

Minutes

Bristol Select Board

February 22, 2018

Present: Select Board members: JP Morrison, Rick Alpers, Les Dion, and Town Administrator Nik Coates.

Absent: Paul Manganiello and Don Milbrand.

Others Present: Members of the public.

The public meeting was opened at 5:05PM.

Consent Agenda: Ms. Dion made a motion to approve the consent agenda dated February 22, 2018, to include the items named therein, seconded by Mr. Morrison. The Board voted 3-0 in favor of the motion to approve the consent agenda.

Public Hearing: The public hearing regarding the SB2 petition warrant article was opened at 5:07PM.

Janet Cote commented that SB2 gives more opportunity for more voters to participate. Ms. Cote stated that she has been contacted by elderly and people with young kids who can't get out to Town Meeting. Ms. Cote thinks that there will be a better turnout with SB2.

Karen Schaffner commented that voters need information to make decisions on what's on the ballot. Ms. Schaffner thinks that there needs to be a discussion about how to get voters the information to make decisions. Janet Cote replied that there still has to be a deliberative session and then there is a month of time to get answers and information to people so there is still time to discuss things on the warrant.

Steve Favorite asked if this information is mailed out to the public. Mr. Alpers replied that if the town prepares a voter's guide the cost would need to be budgeted for. The informational guide would have to be carefully put together so as to be neutral on the articles.

Steve Favorite asked if there is a longer period for returning ballots. Mr. Alpers replied that it is the same as voting now, if the ballot is not in by the close of the polls it is not counted. Mr. Morrison commented that it is just like an absentee ballot and they need to get them in on time.

Mr. Morrison commented that he feels that it's a great idea and covers the whole meeting on one ballot and that it makes a lot of sense.

Paul Simard commented that there legally needs to be a public hearing with proper notice which is 7 days prior to the meeting and the meeting needs to be 15 days prior to voting. The town is short on that notice requirement. Mr. Simard asked what would be the effect of improperly noticing if the voting results are challenged. Mr. Alpers replied that it was posted in two places around town and that the meeting is legal. The Board recognizes that it didn't have a public hearing last week and made arrangements to have it tonight and noticed the meeting.

Karen Schaffner asked if the SB2 article is on the voting ballot. Mr. Alpers replied that it is and needs a 3/5 majority vote to pass.

Tom Caldwell commented that he objects to SB2 as it removes the incentive to attend Town Meeting. Mr. Caldwell commented that in places with SB2 there is almost never any discussion that occurs at a regular town meeting. Mr. Alpers replied that he agrees and that you do get a broader vote but a good part of that comes from misinformed voters.

Paul Simard commented that the default budget is larger than the proposed budget with SB2. Mr. Alpers replied that the default budget is last year's expenses minus any one time expenses. Contracts are included in the default budget.

Ms. Dion commented that she is not a fan of SB2 and that the engagement in the process is not the same as Town Meeting. Janet Cote commented that in her opinion it is always the same people who go to Town Meeting and it will be those same people who go to the deliberative session but that she feels SB2 gives more opportunity to vote.

The public hearing was closed at 5:22PM.

Ms. Dion made a motion to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a), (b), and (e) seconded by Mr. Morrison. A roll call vote was held. The Board voted 3-0 in favor of the motion. Mr. Milbrand made a motion to come out of non-public, seconded by Ms. Dion. A roll call vote was held. The Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion (Mr. Milbrand arrived during the non-public session).

Non-Public Minutes: Mr. Milbrand made a motion to seal the previous non-public minutes, seconded by Mr. Morrison. The Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

Mr. Milbrand made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Morrison. The Board voted 4-0 in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Costigan