

Richmond Water Commission Minutes
7/1/19

Present: David Sander, Fran Huntoon, Don Morin, Josh Arneson, Kendall Chamberlin, Ruth Miller, Jack Linn

Call to Order: 6:02 pm by Josh due to no chair or vice chair in attendance

David motioned to appoint Fran to run the meeting in the absence of a chair or vice chair. Don seconded. Motion passed 3-0

Welcome and public comment.

Jack Linn spoke about water rates. He is looking at comparative water rates for the Champlain Water District. Based on his research he sees other towns have lower rates than Richmond. He would like to see the system not expanded unless it will reduce water rates. He also had a list of towns with populations within 500 of Richmond and stated they all pay less than Richmond. He warned that any expansion needs to be maintained and an expansion for 5 or 6 people may not reduce rates once maintenance costs are factored in.

Fran asked about number of users instead of residents

Jack stated he only talked to Castleton about this. Castleton has about 700 users.

David asked about Jeffersonville and Cambridge and encouraged Jack to call them because they have a similar number of users.

Jack feels nothing is even close to Champlain Water District rates.

Fran followed up on importance of looking at the number of users to get equal comparisons.

Don, asked if Buttermilk is online and if they paid for their number of users so far?

Kendall, yes they have paid fixed charges, metered fees will kick in once people move in.

Don, stated he knows the Water Commission is looking at the Stone Corral rates and admitted he needs to be better informed on Stone Corral rates as it is new to him. He stated that Williston deals with high BOD from breweries and he needs to look more into it. But does Jacks research look at towns with breweries?

Jack, yes a couple towns have breweries including Brandon.

Fran thanked Jack for sharing and said she is looking forward to more information.

Jack asked the chart be included in the minutes and it is included at the end of these minutes.

Additions or deletions to the agenda: David welcomed Don as it is his first meeting.

Update on Camel's Hump Middle School water line extension

Josh updated that CHMS has signed an agreement to turn over the water main to Richmond Water Resources Department. Construction on the extension is slated to begin on July 15.

Don, asked Did the school agree to pay extra maintenance?

Kendall, there are no maintenance costs but they are paying to build to our specs.

Review and vote on approval of pay grid adjustments for Water and Sewer employees

Josh update the Commission that:

This is a follow up on a discussion that was started in January. The idea is to fit the Water and Sewer employees on the grid but also allow for pay raises when they achieve certifications. Certifications make employees more valuable to Richmond and also to other water and sewer utilities. Rewarding the employees for certifications is a means to employee retention.

We propose to give a \$0.50/hr increase for each of the following certifications: Water 3, Wastewater 1, Wastewater 2, and Wastewater 3.

We propose to give a \$1.00/hr increase for each of the following certifications: Wastewater 4 and Wastewater 5.

We have set up the grid so the employee will move up a grade with each certification. But they will be placed on a step that gives them at least the pay increase that matches the above totals. This way they can stay on the grid while still being rewarded for the certifications.

Fran asked how long it takes to get certifications.

Kendall said it takes 2 years to be certified. Need to fulfill time in a facility and take the classes and pass the tests.

Fran wants to be cognizant of jumping employees up in pay too quickly.

Josh stated that the pay jump was part of our conversation and is designed to make Richmond wages more competitive.

Don asked what are other criteria for raises? He is hesitant to not tie pay to performance and to what is competitive in the field.

Fran stated that this is an effort to make Richmond wages more competitive.

Don stated that he feels a certification is a training and learning type of accomplishment and companies he has worked with also look at performance. He will abstain for now and wants to look at other water facilities and their pay structure.

Kendal stated he will not move forward with a new hire until this is settled.

Fran stated that this will be tabled until the July 15 meeting because with Don abstaining and only three Commissioners in attendance we don't have enough members to hold a vote.

Superintendents report: Rebuild influent pump. Taking a lot of septage this month. Montpelier plant is upgrading and will be down next year, companies are already moving to Richmond. Aaron met with PFAS committee and was invited to a follow up meeting and will be involved in an ongoing workgroup. CHMS extension will start July 15, very happy for public agreement. Richmond is eligible for significant subsidies for the bridge crossing project and based on that we should start looking at Bridge St. work for water upgrades.

Fran, stated we will need more detail on cost to do Bridge St.

Kendall, yes, we have preliminary engineering but could get a final number from them.

Kendall continued with the report: We are spending time on mapping and data conversion and we may be able to show this next meeting. Currently looking at vans and pickup trucks to replace the aging pickup truck.

Don, asked do we have a sinking fund for equipment?

Kendall, yes we do and it is fully funded for the truck.

Kendall continued: we have a Facebook page now.

Approval of minutes. Moved by David. Seconded by Fran. Don asked why there was nothing about new members. Fran explained that discussion was at Selectboard. Motion passed 3-0.

Warrants were signed.

Don stated he had a few questions for Kendall. How long will you stay with Richmond and who is your successor?

Kendall, no one on staff is currently certified to run the facility. August 2 is the date Kendall could retire with full benefits. But he stated he will not retire until he can hand it off to a qualified person. Burlington is hiring operators for \$30 per hour with full benefits, it is hard to find people. We need to pay market wages. Hinesburg, Milton and others have increased their payment scale.

Don, asked who hires for a supervisor?

Kendall relied that the Town Manager does.

Fran asked about items for next meeting: Pay Grid Discussion.

Don wants to look at Stone Corral. Josh said he can help with some docs.

Motion to adjourn by David, second by Don. Motion passed 3-0.

Adjourned at 6:37pm

Chart submitted by Jack Linn follows on next page.

COMPARATIVE RETAIL WATER RATES
Survey Compiled December 2018

The following list represents the cost per 1000 gallons and the annual cost for the Chittenden County average household occupancy (2.4 people per home) multiplied by 75 gallons per day per person for an average household usage of 65,700 gallons per year. The annual cost of water reflects individual characteristics of the communities water rates, i.e. any base rate per quarter, incremental rates based upon usage, or any minimum charges.

Water System	Total Cost per 1,000 Gallons (Including any Base Rates)	Annual Cost Average Family
CWD Wholesale (Uniform Rate)	\$2.165	\$142.24
Village of Essex Junction	\$3.86	\$253.60
City of South Burlington	\$3.98	\$261.49
Colchester Town	\$4.45	\$292.37
Malletts Bay Water Company	\$4.45	\$292.37
Colchester Fire District #2	\$4.58	\$300.91
Colchester Fire District #3	\$5.01	\$329.16
City of Winooski	\$5.17	\$339.67
Town of Williston	\$5.18	\$340.33
Town of Essex	\$5.42	\$356.09
City of Burlington	\$5.76	\$378.43
Town of Milton	\$6.48	\$425.74
Town of Shelburne	\$6.65	\$436.91
**Village of Jericho	\$3.27	\$214.84
***Colchester FD#1	\$3.45	\$226.67

***Bolded** water systems are served by CWD

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⁶934.48

Note: The annual average retail cost of water is \$332.77 for 10 of the 12 above "**bolded**" CWD served municipal water systems for a family using 65,700 gallons per year. Of this \$332.77 average annual family cost, \$142.24 (43%) is paid to CWD for the uniform wholesale purchase price, and the remaining dollars is retained by the respective CWD served water system.

**Village of Jericho – Rate does not include Village Tax Rate assessment charge. Not included in average listed in above Note.

***Colchester FD#1 - Rate does not include bond special assessment charge. Not included in average listed in above Note.