

**RICHMOND WATER AND SEWER
COMMISSION MEETING
SPECIAL RATE MEETING
August 19, 2013 MINUTES**

Members Present: Ashley Lucht; Amy Lord; Chris Granda; Bard Hill; Bruce Bailey

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager, Kendall Chamberlin, Water Resources, Lane Carolyn Marshall; Connie Doherty, Financial Assistant; Harold Irish; Bernie Young; Bob and Chris Fischer; Peter Pochop, Green Mountain Engineering; Chris Carfaro and Ruth Miller was present from MMCTV to tape the meeting.

Chairman Lucht called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Ms. Lucht asked if there was any public comment.

Maureen Kangley was told that there were twelve users not paying. She asked what is being done to get them to pay?

Mr. Chamberlin explained that for several months the town has been getting the users to try and pay. Some had agreed to a payment plan, but not all were paying. The agreements said that if they did not pay, their water would be shut off.

Mr. Hill asked how this was handled in the past? Mr. Chamberlin said that Vermont has a uniform shutoff law, and but the town needs to have a policy on long overdue bills. The recent policy said that for bills over \$3,000 they would have a year to pay, but those under \$3,000 would be given six months. He said he would seek a motion to cutoff the users, from the Water Commission.

Ms. Lucht agreed that the town needed to enforce payment policies. Mr. Hill asked if those were in default, would the rest of the system have to make up the loss?

A member of the audience asked what was the balance in the water reserve. The Manager said \$95,000. The person asked what projects could be spent? The Manager said Depot Street was planned to be spent from this reserve. The person suggested not doing the water lines and waiting on Depot Street.

There was a brief discussion on the water storage tank also.

John Fath asked if there were instances where there is a vote that includes town residents as well as water and sewer customers. Mr. Granda said that for debt service the entire town votes, but for moving ahead with water projects, it is a matter for the water commission.

Ms. Lucht explained some of her research on tank costs, and explained some options on how to fund the project. She felt that with the existing rate structure and budget, the cost of debt service on the tank could be managed. She said that the commissioners were charged with making decisions about the health and well being of the system.

Mr. Bailey said he didn't remember voting on Depot Street. Ms. Lucht said that there has not yet been a vote on the project, but it had been bid.

1 Paulita Irish knows a friend from town who got a bill for \$90, and then the next bill was \$241.14. She
2 asked if the members of the water commission knew how the meters were read? There was some
3 discussion.

4
5 Ms. Lord said that the fixed costs have increased, not only in value but in the overall portion of the bill.
6 Mr. Bailey added he understood the methodology of how his bill was calculated.

7
8 Tim Ramon talked about fixed costs and permits, and suggested he could remove one meter, and go
9 back to one base charge since both of his tenants were low water users.

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11 Ms. Lucht agreed that it was possible to do this, but if the collective amount of water increases, then
12 more units would be charged.

13
14 Cara LaBounty asked if some of the high usage readings were because someone had a leak but
15 didn't know? Should they be penalized?

16 17 Farr Allocation Adjustment Request

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19 The Manager explained a request from the Farr Farm to readjust their allocation, based on a new
20 development plan. This adjustment would reduce their overall allocation.

21
22 Mr. Granda asked if this would change under the new rate and would they be guaranteed to get
23 allocation back at a later time if they wanted it? The Manager said that their billing would change
24 because they had been paying for allocation but not usage. Ms. Lucht said that the system has
25 significant capacity but there was not an explicit guarantee.

26
27 Mr. Hill asked about our capacity. Mr. Chamberlin said that we had plenty of capacity, provided a
28 high user doesn't come into town. He noted that surrounding towns have significant allocation fees
29 attached with new connections, while Richmond's are relatively small.

30
31 John Fath has been paying for extra allocation in the past, but now it is not worth anything but his bill
32 is higher. He asked if he still had a benefit for his allocation? There was discussion on this.

33
34 Cara LaBounty asked if line capacity was based on allocation? Mr. Chamberlin said no.

35
36 The Manager explained that the Richmond Historical Society had a similar request, where they had
37 an extra allocation and account, with no plans to use it. Therefore, they wished to return it.

38
39 Mr. Hill offered a motion to accept both requests for discontinuing allocation for accounts 1740 (2,400
40 gpd of water, owned by Farr) and 1990 (Richmond Historical Society) and was seconded by Mr.
41 Granda. The motion carried 5-0.

42 43 Green Mountain Engineering Preliminary Engineering Contract for Water Storage Tank

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45 Peter Pochop of Green Mountain Engineering explained that for his firm to move forward on
46 preliminary design and site research, they would need a contract. The full contract was valued at
47 \$89,723, however, the town was only being asked to move forward with \$11,768 of this.

48
49 Mr. Pochop continued, and explained their work on the preliminary engineering report from 2010 and
50 the preliminary tank engineering report from 2012. This report required updating, and was the basis
51 for the design contract. This opened broad discussion on the tank, the new proposed location and
52 size.

53

1 Mr. Pochop noted that he sized the tank in the preliminary report based on a 50 year buildout analysis
2 and ISO firefighting requirements. The latter represented 2/3 of the size of the tank. Harold Irish
3 asked if this would guarantee adequate water pressure, and Mr. Pochop said yes.

4
5 The commission and Mr. Pochop discussed elevation, tank size, water pressure and timelines.

6
7 Ms. Lucht said that the commission should authorize the survey and Step I preliminary design.

8
9 Maureen Kangley asked if users would vote on the design, and Ms. Lucht said that the
10 commissioners would choose.

11
12 Mr. Granda offered a motion to authorize the contract with Green Mountain Engineering for the
13 design of the new water storage tank according to the contract, but limited at this time to the Step I
14 engineering and Field Survey, in the amount of \$11,768. Mr. Bailey seconded the motion and the
15 motion carried 5-0.

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17 The Manager said that this would initially come from the capital reserve, however, it was expected
18 that a state revolving fund loan would be available soon.

19
20 There was discussion on the next meeting. The commission agreed to hold a meeting on September
21 3rd at 6:00, lasting until 7:30pm. The regular meeting on September 16th would also be held.

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23 **1. Adjourn**

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25 Mr. Granda offered a motion to adjourn at 7:20 pm and was seconded by Mr. Bailey. So voted.

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