

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES-WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

13. Town Administrator Contente re Discussion and Consideration for Building Department Shared Services with Town of Warren

Parella/ Teixeira- Voted unanimously to authorize the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town of Warren to establish shared building department services on a six-month trial basis. The final MOU will be returned to the Council for approval at a future meeting.

Prior to the vote being taken, Town Administrator Contente presented a proposal to establish shared building department services between Bristol and Warren. He explained that Bristol's full-time Building Official, Steve Greenleaf, had recently retired, and Bristol was currently utilizing Warren's Building Official as an alternate. Working with Warren's Town Manager, a shared services plan has been developed.

It was noted that under the proposal, Warren's certified Building Official would serve both towns, while Bristol would provide Warren with an inspector and code compliance support. This would enable Bristol to hire an inspector who may not yet possess the Certified Building Official (CBO) license, which requires three years to obtain. The Warren official would train and mentor the new Bristol inspector, creating a pathway toward certification. Town Administrator Contente described the arrangement as a "win-win," addressing workforce shortages while supporting professional development.

It was noted that the town of Warren has been working with the town of Bristol to draft an MOU. The proposed agreement would run for a six-month trial period, after which both towns could review and renew the arrangement if successful. Town Administrator Contente emphasized that hiring a private, certified Building Official would be more costly and would not provide the same in-office presence as the shared model.

Council members raised questions about service quality and timeliness. Director Williamson asked whether the arrangement would maintain the current level of inspections, permitting, and approvals. The Administrator responded that Bristol's budget would remain unchanged, with a full-time inspector and part-time code compliance officer still in place. He noted that Warren's Building Official was already familiar with Bristol's operations, having served as an alternate, and that there was no

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current backlog of inspections. The arrangement would allow the Building Official to focus on plan reviews while the inspector handled fieldwork, and would provide coverage during staff absences.

Council members also discussed the broader benefits of municipal shared services, noting that similar arrangements are common across Rhode Island and nationwide. They agreed the proposal was an efficient use of resources that would not diminish service quality.

Assistant Solicitor Teitz clarified that Warren's Council had approved the agreement subject to legal review, and asked whether Bristol's Council wished to do the same or await a final MOU for action. The Council agreed that the final MOU should return for approval at a future meeting.