

**R I C H M O N D   S E L E C T B O A R D  
R E G U L A R   M E E T I N G  
F e b r u a r y   2 1 ,   2 0 1 7   M I N U T E S**

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Members Present:    Ellen Kane; Bard Hill; David Sander; Lincoln Bressor; Steve May

Absent:                    None

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Others Present:    Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Connie Bona, Finance Assistant; Mary Houle; Maureen Kangley; Chris Granda; Rick Brigham, Sullivan, Powers & Co.; Jon Kart; and others and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

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Ellen Kane called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

**1. Welcome and Public Comment**

Ms. Kane asked if there were any comments from the public.

Mary Houle mentioned a back-pension payment for Chief Buck due to a misunderstanding regarding his enrollment eligibility, and that there was a rumor that former Chief Miller may be looking for back retirement also. She mentioned that Chief Buck had also higher starting pay because of the belief he was ineligible for pension, but this wasn't discussed at his hire.

**2. Items for Discussion with those Present**

FY2016 Audit Presentation

Rick Brigham of Sullivan, Powers & Co. presented the audit. Mr. Brigham reviewed the highlights and noted an unqualified opinion again this year. He noted that the town had an unrestricted fund balance that was approximately 23% of the budget (\$768,457).

Mr. Brigham reviewed the management letter and recommended a Fraud Risk Assessment, and recommended that the cemetery fund history be reconstructed to correctly identify the spendable and non-spendable fund balances. An investment banking policy should also be approved.

Mary Houle asked about the town's indebtedness and was there any limit. Mr. Brigham said that the town as a whole had taken on a significant amount of debt but it was not close to the statutory limit. It wasn't unusual for a community of this size, but everyone does things differently.

Mr. Hill asked for actionable follow-up at the next meeting. The board thanked Mr. Brigham for his presentation and work on the audit.

**3. Other Business**

Solar Contract Update and Town Energy Usage

Two years ago, the Selectboard agreed to do an RFP for a net-metered solar project and awarded a contract to the Green Lantern Group, who was constructing a solar generation facility in Bennington.

1 Richmond is one of the so-called “off takers” or recipients of the benefits of that project. The included  
2 email from Luke Shullenberger reports that construction is under way, but the facility is not yet  
3 operational. Towards the back of that contract document includes a list of what facilities the town has  
4 signed up to take power. It appears that the Fire House and Town Center are not participating in that  
5 project.

6  
7 The Richmond Climate Action Committee (RCAC) and in particular Jeff Forward as Town Energy  
8 Coordinator and former Selectboard member Chris Granda did a survey of town energy usage for a  
9 period of time. They are now working on an update to this study, to illustrate our energy consumption  
10 based on major facilities. In particular, this focuses on electrical and natural gas consumption.  
11 Vehicles and propane usage are not currently being compiled, but they are tracked in a number of  
12 ways. Review of this would be a good refresher for the Selectboard, and an important update to the  
13 public. Discussion of new ideas, such as community solar, is also welcome.

14  
15 Chris Granda explained the recent 30% tax credit for net-metered solar installations, and that this has  
16 grown the industry substantially and will be in place for at least a short time longer (2017 and 2018).  
17 The objectives had largely been reached, providing solar energy to the electrical grid and the  
18 technology is becoming economically competitive on a non-subsidized basis. Mr. Granda didn't feel  
19 the town had enough consumption capacity for another net-metered project but the town should revisit  
20 the issue in 3-5 years to see if purchasing panels on their own (a non- net-metered project) made  
21 financial sense.

22  
23 Mr. Bressor asked if this meant it would be worthwhile to do a capital outlay. Mr. Granda suggested  
24 talking to Mr. Forward for more details but a better picture of those costs would develop over time as  
25 the subsidies (which do not directly benefit the town as a non-tax paying entity) are phased out.

26  
27 The board thanked Mr. Granda for his work.

### 28 29 Pre-Town Meeting Schedule

30  
31 The Manager quickly reviewed some important points prior to Town Meeting. Town meeting will be  
32 on Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> this year. Here is a quick list of facts:

- 33
- 34 • Voting will be from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
- 35 • Town Meeting starts at 9:00 AM
- 36 • The Budget will be the first article, usually led by my presentation, with possible presentation  
37 by the Library. I am not sure that the Constable will be in town.
- 38 • The only other item to be discussed will be Other Business
- 39 • Under Other Business, a number of items may come up – including Richmond's attitude  
40 towards immigration; the Public Safety Building; other issues.
- 41 • The Andrews Forest Conservation Reserve Fund request will be voted by Australian Ballot
- 42 • The Andrews Forest item will be discussed at a public meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM in  
43 the Library, as well as at the official public information session at the March 6<sup>th</sup> Selectboard  
44 session at 7:00 PM in Camels Hump Middle School

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2 There was some light discussion of these points.

3

#### 4 Discussion of Immigration Issues

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6 The Manager explained that he had spoken to several people (some were in the audience) regarding  
7 their proposal for a Town Meeting resolution, or statement, regarding Richmond as a welcoming  
8 community. While this was in the context of the recent federal-level actions on immigration  
9 enforcement, this was not a “sanctuary city” effort. He had asked his assistant Carol to develop some  
10 information on the subject, which was related to the local efforts but not part of them. Carol’s  
11 summary on immigration enforcement, local policing, and sanctuary cities was in the packet.

12

13 There was a good discussion with the Selectboard and members of the audience. The group would  
14 propose a statement at Town Meeting, and perhaps seek recognition as a committee by the  
15 Selectboard, to further work on the issue.

16

#### 17 All Hazard Mitigation Plan

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19 The Manager explained that the Hazard Mitigation Plan was a requirement of FEMA for qualification  
20 for certain mitigation grants. This identified and proposed solutions to common hazards in town, not  
21 limited to natural disasters. The Regional Planning Commission had taken the lead on development  
22 and implantation since 2010, and the first All Hazard Mitigation Plan for the County was approved in  
23 2011. This was the required update, which had been completed by CCRCP and reviewed by town  
24 staff.

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26 Mr. Hill offered a motion to approve the updated All Hazard Mitigation Plan, and was seconded by  
27 Mr. Bressor and the motion carried 5-0.

28

#### 29 Use of Round Church

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31 Mr. May suggested a once per year use of the Round Church for a Selectboard meeting. He suggested  
32 it could incorporate historical elements into the meeting. There was some discussion and general  
33 interest in holding a meeting in the building. The Manager said he would contact the Historical  
34 Society president about this.

35

36 Maureen Kangley opposed the idea.

37

#### 38 Reports from Selectboard and Town Manager

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40 The Manager noted the Police Report.

41

42 Mr. May asked about the Affordable Housing issue, and was sorry he could not make the last meeting.  
43 Ms. Kane said that the Selectboard believed that they should wait until the Town Plan, with its  
44 affordable housing element, was adopted before any exploration of projects could be done. Mr. Hill  
45 added that in his experience, affordable housing was located where services were – transportation,  
46 healthcare, shopping, etc. This would be in the village here, and there weren’t many opportunities for  
47 new housing growth. There was some discussion. It was agreed that some discussion of affordable  
48 housing, with a speaker, should be scheduled for April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

49

1 The Manager explained that the regional dispatch contractor, DeltaWrx, had submitted an additional  
2 bill for travel to the January 31<sup>st</sup> presentation. This was for \$925, payable from five towns. The  
3 Manager asked for permission to pay this bill. Mr. Hill offered a motion to approve payment not to  
4 exceed \$50 from Richmond, for the DeltaWrx bill. Mr. Sander seconded the motion and the motion  
5 carried 5-0.

6  
7 The Manager noted that CESU, the upstairs tenant at Town Center, would not plan to relocate for at  
8 least the next two Summers. The Manager noted the budget status, and spoke about the need for a  
9 bond question for a small section of water line on Bridge Street underneath the failed storm sewer line,  
10 as well as a potential vote for a public safety building.

#### 11 12 Approval of Minutes

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14 Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve the minutes of February 6, 2017 and was seconded by Mr.  
15 Bressor and the motion carried 4-0-1 with Mr. May abstaining.

#### 16 17 Approval of Warrants

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19 Warrants were reviewed and approved.

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21 Future agenda items were reviewed. Ms. Kane thanked everyone for their support during her time on  
22 the board, as she was not running for re-election. She would be at Town Meeting.

#### 23 24 **4. Adjourn**

25 Motion by Mr. Sander to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hill. So voted.