

Called to Order: 6pm

In Attendance: Bob Reap, David Sander, Christy Witters, Bard Hill, Fran Huntoon, Josh Arneson, Kendall Chamberlin, Jessica Draper, Colin Moffett, Josie Kytle

Buttermilk ROW Permit: Josh Arneson explained that Buttermilk had applied for a Use of Right of Way permit for their gas line installation. He also explained that the location and date of the installation changed after approval. The water department determined that the new location is okay and was inspected last Friday. Kendall Chamberlin noted that this is an issue for public takeover of systems. David Sander similarly noted that it would be a significant problem when digging up lines in the future if they aren't where we know them to be by the permit. Kendall proposed fee changes and fines as consequences for not following the rules of our permits. Bard Hill asked for an example of how other town's address this. Kendall said that other town's either have no enforcement or a department of code enforcement. Josh Arneson mentioned that our only recourse is financial. Josie Kytle stated that it was their mistake and they take full responsibility for it. Bard Hill noted that although a \$1000 fine may be considered serious, it wouldn't cover a severe damage such as a broken line that drains the tank. Christy Witters noted that it seems we have a lot of these scenarios of post-construction changes or no permits at all and would like to see how it is addressed elsewhere. Bob Reap asked if DigSafe notifies the town, and Kendall explains that they do not.

Draft Water and Wastewater Budgets: Kendall Chamberlin announced that one of his employees, Trudy, has resigned. He said that he wishes her well, but that we are losing an incredible amount of institutional knowledge. David Sander said that many customers have expressed regrets that she is moving on. Jessica Draper suggested that the 4 packets of budget information in front of each commissioner be explained. Josh Arneson said that with Trudy's departure it was a good time to look at staffing. The 4 packets include 2 staffing scenarios for each part of the budget. Kendall Chamberlin gave an overview of the increases and decreases. Bard Hill asked what the resulting rate increase would be. Josh Arneson said they would get those figures for next time. The increase in the administrative line was discussed. It was explained that many administrative functions for water and wastewater are done in the administrative offices by that department's staff, so that department charges the water and wastewater department for those costs. Bard explained that some components of the budget are beyond our control, and Jessica Draper explained that the health insurance line is a placeholder of a 2-person policy because we cannot know ahead of time what kind of plan a future employee may need. Kendall Chamberlin discussed hiring staff at higher wages. He said that he hasn't fought for higher wages, so staff have traditionally turned over. Kendall Chamberlin said that Richmond's wages are lower compared to the rest of the county and there is a shortage overall of operators. Bard Hill said that the point of the paygrid was to put people where they belonged on it, and asked why the grid isn't being used. Kendall explained that the grid is being used, but people were not placed where they belonged, only where they would either be brought up to it or would receive a 2% raise. Bard Hill stated that Richmond cannot

compete with the cities in Chittenden County with wages. Mary Houle asked if someone maxes out on the grid do they stop getting increases. Christy Witters spoke to Trudy and got the impression that she was burned out from not being able to take time off and other circumstances. Christy said she thinks they need to consider staffing levels and be aware of the employees' work-life balances and mental health. Kendall Chamberlin explained that they are expected to work 24/7. Bard Hill asked to get the schedules in writing. Kendall Chamberlin also stated that part time doesn't work for the requirements of the plant. David Sander asked if there were any further questions related to the budget. Fran Huntoon asked about Bridge St work. Kendall Chamberlin noted there would be a meeting tomorrow, Tuesday 12/18 to discuss public works improvements with the engineers.

Superintendent's Report: Kendall Chamberlin said he was trying to gain as much information from Trudy before she left, and that there will be a decrease in service in her absence. David Sander asked if there was a timeline for hiring. Kendall Chamberlin said he had some interest but it takes a full two years to get certifications needed. Kendall announced that the proper auger has arrived and will be installed shortly.

Approval of Warrant: David Sander asked why there was a disapproving note on the Comcast invoice. Kendall Chamberlin said that he wrote the note because he doesn't agree with the cost. He also said he explained his issues with the bills to his liaison. Bard Hill explained that liaisons are a holdover from before the town manager style of government was adopted. He said that these kinds of complaints should go to the town manager, because the note and the coding were contradictory. Josh Arneson suggested an offline discussion about the telecom issues. Christy Witters moved to approve the well rehab purchase order. Seconded by Fran Huntoon. All were in favor. So moved.

David Sander asked Josh and Kendall to work with Connie to answer the commission's questions about budget and invoices.

Items for Next Agenda: The commission decided that for the next meeting they would like to discuss rate increase, budget, the telecom costs, the shutoff policy, and changing the ordinance in regards to permit issues and fines.

Bard Hill moved to adjourn. Seconded by Christy Witters. Adjourned 6:59pm.