

*[Meetings are subject to postponement or cancellation in the event of direction to that effect from the Governor's Office, or determination by a committee's Chair that a meeting is not essential or that a quorum cannot be attained.]*

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8.24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Hall, Town Administrator

*(Please review video of meeting at <http://lctv.org/?s=bristol> for full coverage)*