

## **Town of Richmond Selectboard Meeting Minutes of December 5, 2022**

**Members Present:** Bard Hill, David Sander, Jay Furr, Jeff Forward, June Heston

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Duncan Wardwell, Assistant to the Town Manager; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Connie Bona, Finance Director; Peter Gosselin, Highway Foreman; Allen Carpenter, Interim Water Resources Superintendent; Benjamin Herrick, Interim Police Chief

**Others Present:** Meeting was recorded by MMCT, Amy Wardwell, Andrew McCullough, Anthony Cambridge, Bob Reap, Cara LaBounty, Chris Granda, Christine Werneke, Connie Van Eeghen, Isaac, Jack Linn, John Linn, Karen Yaggy, Lauck Parke, Laurie Dana, Lisa Kory, Martha Nye, Paquette, Patty Brushett, Samuel Waters, Susan Wells, Virginia Clarke

**Call to Order: 7:00pm**

**Welcome by:** Heston

**Public Comment:**

LaBounty: I am Cara LaBounty and I have been asked why I ask questions and why I am passionate about topics. I am one of four generations still living in this Town. To have my children live in this Town, it is important to control the taxes, or they will not be able to stay. My parents would have to relocate if taxes keep going up. I also have extended family living in this community. When I push you hard not to burn money, it is because we do not have multi-generational wealth. I am actually the spokesperson for my family and other families who ask me to come because they are not comfortable speaking in public or fear retribution. Also, please make sure the Town Reports for 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018 are put on the website.

Heston: Thank you for that perspective.

Furr: I would rather have an involved vocal citizenry. The more people involved, the more points of view the better we are at doing our jobs.

**Additions or Deletions to Agenda:**

Arneson: We got a letter from the county judges for an invitation to a budget meeting. Maybe at the end we can see if any Board members want to attend.

Furr: I went last year, and it was the dullest thing ever. They invite every Town and Richmond was the only person who sent somebody. I will happily volunteer to go.

Heston: Thanks Jay.

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

## **FY23 Q1 financial review**

Heston: We have a lot of documents in the packet. I have a few questions that I went through with Josh. We have Connie Bona here. Does anyone have any questions. We will start with the Status Budget Report. Do you have an update on the health insurance and long-term disability are at 40 & 49% spent in Planning and Zoning?

Bona: That would have been higher because it was a two-person plan before. Now we are budgeting for a family plan. It is a percentage of compensation, and it has gone up.

Arneson: I am now pulling up the General Fund Financials ([https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3a02\\_FY23\\_QTR\\_1\\_General\\_Fund\\_Financials\\_09-30-22.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3a02_FY23_QTR_1_General_Fund_Financials_09-30-22.pdf)). This is the summary of tax revenue collected, reserve funds, unassigned funds and a few other pages in this document.

Heston: Can you explain the \$7,024,128 to the public because we know we do not have \$7,000,000 in there.

Bona: Part of that would be because the education taxes had not been paid yet. The other part is that we have two years of ARPA money.

Heston: Is this added up?

Bona: The top line are any Reserves that are related to the general checking account. That \$7 million is our checking account. We have ARPA money from all of last year's and one of the two payments were in time for this, and the fourth payment came sometime in October. This was before October.

Furr: On page 5, 2<sup>nd</sup> line from bottom, why do we go from \$330 to \$338?

Bona: I would have to look at that. It wouldn't surprise me if it was a typo.

Heston: Can we look at page 6 because I have a question about CUSI for FY21. We talked about not providing that amount so we can take off that \$7,736. There is also a note at the bottom.

Arneson: I will fix it.

LaBounty: How much is the school payment that comes out of the \$7 million?

Bona: The Education Taxes are \$1.5 million. The ARPA money is part of that. If you want to look at all your excess cash, then you can total up all your reserves that come out of fund 10 checking.

Heston: This is a confusing document to me. What makes up that amount is important. You don't have a total that is the result of a column. Could you pull the ARPA line just to see what came in, what's been spent, and we are always looking back. I would like to see all the line items.

Bona: There are no scheduled uses of ARPA money. We have had some, but they were not scheduled or budgeted.

Heston: Expenses will be net against the ARPA line.

Bona: You would see them on the Trial Balance. This sheet is budgeted and scheduled.

Heston: I don't find this document as helpful as the financials. But this summary might be helpful for others.

Bona: We have different Selectboard members who like to look at different things. This spreadsheet is more for Bard. I use it for other things that I have to report.

Heston: I do not have any more questions unless there are some others.

Arneson: These next five documents are backups to the first page. We can go through them all. Unless there is a question, you will see where Connie has backed up all the numbers with other documents. I am pulling up 3a09 FY23 QTR 1 Balance sheet funds ([https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3a09\\_FY23\\_QTR\\_1\\_Balance\\_sheet\\_funds\\_10-15.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3a09_FY23_QTR_1_Balance_sheet_funds_10-15.pdf)).

Bona: In order to get to your fund balance on any of these you can look at what is shown. Or, if you take the total of your assets minus the total of your liabilities is what you have for a fund balance.

Heston: I had a question about a plus and minus \$32,000. It is the money market.

Bona: It is fund 30 where our fiduciary accounts are so that is the cash within it which should balance zero. There are 3-4 other funds that link to it to see the breakout. I have a problem if that is not zero. If you scroll down to you can see the different amounts. The ARPA money comes in electronically in two separate payments each year. Last year we received one July and August. This year it was much later.

Heston: The Community Development Fund is the note receivable from the building on Borden Street. It was for Affordable Housing, Champlain Housing Trust.

LaBounty: It is still on our books. They were supposed to pay us back.

Furr: People were asking for details about the ARPA money. On page 18 of this document ([https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3a11\\_FY23\\_QTR\\_1\\_Trial\\_Balance\\_funds\\_10\\_-\\_15.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3a11_FY23_QTR_1_Trial_Balance_funds_10_-_15.pdf)), what is "ARPA Lib Unearned .112"?

Bona: That is the Library.

Furr: That is the money that went directly to the Library. On the next page, we have mailing expenses, Library, the sign. The Library did have some ARPA money of its own.

Bona: If you want to see each individual line for ARPA General expended then you would want a detail report printed. I do not know how much we spent on the mailing.

Arneson: I thought we spent close to \$2,000-\$3,000.

Bona: The ARPA postage line was used for our mail machine. We may have done it in October?

Arneson: I've got records of what we did and will look back at that.

LaBounty: Let's get the system down now so we are ready to track it.

Heston: Let's look at the Cemetery  
([https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3a12\\_FY23\\_QTR\\_1\\_Trial\\_Balance\\_funds\\_25\\_-\\_73.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3a12_FY23_QTR_1_Trial_Balance_funds_25_-_73.pdf)), on page 108. Why is there a -\$100,000 balance here and \$166,791.66 taken out.

Bona: The Cemetery Commission is in the process of moving money out of TD Bank and into Northfield Savings. I had to do an adjustment from back in September. Right now, it is a split. It is an adjustment from the October financials.

Heston: If a cemetery is owned by a municipality, then we would manage the money. If a cemetery is owned by an association, then the association has to manage the money according to State statute. It is different how you manage the money. A majority of their money should be in the Perpetual Care fund. We need to clean that up a little bit. Who is the owner?

Bona: Linda Parent manages it.

Parent: We had about \$166,000 and wrote a check for \$100,000 to Northfield Savings. When Spike moved from Town, TD Bank would not let him be a signer anymore. We voted to change to Northfield. Last week, we moved the last \$66,000 to Northfield so TD Bank is closed now. The Perpetual Care funds are included in that as well as about \$300 left from a lady for flowers for a gravesite.

Heston: Can we put this on our next agenda? Can we get paperwork that says it is municipally owned?

Parent: It is an Association that takes care of it.

Heston: If it is an Association, we should not be managing the funds through the Town. If it is Town owned, you shouldn't have a separate checking account. If you file as 501(c)(13) then we just need to know that, so we are following State statutes.

### **Consideration of making an appointment to the Water and Sewer Commission**

*Forward moved that the Selectboard appoint Erin Farr to the Water and Sewer Commission to fill a customer seat on December 6, 2022, with a term running through*

*June of 2023. Furr seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

### **Consideration of approving a name for a new road at 700 Stage Rd.**

Heston: This lot has been subdivided into three lots and since this road services three lots it needs to be a road with a name. The sketch is in our packet. Tyler Machia updated us on the need of having an E911 number, we first have to create the road.

Forward: We are not approving the road, we are approving the road name, correct?

Arneson: Yes, the road will go through the normal Zoning process and come back for an access permit when they construct the road.

*Forward move to approve the name Three Boys Road for the new road at 700 Stage Rd. Hill seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

### **Update from the Town Center Committee**

Forward: This has been a pleasant experience with this Committee. We meet twice a month, our meetings are productive and efficient, and it seems like we make progress. Laurie Dana, the Library Trustee, made a list of all the things we did over the years. I will hand that out. We have been meeting for several years. Most recently, we approved hiring an architect. We wanted to evaluate the cost of new building versus renovation of this building. Based on our work, one conclusion is this building is well loved by the community. It is geographically in the Town Center. The Committee did a bunch of community engagement. Considering this building, we should include the Post Office. It is an important community service and significant revenue for rent. The Police Department is somewhat up in the air due to the space for 5 full-time officers. This site could not include another building due to the flood plain issues. We are not recommending a new building on this site as it requires tearing down this one. This building has historical significance. Demolition would involve significant expenses. We considered other sites for a new building specifically at Browns Court. That site would not be workable for a Town Center building. It would be a commercial use in a residential area. The site's size is questionable for a new building. The development costs and construction would be much more expensive than renovating the existing building. We have not identified any other viable site for a new building. This building does have some serious performance shortcomings. We believe they can be addresses with renovations. We have no fresh air ventilation in this building and the air conditioners are beyond their useful life. We provided the architects with assumptions about program needs for space. Through FEMA and State flood plain agency and Zoning Administrator we can use this building and put an addition on it. We are getting the elevation certificate. We can address those issues through the renovation by only using the basement for non-essential storage and we would not be able to use it for occupied space. Black River Design Architects interviewed Town Staff and tenants to determine how much space was needed. There is enough space to meet most of the Town services, including the Post Office. We may have to do a small addition to address Police Department entrances. With a second story addition, we could accommodate all the tenants in this building. I would like to turn it over to Andrew McCullough from Black

River Design for preliminary numbers with an order of magnitude to compare renovations compared to a new building.

McCullough: It is early in the design process. We are identifying what you must address. The good news is that the building is in good shape. One of the biggest problems is the flood plain issue and occupied space in the basement. The comparisons for Renovation-No Addition, Renovation-Addition, New Construction-Single Story and New Construction-Two Story are a rough order of magnitude and by no means specific estimates. The Project Total and Average Cost per Square Foot are listed on the screen as

Renovation-No Addition: \$6,643,800 & \$224

Renovation-Addition: \$7,877,638, \$238

New Construction-Single Story: \$11,200,000 & \$348

New Construction-Two Story: \$11,791,875 & \$353.98

There are lots of variations based on space for Town Offices, Post Office, Police Department, and then any tenants. The Renovation-Addition would be ideal for all the existing tenants and space. Your Police Station is extremely undersized. We are looking potentially at 19,000 – 22,000 square feet. We could spend a lot of time talking about details. My hope is to answer questions as they come up.

Hill: This is really helpful. For the record, can you list the current tenants?

Forward: When the school department left here, we went through a process to identify who might be tenants including us. The Post Office really helps us pay for the building. The Historical Society has an office and some storage and would like more room for display space. The Senior Center has an office space, but they don't need their own program space as they use space around the community. MMCTV is valuable with all of our Town meetings. Radiate is down in the basement and they use around 2,000 square feet which is harder to find. Without a two-story addition it would be harder to accommodate.

Werneke: I would like to reassure folks that the exercise to come up with these sums are currently scenarios. The decisions for allocation of space and additions are in the next phase. There has not been a decision on how much space each person gets or how it is laid out. Our ask tonight is for the Selectboard to endorse a decision to move forward to the second phase of plans for the Town Center as a renovation and not a new construction.

Heston: Have you included in the project costs, the need to relocate staff during the reconstruction?

McCullough: Yes, there are some general conditions included. We are too early to know the scale of renovations and occupancy. That is part of the next step.

Gosselin: What is the estimated length of time to do a renovation?

McCullough: It depends on the type of renovation.

Gosselin: What is the life expectancy of this renovation?

Forward: This building was built in 1907. If we were to do a renovation, then we would want it to serve future generations. We think it is time for the community to invest in a building for the ages. We have been thinking of at least 50 years.

Gosselin: Does anybody know the current assessed value of the Town Center building?

Forward: I think it is a couple million dollars. There is about 5,000 square feet per floor and the Post Office is about 5,000 square feet.

McCullough: If this building was above the flood plain, you would have enough space for your current program needs.

Hill: Are we fitting tenants to the building or are we fitting building to the tenants? The current tenants are arbitrary. We can have more or less tenants depending on the fork in the road. For instance, are we spending an additional \$1.2 million for existing tenants?

Furr: For instance, Radiate Art and Historical Society are not applicable to Town government.

Hill: I am reiterating the history we have gone through with tenants.

Gosselin: Don't forget to deduct the value of the current building into New Construction as it could off-set some costs if you sold that building. The core of the current building is sub-standard.

LaBounty: What is the revenue from the other tenants?

Forward: MMCTV pay market rate, like \$15,000 per year.

LaBounty: Look and think about those revenue sources. Do we need the vault and files downstairs if we have electronic records?

Arneson: We could still use the downstairs vault for storage with the risk of damage.

McCullough: We considered the local and national regulations when considering the basement. Richmond's regulations are more restrictive.

LaBounty: We could make changes to our flood plain regulations to accommodate what we want to do with this structure. You are required to put in mitigation for flood proofing.

McCullough: Richmond piggybacks off of FEMA regulations.

LaBounty: We should really delve deep into flood plain regulations to make sure we are getting the biggest bang for our buck.

Forward: We have thought about this for several years. We think it is prudent to think the basement might flood and put the mitigation measures in place. There are also significant access problems with the basement. We have been using it effectively, but it is not for the long term. In the previous iteration, Breadloaf did this exercise, and they

were at \$3-5 million renovation. That was back in 2018-2019 and construction costs have gone up.

Heston: This is an updated document, and we can get it posted on the website. This is a 30,000-foot view. Can we go to the next step?

Werneke: We need to prioritize what we can provide for tenant space compared to the Town Staff, Police Department, etc. That is part of the next phase. The Breadloaf costs would not be apples to apples comparison as they did not do a programs assessment. They assessed the square footage and mechanical requirements of the building. We would not be able to accurately compare the two comparisons. The way we do things now are not the way we do things in 25-50 years. We do not expect the storage or vault needs to be the same due to cloud or virtual environments. During the pandemic, we did a relocation exercise of the entire Town Staff. We would put that into a plan based on what extent the work was being done. I think there are ways to address this. We like to move forward with the next phase. We understand if the Selectboard wants to wait.

Furr: This is the point where we are asking if we want to relocate with the associated costs. We have 3 choices: do nothing, relocate and build a new building on land we do not have, or take the recommendation of the Town Center and Library Buildings Committee and renovate.

LaBounty: There is another option to renovate to go net-zero or renovate the building to not have additional expenses. I think we need to know the two options going into this future proposal.

Furr: If we take the path to renovate then we have many other forks to consider.

McCullough: This is just the first phase. The next phase will have more detailed layouts where people can respond to storage and tenants.

*Furr moved to accept the recommendation of the Richmond Town Center & Library Building Committee to move forward with plans for renovation of the existing building that may include options for additions to the existing building's footprint. Hill seconded. Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

Forward: We will post this timeline on the website.

### **Consideration of placing a temporary speed hump on Cochran Rd.**

Heston: Pete has researched the cost of a temporary speed hump and signage to a total of \$2,732.05. We know this cannot happen until Spring. We want to be ready for the Spring. Can you share what you learned?

Gosselin: My task was to bring some numbers for one temporary speed hump and associated signage. Cochran Rd. is 3.68 miles long, so where are you going to put the one speed hump? Since the Rt. 2 work stopped, have we seen the same issues?

Furr: There are usually 6-7 cars who want to pass me if I am going the speed limit.



Heston: We are trying to come up with multiple options and get data on what works. It doesn't make sense to buy 4 speed humps if one is not going to work. We are going to be back in Rt. 2 construction next summer.

Arneson: We are working with the CCRPC on a Traffic Calming Study which will give us more data on where to place permanent fixtures.

Hill: We can put that to the Transportation Committee and CCRPC.

Furr: I would put it right at 25 mph zone coming toward Town.

Wells: I do not understand what one speed bump will do. I think you need more than one to slow down traffic. This has been a problem long before the construction on Rt. 2. I do not think you can assess the benefit of speed humps with just one. What are those new posts for?

Gosselin: The six posts that were recently put on Cochran Rd. are for reminder signs: Caution – Watch For – Children, Joggers, Bicyclists, Pedestrians

Furr: I agree with Susan that I would bracket your neighborhood.

Heston: The flashing signs are ordered and is another vehicle to figure out this problem. If we are going to CCRPC do this Traffic Calming Study, then maybe we should wait on this process. Maybe we need three speed humps?

Arneson: I look at the temporary one as something we can try. Or maybe start with two. Once we have it, I think we can move it around.

Furr: Right now, the residents of Cochran Rd. feel like they are bleeding to death and feel like they need a band-aid. A study could take years. I am sympathetic to doing something now.

Brushett: Have we taken data on when people are speeding?

Heston: One of those devices broke and it is being repaired. We ordered more so we can collect data on how fast they are going and when.

Brushett: I am curious about what the Police are doing about this problem.

Herrick: We are currently very short staffed with the whole Town to cover. We try to get over there as much as we can. With one person on per day, we cannot cover that area all the time. I tried to get the County Sheriff but got crickets or we are sorry.

Kory: I am confused about the Traffic Calming work. We already have a phased-in approach of what to do on Cochran Rd.

Arneson: It didn't dive into deep into the placements on Cochran Rd. I had the same question. The next study is more granular and fine toothed.

Kory: I am in favor of having as many temporary speed humps ready for Spring. I am in favor of anything that can move things along.

Gosselin: These speed humps come in 3-foot sections made out of rubber. They have end-pieces and several 36-inch-long pieces that span the width of the road. They are installed with 12-inch spikes. It is not simple to move it. We would wait at least a few weeks to relocate and re-sign with Dig-Safe. There are a lot of logistics to move them.

Forward: I have a suggestion that might not cost money. Could you leave a cruiser there during the day at somebody's house or the Round Church. I know if I see a police car then I slow down. It might give some comfort to the residents. It is a suggestion. I don't think a police car would be vandalized in broad daylight.

Herrick: It is allowed. If somebody wants me to park a cruiser in their driveway or front lawn, I am happy to do that.

Furr: I am hoping the radar signs that will measure speed, keep the data, tell them how fast they are going, and flash blue lights will jar people.

Heston: You can place a police cruiser randomly.

Wells: A speed hump is the only thing that will slow people down.

*Furr moved to approve the purchase of two temporary speed humps and associated signage in an amount not to exceed \$2,732.05 x 2. Hill seconded.*

Gosselin: We are not installing until April. I think a little more outreach will help. You will get more requests for them. I think the Traffic Calming Study from CCRPC will be very helpful. If you really want to control the speed, then I think you need one every 500 feet. The example is Shunpike Rd in South Burlington. One is going to slow them down at the one spot. The 25 mph zones are 0.3 miles on either end of Cochran Rd. I thought this was about putting a number for future budget items.

Heston: For budgeting purposes, we really need to get into this study in January. We do not know how many we need. The speed signs will also give us better data.

Brushett: Having police there for a couple of hours during rush hour would be a good thing.

Forward: I suggest we table this issue for the time being.

Furr: I can withdraw the motion.

Herrick: If you would like a cruiser in your driveway then put something in the chat box.

### **Update from Police Governance Committee**

Heston: We had a meeting last Thursday. We thought we were going to review an MOU for the joint survey committee. Hinesburg's Town Manager said they are in the process of looking for a consultant to do a strategic plan for their Police and Fire Departments.

They thought an MOU would not be a good idea until they got feedback from the consultants. They did send us their RFP so we could do the same thing if we wanted. Maybe we should wait. The results of their survey will help us. Then we could investigate if it makes sense to put a joint survey together. It would take a lot of time to form a Union Municipal District. We need to figure out what we are doing for the short term. Should we be looking at hiring a Chief? Ben is interested in serving as Interim Chief as long as we need him.

Forward: I was impressed with the Hinesburg Public Safety Strategic Plan Request for Proposal. The questions they asked of the consultant are the same for our Department. I suggest we study their RFP and look at their proposals. The proposals range from \$17,000 to \$80,000. It is a good way to spend our staffing vacancy savings. It is a problem having people come and go if we are building Community Policing.

Hill: If we were going to engage in this then do we want to do Police only or Police and Fire?

Heston: A strategic plan without a permanent leader is a waste of money. They need to be a part of building the plan. We would be asking an Interim Chief with a full plate to do a strategic plan.

Forward: I think we could build around Josh as our leader. I don't know how we get to effective hiring if we don't know how we want to go forward.

LaBounty: This is a question I don't know the answer to. If Hinesburg hires a contractor to do their stuff and we are part of the options, then do we need an RFP process to include Richmond with their contractor.

Arneson: It would depend on how much they charge us. If it is under \$15,000 then we need 3 quotes, over \$15,000 is a sealed bid process.

Heston: My impression is they want to run a parallel process.

Forward: Maybe we can talk to the contractors. But it is not our contract.

Hill: It should have been a joint RFP and they were not interested in it.

Forward: I suggest we table this for tonight. We should have a more in-depth conversation on this.

Hill: It is possible that Hinesburg ends up not wanting to go with Richmond.

Forward: We could do a similar process that ends up with two Departments with similar goals and missions.

### **Review of police cruisers**

Heston: Ben, could you go over for the public the memo on the timeline for the cruisers ([https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3g1\\_Cruiser\\_Memo.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3g1_Cruiser_Memo.pdf))?

Herrick: We have two cars slated to be replaced this year. We have quotes for a Durango (\$41,016) and a hybrid Ford Explorer (\$47,460). I broke down the fuel consumption for the Durango (21 mpg) and Explorer (25 mpg). The Durango will burn about \$3,808 and the Explorer \$3,200 (assuming 20,000 miles per year, \$4 per gallon). The Dodge is still less with purchase and fuel. I am looking for direction on which route we want to go. I have been driving the Tesla the last few days. The charging issues are worse than I thought. I have been spending 4-5 hours sitting at chargers waiting for it to charge. The one in the parking lot is a 6.5 kW charger. I plugged the car in at 2:30 pm and it is now 9:30 pm and it still has 2:55 before it reaches full charge. There is only one super-charger in Williston. The charging and the size of the Tesla are issues. The Tesla is a great car for somebody who is not patrolling in it. They are not purpose built for law enforcement. Goss Dodge gave us a trade in value of \$37,000 when we bought it for \$51,200. It is currently at 19,590 miles. It is a 2021 Tesla Model 3 Long-Range S. We have had a little bit over a year. I am not sure what we could sell it for without a trade-in.

Granda: I would suggest that if there is not a sense of urgency, it might be worth waiting 6 months when the Inflation Reduction Act gets finalized. There might be some money for municipalities install EV charging equipment. It is a charging issue. We do not have the right equipment. We may be able to do that at reduced costs. In a holistic sense, 50% of all passenger vehicles sold in 2030 will probably be electric vehicles. It is not just about charging the police cars. Think about all the vehicles in Town we can charge.

Forward: My concern is that it is taking that long to charge. It could be the charging station, or the car is not working as it is designed. There is more to investigate. Many electric cars charge overnight. We might consider using it in a different way like commuting. Also, the Tesla doesn't use up fuel idling. I do not know how much is on each of those cruisers. We haven't had a full staff since 2018. I question whether we buy two cars now. The federal incentives for electric vehicles are available to municipalities. I do not think we need to make a decision to buy two cars tonight. We have plenty of cars now. The Energy Committee can do some research on how the car is performing and how it compares to a conventional car.

Arneson: Last time we talked about the budget, we were continuing with two cars this year and skipping next year. The lead time on these cars is several months. We could trade in two of the Fords to get two Dodges. Then, look at the Tesla as a trade-in for the Durango.

Hill: 2017 Ford Explorers are ready for trade-in?

Herrick: Yes. I am not sure of the mileage as I have not driven either of them.

Hill: Mileage should have gone done with fewer officers and fewer hours. We should be able to stretch out the replacement cycle.

LaBounty: I thought we were not buying cars this year. I am very disappointed about buying any cars this year. We should not purchase cruisers this year. We should do research for the right car. I feel bad about the Chief worrying about charging a car instead of doing other work. He doesn't have time to go to Cochran Rd. because he has

to take the car to South Burlington. Don't force him to drive the Tesla to prove a point. Let him do his job in Richmond. Let the Committee figure it out. We do not need 6 vehicles. We do not need to replace 2 of the 6. Just because it is in the budget does not make it right.

Heston: The mileage on those cars will be helpful.

Hill: I am intrigued if there is another use for the Tesla in Town government. I am assuming we can get more selling it privately than as a trade-in.

Arneson: We will get more information. We can look at an action item for next meeting.

Heston: I felt cramped in the Tesla.

### **Update from the American Rescue Plan Act Committee**

Furr: We have been talking about ARPA and some people may not know what it means. The U.S. Government allocated \$1.2 million to our Town to help with COVID recovery. The original Act outlined some of its uses: replace lost public sector revenue due to COVID, address economic harms to household, small businesses, non-profits, impacted industries, and public sector, provide premium pay for essential workers, and invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. There is an option where you can claim the entire amount as revenue lost if it was less than \$10 million. The Town of Richmond did not have a reduction in tax payment but by doing it that way we do not have a lot of strings on how to spend the money. If you do not claim revenue loss, then you should not think of economic development. People ask me about the number of recreation suggestions and that is something we can do. About 90% of our submissions are for "developing neighborhood features that promote improved health and safety outcomes, such as parks, green spaces, recreation facilities, sidewalks, pedestrian safety features like crosswalks, health foods, streetlights, neighborhood cleanup, and other projects to revitalize public spaces." (<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule-FAQ.pdf>). The timeline for this is we have the money in the bank, and we need to allocate by 2024 and spend it by 2026. Infrastructure projects would probably have to be allocated by right about now. We cannot spend it on debt service or tax reduction. We formed the ARPA Committee to solicit suggestions through forums, mailings, drop boxes, electronic forms, Front Porch Forum, and emails. We received 350+ submissions or 600 overall ideas. The ARPA Committee prepared a summary document of the submissions. We set aside some suggestions due to the overall cost like an indoor swimming pool. Others were set aside based on on-going costs for maintenance. The vast majority of suggestions were based recreation or transportation. We asked the Recreation and Transportation Committees to consider these requests with their experiences. The ARPA Committee is still meeting to see which of the ideas to suggest to the Selectboard. The Selectboard has the option to allocate money now without ARPA's final report based on an obvious or compelling merit. For instance, digitizing land records might be a good idea. Long term infrastructure might be another option like sidewalks or water/sewer but that money should be allocated soon. I asked Josh to run some numbers for bond repayment where we would put in different amounts of the ARPA money to sewer or water/sewer. This topic has not been warned so this is not the time to get into this discussion. Do we want to look at the money for infrastructure like water/sewer or digitized land records?

Forward: I want to thank Jay for his leadership. It was extremely helpful to have the suggestions organized in a spreadsheet. The next step in our process is to come up with criteria to apply to these ideas. One criterion might be around on-going costs associated with a project. What type of criteria would the Selectboard like the ARPA Committee to consider?

Heston: I like the idea of considering water and sewer as we have talked about it for 8 years. That cost cannot be put on the few residents that are along that strip. We know there is a housing crisis. There will not be affordable housing that is not on a water and sewer system. The only place left is the Gateway. Considering this infrastructure is going to help us grown the economy, provide housing that we desperately need, and bring businesses and jobs to Town. This topic is stagnant. This one-time funding. Water and sewer provides revenue in the future.

Hill: Affordable housing is not going to happen up on the hillside, it has to be on water and sewer. One of the few places where affordable housing is not in somebody's backyard is between Rt 2 and interstate 89. There are concerns about commercial retail in that area. We have never hit a tipping point. It doesn't serve everybody directly like investing in the Town Center.

Heston: I would argue against that. If you increase the tax base, the grand list, it does benefit everybody. I would vote for a water & sewer system, which I am not on, over sidewalks.

Hill: I don't think it benefits the current users. It connects a group of new users to this system in an affordable way. I don't know how many Police Officers and teachers can afford to live in our Town.

Furr: The Reaps have been waiting for how many years now? If we don't do something like this, then they will come over the hill from the school. I don't like that idea. They are ready to build.

LaBounty: As an ARPA Committee member, I feel blindsided by this conversation tonight. The ARPA Committee did not discuss water and sewer or any other spending earmark now. We did not discuss that it was coming to the Selectboard specifically for water and sewer. I am very angered by this. We are talking about helping a developer. I have been a developer for 30 years and you didn't pay to put anything in for me. It is an illusion of increasing the grand list for affordable housing. There is no guarantee the Reaps are going to put affordable housing out there. The Water and Sewer Department is sitting on \$1.6 million in cash and reserves.

Hill: You cannot spend it on that.

LaBounty: All the other developers in Town didn't do affordable housing. We have no mechanism in place to guarantee water and sewer expansion will lead to affordable housing. The Planning Commission has tried to stop development in that area for years. As a taxpayer, I do not want to pay for their water and sewer, they didn't pay for mine. I am very disappointed as an ARPA Committee member. This is not fair; this is not leadership.

Furr: At the ARPA Committee the other day, I said in the chairman's summary that potential uses were infrastructure. I have no intention of supporting spending the money on any one project. If the rest of the Selectboard wants to propose \$400,000 to make water and sewer more affordable I can get behind that because it leaves \$800,000 for other projects.

Forward: There is no decision to be made. It is fair to say there will controversy no matter what we decide. I agree there is no guarantee for affordable housing. The Planning Commission is working on a zoning ordinance amendment for the Gateway district and what might go in there. It requires a broader discussion. It is a viable idea but requires a bigger discussion.

Heston: I said at the last meeting, we have to start making decisions because a project could go beyond 2026. After that deadline, any money that has not been spent goes back.

Forward: I talked to the ARPA person at VLCT and I asked her about getting contractors to do anything under any circumstance. There is a lot of federal money floating around to do all kinds of stuff like schools. A Town Center bond vote for 2023 it is entirely likely we could probably not begin construction until 2024-2025 due to the backlog. We have a grant right now to do work on the Library. We have not been able to find a contractor to do it so they are willing to extend the grant. The obligation to spend can be a resolution at the Selectboard level to state where we want to spend the money. The ARPA Committee does have more work to do. The Selectboard can help us establish some criteria.

Furr: I am looking forward to hearing back from the Recreation Committee. An expanded playground might be considered.

Forward: Do we provide specific money to different topics?

Furr: We could significantly increase recreation opportunities for our townspeople, or we could build 1/20<sup>th</sup> of a Town Center.

Forward: Tennis courts are not maintenance free.

Heston: We are going to continue the conversation.

Forward: The intent to was to bring you up-to-date and we will be back.

### **Update on retail cannabis ballot item**

Arneson: There were a couple of questions from last time. VLCT said we could not tie the vote to future zoning regulations. If it passed on Town Meeting, then it would be allowed in Town with other retail.

Town Planner Ravi Venkataraman and I have been talking with VLCT and our attorney regarding the questions that came up at the last meeting around zoning for retail cannabis.

VLCT has advised that the opt in vote is to be focused solely on whether to allow retailers or not. We cannot add a stipulation about the retail locations being dependent on an amendment to zoning regulations. Ravi provided some maps ([https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3i\\_Memo-CannabisRetailAllowances.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3i_Memo-CannabisRetailAllowances.pdf)) and a memo on the areas in Town where it would be allowed. The Planning Commission could then classify cannabis retails as specific use and could tailor where it could be allowed. It would take some time to work through that process. Even if it passed right away, there would still be some time for a retailer to deal with the cannabis control board.

Forward: The maps show it is essentially everywhere in Town.

Arneson: If the Planning Commission changes the zoning then any application after the changes would apply. Any existing shop before the changes would be grandfathered in and would not have to move.

Forward: There is a hemp operation by Fay's Corner which could become a commercial operation. It is an odd place for commercial/retail when it is intended agricultural. I haven't thought it through. I would like the Planning Commission to wrestle with this idea.

Heston: What is the application process? I think it is to the State.

Arneson: I will look into that. I think they have to go through several steps before it comes to the Town.

Furr: Is it something we can take away like Liquor Licenses? Once you have done some things, it is irrevocable.

Forward: I like the idea of a vote but I am not sure Town Meeting is the right time.

Clarke: Ravi sent me a memo on this as we are discussing at our next Planning Commission meeting. The Town can have a local cannabis control board like getting a liquor license. It would be a board that grants retail cannabis licenses and would be an annual thing. Most Towns did have a retail cannabis board at the local level. So you would first have to get your State license and then have to get your Town or local license. There are a couple of different things other than altering the zoning. You could look at the renewal of licenses as a board.

Furr: It is on the Town Meeting ballot.

LaBounty: My concern about having it on the ballot in March is the Planning Commission needed to be ready for the zoning regulations.

Clarke: The Planning Commission may have time but it depends on the amount of discussion and coordination with the Selectboard around a cannabis control board. It would only be allowed in retail areas. Ravi found that a lot of Towns did not regulate it through the zoning but through a municipal board. We are a little bit handicapped because our Town Planner is leaving. We can work with CCRPC.



Furr: I would like to have this settled before we go to the voters.

Clarke: There are other restrictions already in the zoning. You cannot just put it anywhere.

Forward: We are not setting the Town Meeting ballot for another month. We can discuss this further in a month.

Heston: The board would depend on if the vote passes. We need to do some homework on the cannabis review board.

### **Update on costs related to Williams Hill Rd. hearing and lawsuit**

Heston: An updated spreadsheet of costs related to Williams Hill Rd. is included in the packet ([https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3j\\_Costs\\_related\\_to\\_Williams\\_Hill\\_Rd.\\_as\\_of\\_12-2-22.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3j_Costs_related_to_Williams_Hill_Rd._as_of_12-2-22.pdf)). Recent legal fees include \$1,680 from October and \$120 from November.

Arneson: The total right now is \$33,718.83.

Forward: I will state for the record, I do not begrudge the Selectboard spending the money on the lawsuit. I do begrudge that we are forced to do it. It has been on maps for 100-150 years. It bothers me that an individual family has caused the Town to spend a fair amount of money for their personal gain.

Furr: We do not have that piece of paper that says we legally established the road.

Hill: We should resist criticizing legal opponents or citizens who might be legally correct. Unfortunately, attorneys are expensive. We went into this with our eyes wide-open.

LaBounty: It is not legally a road based on the ancient road law. I said at the beginning, do not go down this path, you don't have the documentation to prove it is a Town road. I take offense that we are defending their neighborhood by people just coming in to clear something where they didn't know where it was. They did a petition and came to you asking you to do that. You went just the opposite and said it was our road without knowing. You are missing documentation. We are still in a legal battle. You are taking away a right when you know you do not have that piece of paper.

Forward: I was speaking for myself that I am frustrated. I hope we have found all our Class 4 roads and delineated them. They are assets that we should protect and keep.

Heston: That is a future subject.

### **Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders**

#### **Minutes**

*Hill moved to approve the Minutes of 11/21/22 as presented. Sander seconded.  
Roll Call Vote: Forward, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Furr abstain. Motion approved.*

### **Purchase Orders**

*Hill moved to approve PO#4543 to VLCT Property and Casualty for Workers Comp and Assigned Risk Insurance not to exceed \$95,055.82. Forward seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

*Hill moved to approve PO#4544 to CCS Constructors LLC for Bridge St. Bridge Repair not to exceed \$79,877.60. Furr seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

*Hill moved to approve PO#4545 to Richmond Land Trust to Gillett Pond Dam not to exceed \$150,000.00. Sander seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

### **Warrants**

*Hill moved to approve the general warrants as presented from 12/5/2022. Furr seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

### **Discuss Items for Next Agenda**

- \*Cemetery
- \*Police Cruisers
- \*Police Governance
- \*Strategic Plan & Hiring

### **Adjournment**

*Furr moved to adjourn. Sander seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

### **Meeting adjourned at 10:50 pm**

#### **Chat file from Zoom:**

01:28:33 Christine Werneke: Thank you Selectboard members!  
01:30:02 Linda Parent: Thank you, now we can move forward with ideas.  
01:48:51 Lisa Kory: I am ready. 355 Cochran Rd. I have a big driveway.  
01:49:13 Patty Brushett:How about the round church  
01:49:18 Patty Brushett:Walk  
01:49:39 Patty Brushett:I like it  
01:50:26 Patty Brushett:Park at Stone Corral too  
01:50:28 Susan Wells: I'll drive the officer back to the station.  
01:50:36 Patty Brushett:Move them around everyday  
01:50:58 Anthony Cambridge: Maybe patrol the road at specific times we know are problematic?

01:51:05 Patty Brushett: Seeing a police officer walking through town would be great

01:54:24 Patty Brushett: If the temporary ones work then we can put in permanent ones.

01:54:41 Susan Wells: I agree. The more humps the better.

01:55:39 Jay Furr: We'll have better data to know when the problematic times really are once all the speed signs with the big flashy blue lights are in place; they'll record speeds

01:58:39 Patty Brushett: Round church also

01:58:40 Susan Wells: Susan Wells 44

01:58:55 Lisa Kory: Thank you all!

02:14:28 Patty Brushett: That was my question

02:16:22 Patty Brushett: That's great Bard

02:17:03 Patty Brushett: I agree Cara