

**Special Meeting of the Town of Richmond**  
Water Commission Minutes  
10/12/2021

Members Present in person: Jay Furr

Members by Zoom: Bard Hill, David Sander, Fran Huntoon (departed meeting at 6:40)

Absent: June Heston

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Staff Present in person: Josh Arneson, Town Manager

Staff Present by Zoom: Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent

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Others Present in person: , the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15

Others Present by Zoom: Connie Van Eeghen, Housing Committee; Rod West, Gretchen Paulsen, Bob Reap

**Called to Order:** 6:01 PM

**1. Welcome by David**

**Public Comment-**

A. Kendall thanked the neighbors for helping each other during the construction work being done

B. Connie van Eeghen reminded the Commission that the Housing Committee is very interested in what is going on with the gateway development and that they supported the expansion

**2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda- none**

**3. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**

- a. Discussion of next steps for the Gateway Sewer Expansion Project and receipt of the 2021 State Economic & Infrastructure Development grant to partially offset costs for Phase 1

Josh reported:

- that the Town was notified of being awarded a \$147,947.00 grant for Phase 1 construction costs for the sewer expansion. The NBRC grant was not awarded but the application was passed on to another opportunity that awarded the application.
- that when the grant was applied for the original preliminary report was used that had costs related to the sewer expansion only along Route 2 and the award is about 50% of Phase 1. We are waiting to hear what the next steps are.
- that the ACCD grant needed to be applied for by a non-profit and was not eligible to municipalities. He asked if the mobile home park or Mobil station would be eligible and the mobile home park could apply for Phases 2 and 3, then turn the system over to the municipality.
- that the bond bank said there could be some ARPA funding available and he would follow up with them

Discussion included:

- that Bard thought \$147,000 was a substantial amount reducing the cost of Phase 1 by and said that recovery money was starting to show up. He asked how the Commission wanted to stage the expansion and vote. David agreed, saying with every dollar it changes the tables of potential costs. Fran agreed as we become eligible for funding it changed everything
- that David asked if there was a number the Commission was looking to get to before a vote, Bard thought timing would be the factor, if a year, he would not want to wait, if a few months that would be different adding Phase 1 was probably ready and if more funding became available all the better. Connie van Eeghan brought up affordability and anything that brings the numbers down was a good thing.
- that Bard thought the Commission should decide sooner rather than later since the Reaps had been waiting four (4) years
- that Rod West thought there would be a positive expansion vote and thought a vote should be done soon with the Commission making a statement that it would not move forward with expansion unless it was affordable. He said if we go all the way out and the cost was spread over the entire system, including existing users, the expansion would still provide a 20% reduction to existing users.
- that Rod West having been to the last Selectboard meeting believed hiring an ARPA manager who could also be the sewer expansion manager would be the right direction to go in saying as there is more to do, working on grants and managing everything Josh could use the help.
- that if the Reaps put in a system for themselves they would install something that would suit their needs vs something that would accommodate others connecting. Bard said that Route 2 was the preferred route for Phase 1 vs uphill to the school. Kendall agreed with Bard.
- that Kendall said expansion was the key to funding and more importantly a vote would show exactly what areas were interested in having the expansion. He said engineers do not like to design a system then have an expansion.
- that David asked if the Commission wanted one vote, not in phases. Bard said if the expansion vote was for the entire area, it could be voted down over the mobile home park residents being concerned about the financial impact, then a vote would need to be done for Phases all of which would take time and money. Jay thought going small with a vote on Phases 1 & 2 should be done thinking that vote would be won. Bard thought there was merit to that, start small and expand. Rod West said thinking the mobile home park residents would vote the expansion down should not be assumed. He thought they did not have all the information and because a few people have been negative did not mean everyone felt the same way. He felt that having a vote with no information would be a mistake but providing the information that the system would not be put in unless it was affordable was critical to a positive outcome. He said reducing costs to existing users was part of the goal and just expanding to Phases 1 & 2 would not do that.
- that Kendall said he notified another fund on Friday that Richmond was interested in applying for their grant opportunity and affordable housing was a big part of it so including Phase 3 could be important. Bard said if we could say there was a big grant opportunity we could get it would make it more appealing. If there is money coming, we are very well situated to take part of it. The question was one of timing. It would be easier to sell it if there was funding available. Jay wanted to see if there was a way to have one vote but with the incentives to go all the way out having a vote for all three phases made sense. Bard said residents may distrust what people say he wanted to be transparent about the information and not necessarily "sell" it to anyone. Jay thought the project would sell itself if people took

the time to understand the information being provided. Bard thought most people would just look at the bottom line without weighing the benefits. David agreed.

- that Bard wanted to know if Kendall had an idea of the time frame for a decision from the grantor because we would be in a better place for a vote discussion if that were known. Kendall said he thought if the application was out, they would give him an idea of where the town stood. Bard thought meeting next week and determining the timeline for a vote would be best. David asked the other Commission members what they thought. Bard asked if the application should be put in and meet next week to discuss what a full expansion vote would look like. Josh said he had two days in office before the next full meetings on Monday. He said he would do what he could.

- that Rod West asked if Josh felt he had an open line of communication with Peter Brown. He said a big part of the transparent discussions needed to be with him. Josh said he had spoken to Peter Brown and could relay the information from tonight's meeting. Bard mentioned the private sector grant saying for Peter Brown it was not just the line to get there but the infrastructure within the park that could be applied for.

It was decided to explore the questions and set details for vote next week.

Kendall said he put Richmond in for the grant and the application would come later.

#### **4. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn**

potential expansion vote

potential grant money coming in

David may miss meeting on Monday

#### **Adjourn**

Bard moved to adjourn; Jay seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Jay, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:47 PM.