

Water Commission Annual Meeting Minutes
5/21/19

Called to Order 6pm

Present: Bard Hill, David Sander, Bob Reap, Fran Huntoon, Christy Witters, Jessica Draper, Josh Arneson, Kendall Chamberlin, Gary Bressor

Josh Arneson gave a presentation. The first topic he covered was accomplishments over the last year and a minor correction the budget figures. He then went over the overall changes in budget from the previous year noting that administrative fees, insurance costs, and staffing costs were increasing. He also noted an overall decrease in capital expenses to help balance the other increases. The next topic was revenue, for water there will be a 3.72% increase and for wastewater there will be a 3.12% increase. He also noted a new revenue line for interest accrued in the bank account. He gave an overview of the fund balances and then an overview of the projected rates including an example rate for the average user. Gary Bressor asked what the usage per person is, and the commission said it varies for a number of reasons. Josh went over some upcoming projects around Bridge St. He finished up by reminding everyone that Richmond has very high quality drinking water and that the commission meets the 1st and 3rd Mondays at 6pm in the town center.

Bard asked Josh to look at what the project costs might do the rates in the future. Fran asked if the Bridge Street waterline crossing will disrupt traffic. Kendall said he believed it would be minimal.

David Sander asked what Yellowmine PVC was. Kendall explained that it's exceptionally strong pipe material that is nearly impossible to destroy and has held up extremely well in the past.

Bard Hill noted issues with what are being marketed as flushable wipes. Kendall noted that there is no such thing as a flushable wipe and they do not degrade. He asked everyone to please use traditional toilet paper.

Bard asked Kendall to further discuss what is special about Stone Corral's waste. Kendall explained that it's high strength waste that requires further treatment prior to being treated with other wastewater.

Gary Bressor asked how the authority worked between water commission and selectboard in regards to the West Main Extension grant. Bard explained that the town and selectboard manage financial logistics on behalf of the water commission. Gary said he wanted to note that the vote passed very narrowly and much of the support was for the Riverview Commons potential connection.

Bard said that he wanted to note that this was a first step and many other tasks would have to happen if the grant were awarded but understood Gary's sentiments. The commission asked Josh to review the terms of the bond vote for clarity.

David Sander moved to approve the FY20 budget and rates. Seconded by Christy Witters. All were in favor, so moved.

Josh gave an overview of the disconnection policy and an update regarding the utility connection policy.

Gary Bressor asked why 8% was assessed and thought it was too high for people who are already struggling to pay. Consensus was that the delinquent policy was required to match parts of the tax collection policy, but they would look into the rate of 8% whether it was required or not for the delinquent water accounts as well.

Membership: Josh explained that letters of interest to serve on the water commission would be accepted until May 29th and would be reviewed by the standing commission on June 3rd. The official appointments would take place on June 17th.

Gary Bressor expressed concern that when he was on the planning commission around the time he purchased property he was accused of self-serving. He said he wanted it to be a cautionary tale about the Gateway extension going to Bob's property. He said he didn't think Bob had done anything or would do anything wrong, but wanted to address it. Bob said he's with Gary on the front porch forum concern, but it is not a financial gain for him because of the land loss with the easement and the new cost of service. The commission expressed desire to keep it in mind as things progress.

There was a brief discussion of septage collection times. David Sander moved to adjourn, Christy Witters seconded. All were in favor, adjourned 7:14pm.