



**Selectmen's Meeting
MINUTES OF EMERGENCY MEETING
Bristol Town Office, March 16th, 2020**

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

Also Present: Don Means (Moderator); Chris Hall (Town Administrator); Paul Leeman; Lara Sargent; Chuck Hanson; Chuck Farrell; Pat Porter.

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

The Chair spoke to the difficult situation that has arisen due to the state of Civil Emergency proclaimed by the Governor due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus.

It is essential to continue operations of essential services, including Fire and Rescue and the Transfer Station, for which authority from the last Town Meeting is now expiring, and which must be renewed from this Town Meeting. However the Governor's advice is to avoid meetings of more than 50 people. The challenge is therefore how to pass the basic budget for the Town in as short a time as possible, while deferring other business to a time when they can be debated.

Poland believed that articles which had received unanimous approval from the Budget Committee should be taken up on Tuesday, and proposed that June 16th as the date for Recess of the Town meeting to hear the balance. Selectmen went through the Warrant to identify Articles that are not expected to attract debate. These could be handled in a single Motion to Approve.

The Moderator, Don Means, noted his discomfort continuing as he is in both categories of risk for the virus. The Board noted that Rachel Bizarro and Jessica Westhaver had been appointed Deputy Moderators by the Moderator after his election. A Clerk is needed in their official capacity at an open Session, so it would fall to Jessica to moderate a (hopefully brief and pro forma) session.

After discussion, it was moved by Yates, seconded by Poland, as follows:

To Proceed with the open portion of Town Meeting on March 17th but to limit business to articles that allow the continuation of Town services, by the Chair proposing Motions on behalf of the Selectmen as follows, with explanations in italics:

1. To dispense with the reading of the Articles.

(This saves considerable time by not having the Moderator read out every Article and Recommendation thereon.)

2. To Table the following Articles until later in the Meeting: Articles 13, 14, 27, 28, 36, 38, 39.

(These items include: (i) Articles with divided Recommendations from the Budget Committee; (ii) Articles that are the result of citizen petition; and (iii) Article 39, the non-profit requests, which must each be voted separately and which are not paid until after the September deadline for collecting taxes. It is expected that these Articles are those which Bristol residents will want to have the opportunity to debate, once the public health situation permits unlimited gatherings.)

3. To take all other Articles not requiring a written ballot, in one Motion to Approve, subject to the money articles being to Approve the recommended amounts and sources of funds.

(This combines in one Motion, Articles 3 through 12; 15 through 26; 29 through 35; 37; 40 through 63; 65 and 66. All of these that authorize spending are unanimously recommended by the Budget Committee.)

4. To direct the Clerk to cast one written ballot in favor of Article 64, “to raise and appropriate \$1,447,964.87 in additional local funds for the School, which exceeds the State’s Essential Programs and Services funding model....;” which is required to be voted by written ballot.

(Written ballots are required by statute to vote funds in excess of the minimum or EPS level determined by the state Department of Education. The School Budget was unanimously recommended by the Budget Committee, and is flat year-to-year.)

(The written ballots will be counted by the Town Clerk and her appointed Ballot Clerks.)

5. Motion to Recess until 7 pm on Tuesday, June 16th, at the Bristol Consolidated School gym.

(The remaining Articles, tabled ‘until later in the Meeting,’ will be debated and voted in the usual matter at that time. If there is still guidance against public gatherings at that time, there can be a further Motion to Recess until a later date.)

Motion passed, 3 – 0.

The Chair asked the Administrator to publicize this as widely as possible, to minimize the number of people who feel it their duty to turn out to a Town Meeting. He stressed that every Article will be acted upon, eventually – when people can safely turn out to vote.

Speaking to the video audience, he said that IT IS NOT YOUR CIVIC DUTY TO SHOW UP on Tuesday. Especially if you are in a category of people vulnerable to COVID-19 - over 70 or with existing health issues - please stay home. Everyone will have a chance to come and debate questions later.

Policy on Boards and Committee Meetings: After a brief discussion, The Board asked Town Boards and Committees to take note of the advice from CDC. It is the

responsibility of chairs to contact their members and determine whether a meeting is necessary and whether a quorum can be obtained.

Notice of Public Meetings: The Chair gave notice that the next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be on Wednesday, March 18th, at 7 pm at the Town Office.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8.01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Hall
Town Administrator