



# Town of Bristol

- *Rhode Island* -

## 2024 Annual Report







- Safest City/Town in Rhode Island by SafeWise
- CALEA Accredited Police Department
- Tree City USA for conservation of our natural environments
- AARP Age-Friendly Community
- Continuing to work with businesses and road engineers to ensure accessibility for all
- 100 percent collection rates of property taxes
- Among the lowest property tax rates in the state
- AA+ Bond rating



To our respected Bristol residents:

Looking back at 2024, the Town of Bristol made numerous, significant improvements to the infrastructure, services, and amenities within the community. Moving forward to meet the diverse needs and expectations of our residents, while maintaining the rich traditions that define the Town, is both a challenge and a goal.

I, along with the dedicated staff who are committed to continuous improvement, understand that change is vital to a community and we welcome new ideas and innovative concepts that are for the betterment of our Town.

As noted in the recent financial bond audit, the Town of Bristol received an AA+ rating, in part, due to “good financial management practices” and “Bristol’s strong economy, consistent financial performance leading to maintenance of strong reserves, and very strong debt profile”.

Many of our projects are successful due to grant funding that helps to offset the financial burden to taxpayers. Across the Town’s departments, service to residents has influenced decision-making to ensure that municipal programs are strategically implemented to improve the quality of life in Bristol.

In my role as Town Administrator, I am privileged to experience special moments in the lives of our residents - from celebrating the accomplishments of young men achieving Eagle Scout, to sharing birthday cake with a resident who celebrated her 111th birthday, and reading to elementary grade students who have a thirst for learning - we are all neighbors.

As we take a look back at all we’ve accomplished in the past 12 months, I will continue to look forward to addressing the needs of a sustainable community, while exercising my fiduciary responsibility to our residents and businesses so that all can continue to enjoy the most patriotic town in America.

Respectfully,

Steven Contente  
Town Administrator

**A message  
to the community  
from  
Town Administrator  
Steven Contente**



Steven Contente  
Town Administrator



Melissa Cordeiro  
Town Clerk



*Pictured left to right: (standing) Council Vice Chairwoman Mary Parella, Councilor Timothy Sweeney (seated) Councilor Antonio 'Tony' Teixeira, Council Chairman Nathan Calouro, Councilor Aaron Ley.*

Town Council meetings are held every three weeks on Wednesdays at Bristol Town Hall. Residents are encouraged to attend in-person or view via Zoom.

Visit the [Town Council page](https://www.bristolri.gov/town-council) at [BristolRI.gov](https://www.bristolri.gov) for streaming information.





- Completed Landfill Solar Project
- Tupelo Water Pump Station completion
- New playgrounds – Rockwell, Coelho Park
- Implemented Traffic Calming Policy to ensure safer neighborhoods
- Greenhouse remediation – Police grounds
- Continued work on HVAC at former Reynolds School building
- Munis Financial Software Upgrade
- Sewer Upgrades
- New Rescue 4
- New Engine 4
- Portside Road Right-of-Way improvements
- Reservoir Orchard Drainage improvements
- \$1.7 million in paving projects
- Upgrade of Holiday Lights and electrical circuits
- Repair DPW Salt Shed

## Notable Achievements and Improvements in 2024





**Landfill Solar Project**

The Town of Bristol, along with NuGen Capital and Toray Plastics, celebrated the successful launch of a 20,000-panel solar array at the former landfill on Minturn Farm Road that will generate renewable energy and return revenue to the Town. The project has an estimated production capacity of approximately 8.7 million kilowatt hours (kWh). This is enough to power over 700 homes and the equivalent of 9 million miles driven by gasoline-powered vehicles.

Under the lease agreement for use of the capped landfill, the Town will receive \$110,000 in revenue each year, over the next 25 years. In addition, the Town will receive \$15,000 annual payments in lieu of taxes for a period of 30 years.



**\$1.7 million in Road Re-surfacing**

In 2024, the Town resurfaced over 9,235 linear feet of roadways. This year's paving project was more comprehensive than in years past and included numerous drainage and stormwater improvements.



**Portside Road Right-of-Way**

Providing public access to the shoreline is important so that all residents and visitors can enjoy Bristol Harbor, Mt. Hope Bay and Narragansett Bay that surrounds our peninsula on its three sides. In 2024, significant improvements were made to the right-of-way on Portside Avenue, making the access point safer and less prone to washing out during rain events. The result is a more aesthetic and useable pathway.



**Upgrade of Holiday Lights and Circuits**

At the request of the Bristol Merchants Association, the Town purchased new LED Christmas lights to string along the downtown areas of Hope Street and State Street. Lighting choices were selected by the public through an on-line poll, and the decorative lighting was extended to the intersection at Franklin Street. The result is a true Grand Illumination of the downtown area.



The Town of Bristol continued to operate with a financially robust reserve.

This, along with the Town's collection rate of 100 percent, plays a role in the Town's favorable standing with a Bond Rating of AA+ as determined by S&P Global Ratings.

Adding to the Town's positive returns on investments averaging over 4 percent, the Finance team leveraged the Federal Reserves' efforts to stimulate the economy and negotiated higher-than-usual rates on investable assets such as Certificates of Deposits.

The finance department also upgraded its financial software to enhance efficiency, improve financial transparency, and ensure better compliance with evolving regulatory standards. Additionally, it strengthens internal controls and security features, ensuring that public funds are managed responsibly and in accordance with best practices. This upgrade was a proactive step toward improving overall fiscal management and delivering better services to the community.

**Total Operating Budget FY 2024:**  
**\$67,308,961**

Department	Budget	% of Total
Education	\$29,990,009	43%
Police	\$ 9,396,769	13%
Sewer & Compost	\$ 7,093,845	10%
Public Works	\$ 5,289,610	8%
Fire	\$ 2,577,542	2%
Library	\$ 1,233,966	2%
Parks & Recreation	\$ 1,097,267	2%
Harbor	\$ 510,829	<1%

### Tax Collection

Bristol's residential real estate (RRE) and commercial tax rate is \$13.82 per \$1,000. This RRE rate ranks among the lowest in the state while continuing to provide residents with a full array of services such as curbside trash and recycling pick-up, sidewalk snow removal in certain areas of Town, and maintains its public safety reputation as the safest community in Rhode Island.

### Net assessed values of Bristol properties:

Residential: \$3,249,654,922  
Commercial: \$320,707,168

### Businesses registered with the Bristol Tax Office:

No. of New businesses: 34  
No. of Total businesses: 732

In 2024, the Town Administrator, Town Treasurer, and members of the Town Council introduced and approved an **Owner-Occupied Tax Rate**.

Given the influx of residential properties being used as short- and long-term rental units, the use of these properties generates income for the property owners.

Under the traditional tax structure, the Town of Bristol offered only residential and commercial real estate rates.

With the new tax tier, property owners who are full-time residents residing in the property will receive a lower tax rate than income-generating properties.

The tax structure was approved by the Town Council at the October 9, 2024 regular meeting and the exemption will go into effect commensurate with the start of Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025).



### Finance & Tax Collection

Bristol Town Hall  
10 Court Street  
P: 401-253-7000

Carl Carulli, Treasurer  
Brendon Smith, Deputy Treasurer  
Michelle DiMeo, Tax Collector

The Finance Department is responsible for the financial business and transactions of the town, including budget preparation and administration, tax assessment and collection, disbursement, and purchasing.





The Bristol Police Department consists of 41 sworn officers and 12 civilian members and one K-9 officer.

- Branches:
- Patrol
  - Detectives
  - Mobile Command
  - Marine Unit
  - Motorcycle Unit
  - Drone Unit
  - K-9 Unit

The Bristol Police Department responded to or initiated 35,098 calls for service in 2024. This represents an increase of 4.95 percent from 2023 (33,401 calls).

#### Most Common Traffic Citations

Using handheld devices	678
Speeding	354
Stop Sign violations	351
Lights Required	193
Suspended/Canceled Registration	175
No seatbelt	128
Traffic Control Devices	95
Leaving lane of travel	85
DUI	29

#### Accomplished Goals and Objectives for 2024

- Created a traffic calming policy
- In conjunction with the Community Development department, secured grants to remove greenhouses on abutting town-owned property
- The Bristol Police Retired Officers' program created training requirements for retired officers
- All communication, networking, and hardware systems have been modernized in the Mobile Command Unit (MCU) using federal grants
- Implemented School Safety action items for facility assessment and active shooter training. Secured funding with the school district to support updating and installation of surveillance systems
- Reorganized department structure to meet current needs and enhance service to the community
- Revised officer promotional process to mirror the reorganizational plan
- Conducted a recruitment drive for both police and civilian staff
- Introduced a wellness app to all personnel to provide a confidential tool for officers and support staff to promote a safe work environment, both on and off duty





## Community Policing & Outreach

**Blue Envelope program** – Provides those with special needs that impedes their ability to communicate with law enforcement officers a means to provide information during an encounter

**Community Night Out** – Brings public safety resources and the community together in a fun and festive event on Town Common

**Youth Leadership Camp** – Encourages participating youth to demonstrate and incorporate qualities such as teamwork, respect, honesty, integrity, courage and leadership into their daily lives

**Special Olympics Torch Run** – Members of the Bristol Police Department take part in the annual Torch Run through town to kick-off the Special Olympics athletic competition

**Battle of the Badges** – A friendly, annual softball competition for bragging rights between the Bristol Police and Fire Departments

**Citizens Police Academy** – A 10-week program that provides members of the community an opportunity to learn the inner workings of public safety and law enforcement

**D.E.A. Drug Take-Back** – Collected and disposed of 450 pounds of unused/unwanted prescription medications



Visit the Police Department page of the Town of Bristol website to view the [2024 Police Department Annual Report](#).

## Welcome new staff

The Bristol Police Department welcomed the following staff into the department in 2024:

### Civilian Dispatchers

Steven Smith  
Abigail Velleca

### Animal Control

Camila Oliveira

### Patrol Officers

Ziad Abdallah  
Alexander Carvalho  
Jonathan Jones  
Joseph Leonardi  
Jeremy Lima



## Bristol Police Department

395 Metacom Avenue

P: 401-253-6900

Kevin Lynch, Chief of Police

Scott McNally, Major, Operations



"Officer Bristol" was introduced as the Bristol Police Department's wood-sculpture mascot. The larger-than-life statue stands guard at the Police Department entrance and occasionally makes appearances throughout Town.

Officer Bristol is on-duty 24/7/365 and is always willing to pose for a photo-op.

The Bristol Police Department is dedicated to the prevention of crime and disorder, reducing citizen fear of crime, providing for the safe and efficient flow of traffic, engaging the community in a variety of activities, and improving the quality of life of all members of the community.



The Bristol Volunteer Fire Department continued to provide exceptional service to the Town of Bristol, providing 24/7/365 response to residents.

Emergency Responses - Five-year Comparison

	2020**	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total runs*	3,588	4,250	4,387	4,450	4,411
EMS	2,831	3,454	3,674	3,680	3,587
Fire	757	796	712	770	824

\*Receive multiple calls at once 41% of the time

\*\*Height of COVID 19 Pandemic Lockdown



Operations

- Continued maintenance and building improvements to all stations
- Continued fire inspection program striving for inspections of properties at least every 3 years
- Received \$48,719 grant for Townwide IT upgrades
- Received Legislative grant of \$1500 for purchase of radio equipment
- Assisted with implementation of new security system software and hardware Town-wide



Training

To ensure that volunteer members of the Bristol Fire Department are qualified to exceed the expectations of the Town and provide the same level of service as paid departments in other municipalities, firefighters and EMS professionals are required to successfully complete the appropriate trainings for their positions as listed below:

- Probationary firefighter training
- RI Fire Academy Firefighter 1 and 2 course
- RI Fire Academy company Officer 1021 course
- Computer based continuing education
- Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support
- Monthly Company drills
- EMS Continuing Education
- Live Fire Training in the department burn trailer
- Emergency Vehicle Operations
- Fire Inspections and Codes
- Marine Operations





## Community Services

- RI Department of Health, various committees, and interests for pre-hospital care
- Community Training Center for CPR courses
- Participated in Community Night out on the Common
- Administered seasonal FLU vaccines to employees, seniors, and community residents
- Elementary school fire safety presentations
- Annual Blood Drive
- Took delivery of new Rescue 4 and new Engine 4



## Goals 2025

- Continue to utilize Medical Director for quality improvement through EMS call review and training
- Continue to improve on disaster response in cooperation with RI Department of Health and the RI Emergency Management Agency
- Continue community education and risk reduction programs
- Continue professional development for personnel
- Complete specifications and order new Rescue 1 (2.5-year delivery time)
- Conduct training for Probationary Firefighters, RI Fire Academy Firefighter Level 1 and 2 course
- Conduct Emergency Medical Technician course
- Conduct NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer training for Chiefs and Company Officers
- Conduct NFPA 1002 Driver Operator Course for engine and ladder personnel

## Bristol, Rhode Island Volunteer Fire Companies



Hydraulion Engine & Hose Company No. 1



Defiance Hose Company No. 1



Dreadnaught Hook, Ladder & Hose Company No. 1



Ever-Ready Engine & Hose Company No. 2



## Bristol Fire Department

Headquarters

4 Annawamscutt Drive

P: 401-253-6912 (non-emergency)

Michael DeMello, Fire Chief/EMA Director

Stephen Knapman, Deputy Fire Chief -  
Administration

The purpose of the Bristol Fire Department is to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, life safety education, pre-hospital emergency medical treatment and transportation of the critically sick or injured, public outreach, injury prevention, emergency management, and mitigation of all hazards.

In keeping with its mission, the Department of Public Works provides numerous environmental, health, and public safety services to the residents and businesses of Bristol, including:

- Curbside collection of trash and recycling
- A fully operational transfer station
- Road maintenance
- Drainage improvements
- General maintenance and repair of public property
- Snow and ice removal
- Storm preparation and response
- And many other services that provide for a safe and healthy town



The department proudly assumes an instrumental role in the planning and implementation of all the Town's large events and collaborates with other Town departments in many of the services they provide.

- DPW updated and replaced all the Christmas lights and electrical infrastructure along Hope Street. This included updating the lights to LED and adding new electrical lines and power services.
- Assisted parks and recreation with the demolition and installation of 2 new playgrounds.
- The Planning Department, on behalf of DPW, received a grant to update nearly every garage door in the facility to insulated doors. This is expected to save a significant amount of money on heating over the course of the winter.
- The department's salt shed was repaired and the loading dock altered to make the sanding operation much more efficient.
- Two new guardrails were installed to enhance vehicular safety and the department rehabilitated and opened the newly acquired Town parking lot on Thames Street.



### Trash & Recycling Collection

The department provides weekly curbside trash and recycling collection. The entire trash and recycling operation is conducted by DPW personnel to include the collection, transfer and hauling of all municipal solid waste and recyclables to RI Resource and Recovery. DPW operates, staffs, and maintains the Town's transfer station. This allows residents to dispose of up to two tons of mixed solid waste per year.

- Disposed of 6,425 tons of mixed solid waste
- Recycled 2,211 tons of material

The Town earned a credit from RIRRC for meeting our recycling goal relative to the total disposal amount of mixed solid waste.

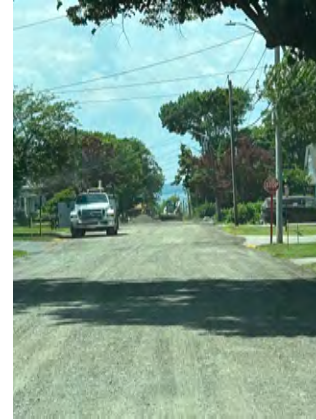




## Road Maintenance and Improvements

The department applied for and received \$387,000 from Governor McKee's Road and Bridge program to bolster the Town's annual road paving project.

- In 2024, the Town of Bristol and the Department of Public Works resurfaced over 9,235 linear feet of roadways. This year's paving project was more comprehensive than in year's past and included numerous drainage and stormwater improvements.
- The department oversaw the implementation of a large-scale drainage project on Mt. Hope Avenue designed to mitigate some long-standing stormwater issues.
- Maintained 86 miles of Town roadways including snow and ice removal, and pothole and trench repair
- Inspected all construction work within the Town's right of ways
- Provided, installed and maintained streetlights within the Town's right of ways, traffic signs and other traffic devices, and pavement markings and painting for parking, crosswalks, and traffic control
- Updated and installed new software systems for pavement management and drainage maintenance
- Updated, maintained, and monitored all stormwater drainage infrastructure in the Town's rights-of-way



Department of Public Works  
111 Mt. Hope Avenue  
P: 401-253-4100  
Christopher Parella, Director



## Tree Maintenance

The department conducts full-scale tree maintenance and removal in concert with the Tree Warden.

In 2024, the DPW responded to 240 tree maintenance requests.

The mission of the Department of Public Works is to enhance the quality of life for the entire community by providing a wide array of services that address public safety and health.



The Water Pollution Control (WPC) Department successfully completed several outstanding upgrades and improvement projects to better service the community.

The completion of our electrical upgrade, a necessary upgrade to facilitate the solids handling project, involved replacement of conduits and consolidation of several transfer switches to one central switch for backup service during power outages.

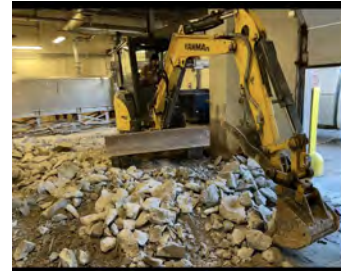
The largest contract was the solids handling contract where multiple pieces of new equipment were installed.

Upgraded equipment such as new pumps for thickened sludge, blended sludge along with new piping, the addition of a new blending tank, and the refurbishing of our thickener tank along with replacement of two belt presses with two new screw presses.

Calls and complaints from neighbors led to the discovery of a failure of the odor control system on the new blending tank. That malfunction has since been corrected.

Closed out a collections system project in areas in town that were identified as 'compromised' and/or constructed of asbestos piping. In those areas, sewer mains were relined, along with replacement of several manholes.

At our main pumpstation, a contract was awarded to repair screw pumps. Gearboxes were swapped out and new para-flex couplings were installed.



The department dealt with several storms during the year. A January event downed a tree on Annawamscutt Avenue near our pumpstation which left the station without power for several hours. Other storms necessitated the use of both our stand-by and portable generators.

Currently, due to sea-level rise, we have notified the State Department of Environmental Management that we intend to abandon the Ferry Road pump station as it has come close to being flooded during several storm events.

Currently, the Town is seeking an State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan of \$2.5 million to address several items, including:

- improvements at the compost facility
- preliminary design/evaluation of the Ferry Road pumpstation abandonment
- miscellaneous improvements at the sewer facility
- continuation of the sewer collection rehabilitation







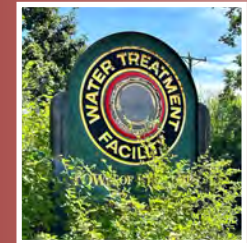
### **Staff, Training & Safety**

Several department members participated in various training events.

Two operators successfully completed the year-long Operator Boot Camp presented by the RI Department of Environmental Management. The program instructed participants on the many ways of treating wastewater.

A new trash compactor was put on the road for the Compost facility, and a new employee was hired as a laborer.

Throughout the year maintenance of equipment was maintained and the department rendered assistance to other departments such as DPW and Parks & Recreation.



**Water Pollution Control Department**

2 Plant Avenue

P: 401-253-8877

Jose DaSilva, Superintendent

The Water Pollution Control Department is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of the Town's sewer systems, wastewater treatment plant and compost facility

Throughout 2024, the staff at Parks & Recreation made a significant, positive impact on the health, wellness and quality of life for Bristol residents by delivering high-quality programs and services designed to enrich lives.



### Facility Improvements

Maintenance and improvements to existing facilities and equipment extends the usable life of the Town's resources and uses taxpayer's money efficiently. In 2024, the Parks & Rec department identified several areas that needed maintenance and improvements, and made investments that will sustain the Town's facilities for the foreseeable future.

- New HVAC system
- New playground equipment at Rockwell Park and Cedarcrest Park
- New web platform for camp registration
- Updated sound system in gymnasium/yoga studio and blue room at Quinta Gamelin
- Improvements to Town Beach and Independence Park restrooms

### Health & Wellness

- 2,507 classes for an average of 48 classes per week. Participation increased by 10 percent over 2023, with 29,154 total participants
- Yoga accounted for 32 percent of programming
- Indoor Pickleball program increased to four sessions during the winter months
- Virtual meditation classes are offered for remote participation

**Summer Camp** had 477 children registered, averaging 325 campers per day in attendance

### Facility Use

340 facility permits were issued for special events and tournaments

### Community Events

**Concerts at the Gazebo** presented nine successful shows during the summer, with attendance as high as 300-plus, including the first ever Concert at the Beach on the patio.

### Bus trips included:

- PPAC for Beautiful Noise
- Stadium Theatre for A Christmas Carol
- Haunted Happenings in Salem, MA
- Boston Red Sox
- NYC (Fall and Spring)
- LaSalette Shrine, and Tanger outlets at Foxwoods

1,038 participants took part in the road trips

Over 75 people attended this first-time **Community Wellness Fair** held at Quinta-Gamelin Community Center, partnered with Bristol's Health Equity Zone, local organizations and town departments.





## Bristol Golf Park

Bristol Golf Park celebrated its first year in operation. The course, operated by Northeast Golf Company, works in conjunction with Bristol Parks and Recreation to support the sports and activities programming available within the Town.

Northeast Golf Company leases the golf course property from the Town and operates the business of Bristol Golf Park independently from the Town of Bristol.

The Golf Park offers golf, as well as numerous special events and activities throughout the year, including 'Bark in the Park', nature walks, and other passive activities.



## Looking ahead to 2025

As the population and resident needs change, so do the projects that will meet those needs. In 2025, the Parks & Recreation team will continue to identify and address those areas that return the most benefit and improve the community-at-large.

Looking ahead, planned projects include:

- New programs/activities such as youth basketball clinics and the formation of an organized league
- Replace playground at Coelho Park
- Construct a Dog Park
- Install new flooring in Blue Room at Quinta Gamelin Center
- Open the Community and Senior services center on Town Common
- Launch new registration platform on the Town's website

### Playgrounds

Cedarcrest Park  
Coelho Park  
Rockwell Park  
Sowams Park  
Town Beach  
Town Common  
Vet's Park

### Parks

Bristol Town Beach and Sports Complex  
Cedarcrest Park  
Coelho Park  
Gibson Pond  
Independence Park  
Leahy Pond  
McKenna Memorial Park  
Milly House Park  
Mosaico Park  
Mt Hope Rain Garden  
Paull Park  
Rockwell Park  
Sowams Park  
Thomas Park  
Town Common  
Union Street Beach Area  
Veteran's Memorial Garden  
Veteran's Park  
Walley Beach at Herreshoff Park

### Sports Fields

Bristol Town Beach and Sports Complex  
Veteran's Park  
Town Common  
Paull Park

### Tennis & Pickleball courts

Bristol Town Beach and Sports Complex  
Town Common

### Basketball courts

Town Common  
Bristol Town Beach and Sports Complex  
Vet's Park  
Cedarcrest Park  
Coelho Park  
Sowams Park



## Parks & Recreation Department

101 Asylum Road  
P: 401-253-1611

Warren Rensehausen, Director  
Tim Shaw, Deputy Director

The Bristol Parks & Recreation Department provides a variety of events, activities and programs that appeal to residents of every age group and diverse interests.



**Bristol Harbormaster's Office  
& Maritime Center**  
127 Thames Street  
P: 401-253-1700

Gregg Marsili, Harbormaster  
John Perry, Deputy Harbormaster

Bristol's Harbormaster's office oversees the operations and safety of boating activity in and around the Town's waterways, the maritime center, public boat ramps, docks and moorings, public rights-of-way to the waterfront, and motor vehicle parking along the Thames Street waterfront.

The Bristol Harbor Management Plan received Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) approval for the Town's Harbor Management Plan, commensurate with minimal revisions for clarification.

The Plan outlines processes, procedures, and allowable uses of the harbor and waterway in Bristol.



The Harbor Department purchased a new pump-out vessel, funded through a grant from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Clean Vessel Act grant. The new 23-foot Northcoast PumpKleen will be used to assist boaters with properly disposing of sewage to help keep Bristol Harbor and neighboring waterways clean.



### Maritime Center

The Maritime Center is normally used by Transient Boaters and Visitors to Bristol.

During the high season (April through October) an estimated 250 boaters utilized the facility Monday through Thursday with an increase to 550 to 600 on weekends and holidays.

The Bristol Harbor and Maritime enjoyed a successful year of boating-related activities. Some of the highlights include:

### Quality & Safety

Held Two Boater Safety Classes  
35 Students Total

### Emergency responses

- 22 urgent distressed boaters
- 65 distress boaters

### State Street Fuel Dock

74,150 gallons of gas and diesel sold

- 36,125 gallons of diesel
- 38,025 gallons of gas

### Enforcement (Harbor/Traffic)

- Parking Tickets: 270
- Boating Violations: 22 Summons
- Boating Warnings: 50

### Slips & Moorings

- 1,410 Reservations April through October
- 752 Dock (including hourly, daily, and overnight stays)
- 658 Moorings (includes half-day and overnight stays)
- Approximately 28% Rhode Island Residents
- 72% out-of-state or International visitors

**Boaters Choice Award Winner**  
6th consecutive year  
(Marina.com)



**2024 Best Harbor**  
**4th Best in Nation**  
(US Harbors poll)



The 11th annual Blessing of the Fleet and Harbor Festival raised over \$10,000 to host a kids' fishing event at the Town docks in Spring 2025.

Over 40 boats participate in the Blessing of the Fleet.

Miss Rhode Island and Miss Teen Rhode Island joined the festivities this year with the winner of the Stuffie Competition - Leon Silvia.





The Community Development Department manages functions of the Town related to Planning, Zoning, Code Compliance, Building Inspection, Historic District, Redevelopment, as well as land use, housing, air pollution, and the protection of the natural environment within the town.

In 2024, the Community Development staff and relevant boards and commissions continued to work with engineers, contractors, property owners and other agencies to ensure that Bristol adheres to the Town's Strategic Plan and prepares to meet the diverse needs of the ever-developing community.

## Buildings & Properties

### Walley School Building – High Street

Work continues on the restoration and rehabilitation of the former Walley School to be used as a Senior Center. Once complete, the Center will retain some of its original characteristics as a school while offering inter-generational resources to residents.



### Oliver School Building – State Street

Successfully completed the sale of the former Oliver School. The new owner plans to convert the former school to residential apartments.

### Robin Rug Mill Building

Work began on the former Robin Rug Mill Complex on Thames Street to convert the former factory into 127 apartments and 6,300 square feet of commercial space, including a public boardwalk along the Bristol Harbor. The rehabilitation and reuse of the buildings will be in accordance with the guidelines of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission and the Bristol Historic District Commission.



### Reynolds School Building – 235 High Street

Work continued in the former Reynolds School, using APRA funds to upgrade the HVAC system. The building houses the Community Development and BWRSD Administration.

## Community improvements

- Created an on-line application through the Open Gov permitting portal for the HDC applications
- Partnered with Barrington and RI Statewide Planning on a Resilience Plan for Route 114



## Grant-assisted projects

- A consultant was hired to update the National Waterfront Historic District survey.
- Held a public workshop with the residents of the Annawamscutt and Sowams neighborhoods to get input on a water quality project. This grant funded project will provide the Town with 10% concept plans for water quality improvements in this neighborhood, including the area around Leahy Pond and Sowams Park.

## Community Development

235 High Street

P: 401-253-7000

Diane Williamson, Director

- Planning
- Zoning
- Historic District
- Building Official
- Code Compliance
- Conservation & Open Space



"The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library."

Albert Einstein

Throughout 2024, members of the Library, Friends, and community worked collaboratively with strategic planning professionals to create a five-year strategic plan.

The library's strategic plan centered its goals around the topics of education, workforce development, and health outcomes to ensure that Bristol is an informed, happy, and healthy community.

### Circulated items

106,891

(compared to 99,460 in 2023)

Patrons who used the library's lending resources saved  
\*\$2,103,020 by borrowing from the library.

*\*Value calculated by Ocean State Libraries based on an estimated value of each item if purchased new.*

### Total Library Cardholders

8,156

(compared to 7,357 in 2023)

### Space reservations

1,733

(compared to 1,480 in 2023)

### Program Attendance

13,686

(compared to 12,599 in 2023)

## Rogers Free Library ~ A Year in Review

### Community Learning Center Grant

In early 2024 the Town of Bristol received a \$1.75 million grant from the US Treasury's Community Facilities Grant program by way of the RI Pandemic Recovery Office.

The grant program is for the construction or renovation of multipurpose community facilities.

Rogers Free Library is thrilled that the Town of Bristol recognizes the significant role the library plays as a community hub and decided to invest these funds into the Library to make a number of improvements, including facility repairs and updated ADA compliance.

In addition, the grant will fund improvements to the library including three new quiet study spaces that may be used for work, study, tutoring, and private telehealth visits, as well as a 775 square foot makerspace – a collaborative space that provides tools and resources for people to create, learn, and share.

The makerspace will also be used as an additional library classroom.

Modifications and construction are expected to commence in Spring 2025.

### English Language Learning courses

In collaboration with EBCAP (East Bay Community Action Program), the library now hosts dynamic English classes to help non-native speakers build skills in reading writing, speaking and listening.

The Library also curated a selection of picture dictionaries, textbooks, and other materials for members of the English Language Learner community.

### Learn365RI

The Learn365 initiative, which was known last year as the Bristol Career & Technical Academy, was merged into library programming in the summer.

This program, affectionately called "Career Explorers," continues to offer educational programs outside of school to BWRSD students in grades 6 through 12.

In 2024, we offered five programs for over 30 different teens with the help from partners around the town, like the Herreshoff Museum, Roger Williams University, and Shine On Social.

Three of these programs were hands-on workshops where students built their own Skateboards, model sailboats, and 3D printers.

The remaining two programs were classes in personal branding and career exploration within Media & Communications.





## Rogers Free Library ~ A Year in Review

### E-Sports

The library is the home of the MHHS eSports team. The team made it to the playoffs this past year, and one of our team members won an All-State Award for Mario Kart.

### Winter Reading Challenge

As a literacy initiative, we offered a Winter Reading Challenge for children & teens. We had 110 participants.

### Summer Reading

We saw an increase in Summer Reading Participants, with 312 children & 100 adults participating this year. Dozens of programs surrounding the theme, Read Renew Repeat, captured audiences of all ages.

### Bring Your Child to The Library

We celebrated Bring Your Child to the Library Day, where we sign up children for their first library cards and enjoy a fun-filled day at the library with crafts, story times, and games that teach them about the library.

### Salute to Veterans Exhibit

With funding from a Friends of the Rogers Free Library community grant, the library presented a public exhibition of artwork created by local veterans at summer workshops led by the Bristol Art Museum. The veterans shared their stories and their exhibit enriched the cultural fabric of Bristol.

### Author Talks

A variety of impressive authors read from and discussed their works with the community, including Margot Livesey, Don Winslow and Dawn Tripp.

### Let's Talk: Caregiving Matters

An important series at the library that offers community connection, practical information, and discussion to those who may become caregiver, those who are currently caregiving and those who might need a caregiver someday.

### Bristol BookFest

Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* was a tale of the sea, and the library offered over 10 programs centered around the maritime novel, such as craft nights, lectures, art displays and film screenings.



Rogers Free Library  
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RFL Board of Trustees

### Our Vision

Bristol is an informed, happy,  
and healthy community.

### Our Mission

We welcome, we share,  
we build community.