

Timothy Sweeney
Melissa Cordeiro
Deputy Clerk

Hi Melissa,

Thank you for confirming that the Town's current six-month practice for new restaurant liquor licenses is not written in an ordinance or formal policy.

My recommendation is that the Town replace the unwritten practice with a clear, written, risk-based policy.

A new restaurant applicant should be eligible for a full Class BV license if the applicant satisfies all state and local requirements, receives favorable departmental recommendations, and presents a complete and responsible operating plan. The fact that a restaurant is newly opened should not, by itself, require a limited license or a six-month waiting period.

To protect the Town and nearby residents, newly issued full BV licenses could be subject to an administrative compliance check-in after approximately 2–3 months. If no material concerns are reported, the matter can be received and filed. If concerns are reported, the Council could schedule a further review, consider lawful conditions, or take any other action available under law.

The Council should still retain discretion to impose reasonable conditions, grant a limited/provisional license, continue an application, or deny an application where specific concerns are identified, such as public safety, police impact, fire/code issues, zoning, outdoor service, entertainment, late-night operations, neighborhood impacts, incomplete documentation, or prior compliance history.

In short, I recommend replacing the blanket six-month custom with individualized review, written criteria, departmental recommendations, reasonable conditions where needed, and a 2–3-month compliance check-in for new full BV licenses.

Best,

Tim

Timothy E. Sweeney
Bristol Town Council, Member