

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
D e c e m b e r 1 , 2 0 1 4 M I N U T E S

Members Present: Taylor Yeates; Chris Granda; Bard Hill; David Sander; Ellen Kane
Absent: None
Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Mary Houle; Maureen Kangley; Ian Bender; Harold Irish; Cara LaBounty, Bruce LaBounty; Meghan Giroux; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

Taylor Yeates called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

1. Welcome and Public Comment

Mr. Yeates asked if there was any comment from the public for items not on the agenda.

Maureen Kangley spoke about a message against bigotry and urged the Selectboard to listen to the message online.

2. Items for Discussion with Those Present

3. Other Business

FY2016 Capital Plan and Budget

The Manager explained that the third draft of the budget was adding 2.52 cents to the tax rate, a 4% increase, or about \$110,000 in additional spending. The Selectboard had previously said they would like to keep the tax increase to about 2%, or about 1.35 cents. Therefore, the Selectboard should find \$60,000 in cuts.

At the same time, the Capital Plan needs to be finalized and prepared for a public hearing on January 5th. The Manager noted that most of the tax increase this year is due to capital spending, and therefore the most likely to be adjusted.

Mr. Yeates directed the discussion to proceed by department. The Administration, Planning/Zoning, and Recreation budgets had no significant discussions. There was consideration of reducing the contribution to the reappraisal reserve in the Assessor budget. The Manager was directed to obtain some information from NEMRC and the balance of the reserve. There was significant discussion on the Police Cruiser purchase and whether to proceed with two vehicles or one. On the Fire Budget, Mr. Hill noted that the Water Commission was going to proceed with a recommendation to increase the Water charge to reflect a value of fire protection for the community, not just the metered water at the fire station. The Highway budget was discussed and concentrated on the replacement highway truck, the paving and gravel plans and the restoration of the bridge and culvert fund.

After discussion, it was agreed that the police cruiser purchase would be cash for one cruiser only, and the new video camera system for that vehicle would be kept in. There was additional discussion on

1 the Charitable Appropriations, and COTS was reduced by \$500 and Our Community Cares Camp was
2 included at \$100.

3
4 There was some discussion about the Library budget and the roof replacement, how that would be
5 funded and how much to put into the Library Reserve. The Library had requested an additional \$8,000
6 to fund their reserve to previous years' level. It was agreed to restore the reserve funding, but get more
7 information from the Library on their roof replacement plans.

8
9 There was some discussion on the Highway truck replacements. Bruce LaBounty asked if we were
10 going to have all four trucks be tandem trucks, and the Manager replied no, two tandems and two
11 single-axle. Mr. LaBounty felt that the town had purchased tandem trucks to be able to hold more
12 road gravel, and now we were renting additional trucking for the gravel plans.

13
14 Mr. Yeates said that the gravel plan should be changed in the Capital plan to reflect what was in the
15 budget.

16
17 Mr. Yeates noted the final edits to the Capital Plan, based on these discussions. The gravel plan was
18 changed to \$221,000; the Police Cruiser purchase was amended and the Library capital plan was
19 finalized.

20
21 Mr. Granda offered a motion to accept the final draft of the FY2016 Capital Plan and warn a public
22 hearing for January 5, 2015 at 7:30 pm in Town Center. Mr. Sander seconded the motion.

23
24 The Manager noted that the additional \$5,000 for the Bridge Street Bridge reserve was not included.
25 After some discussion, the Selectboard agreed that the additional \$5,000 was not necessary and the
26 current bridge and culvert fund was sufficient and was removed from the Capital Plan.

27
28 The motion carried 5-0.

29
30 Mr. Yeates noted the Public Hearing on the Gateway Zoning amendments, to be held on December
31 11th at 7:00 pm in Camels Hump Middle School Cafeteria.

32
33 Mr. Granda requested that the discussion on the Cochran Road property take place now, as someone
34 was here to discuss it. The Selectboard agreed.

35
36 Cochran Road Property

37
38 Meghan Giroux was present to discuss her ideas for community gardens. Ms. Giroux said that she had
39 been invited by Chris Granda because of her work with community gardens, and her expertise as an
40 environmental planner. She said that there were several successful community gardens around but
41 Richmond was without one. Some community gardens charged a small fee for plots, which paid for
42 maintenance on the parcel. She said she had not visited this parcel but felt that the way it was
43 described would be good for gardens.

44
45 Mr. Hill said there were two issues with the site, the lack of water and some debris in the soil that
46 would require remediation.

47
48 Mr. Yeates asked what kinds of organizations are helpful and Ms. Giroux said the Vermont
49 Community Garden Network would be a great resource. She felt that the community would really buy
50 into the idea. There was some additional discussion. It was noted that the only other idea put forth

1 was for a parking lot. Mr. Granda suggested a design charette over the Winter. The Selectboard
2 thanked Ms. Giroux for her discussion.

3 4 Economic Development and Urban Renewal

5
6 The Manager explained that the Selectboard had requested a legal review of the Urban Renewal
7 statutes, found in 24 VSA Chapter 85. This was regarding the creamery parcel, and was regarded as
8 an option to be aware of but no action is being immediately considered. The Manager noted there was
9 a memo from the attorney, Mark Sperry, that he wanted to keep confidential for the time being as it
10 included some advice on how to proceed. The statutes themselves were clear in what they allowed,
11 which was the possibility for the Selectboard to use eminent domain on a property that was declared
12 blighted, and issue bonds to compensate the owner for the taking. The voters would have to approve
13 the declaration and use of the statutes, however, it was possible to take a blighted property, and sell it
14 back to a redeveloper within the confines of a redevelopment plan.

15
16 Cara LaBounty asked why didn't the Selectboard consider buying the property for \$1, obtaining grants
17 and cleaning it up and selling it back to the owner for \$1? There was some discussion. Mr. Granda
18 felt that there must be something preventing that within the Brownfields requirements. Mr. Hill said
19 we should remain in regular contact with the owner, the building continues to be a disgrace and fall in
20 on itself.

21 22 Ballot Questions for Town Meeting

23
24 Mr. Yeates explained that there were several outstanding questions proposed for Town Meeting, and
25 some needed consideration for Australian Ballot. Mr. Yeates noted that the Conservation Reserve
26 Fund question was previously approved to be perpetually Australian Ballot, unless so changed.

27
28 Cara LaBounty asked that a record of transactions be included in the question for the Conservation
29 Reserve Fund. Mary Houle said it should be a concise question. There was some discussion. It was
30 agreed that some sample language would be included, and this question would be discussed again on
31 December 15th before final approval for the ballot.

32
33 Mr. Yeates said that the next question was the Richmond Rescue tax exemption. There were no
34 changes to this question, and it was approved to be on the ballot and discussed at a special meeting of
35 the voters on January 14, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Library.

36
37 Mr. Yeates noted that the West Main extension questions were not yet ready.

38
39 Mr. Yeates said that the tax stabilization question should be approved. Mr. Granda suggested adding
40 the Gateway to this, but Mr. Hill objected and said this should continue to be just about the former
41 creamery parcel. There was some discussion.

42
43 Mr. Yeates wanted to amend the question to make it easier to read. There was additional discussion.
44 Mr. Yeates said that he would prefer that this question be discussed at Town Meeting, and that voters
45 were informed. The rest of the board agreed, and would take the discussion of the article up at the
46 December 15th meeting and not place this question on the ballot.

47
48 Mr. Yeates noted that the only other question was the Gateway zoning amendments, which would be
49 heard and possibly approved at the December 11th meeting and public hearing.

1 Cara LaBounty asked about the floodplain zoning. The Manager said it would not make the schedule
2 for Town Meeting. Ms. LaBounty asked if the Selectboard would approve these without requiring
3 voter approval also. There was some discussion but the Selectboard did not agree to adopt the
4 regulations without voter approval.

5
6 Reports from Selectboard and Town Manager

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8 The Manager noted that the financial reports were complete for the audit, however, they were slightly
9 late and the auditors would not be able to meet the November 30th deadline for a complete audit. The
10 fieldwork was complete and the remainder of the audit should be done soon. Mr. Yeates expressed
11 frustration at the delays and said we should solicit more CPAs to see what else was available.

12
13 Mr. Hill talked about some recent break-ins that were discussed mostly on Front Porch Forum. He
14 asked how the police chief notifies the public, and how we would do a better job of letting people
15 know of recent events without signaling that a particular individual was robbed. He said that the
16 weekly reports focused greatly on DUI and speeding, but not much else.

17
18 The Manager reported that the recent poor weather had delayed the work on the failed septic in
19 Greystone, but the contractor was on track for the following week.

20
21 Approval of Minutes

22
23 Mr. Hill offered a motion to approve the minutes of November 17, 2014 with minor edits and was
24 seconded by Mr. Sander and the motion carried 5-0.

25
26
27 Warrants

28
29 The warrants were approved and signed.

30
31 **4. Adjourn**

32 Motion by Mr. Sander to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Granda. So voted.