

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
J u n e 1 8 , 2 0 1 8 M I N U T E S

Members Present: Bard Hill; David Sander; Stephen Ackerman; Roger Brown; Christy Witters

Absent: None

Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Mary Houle; Linda Donovan; Bill Donovan; Amy Macrellis, Stone Environmental; Joe Greenough; Mo Forcier; Judy Rosovsky, Conservation Commission; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

Bard Hill called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Welcome and Public Comment

Mr. Hill asked if there were any comments from the public, but there were none.

2. Items for Discussion with Those Present

Storm Water Master Plan – Stone Environmental

Amy Macrellis of Stone Environmental and one other person provided a presentation on the development of Richmond's Storm Water Master Plan, which was being created by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. The project aimed to identify erosion hazard areas and storm water outfalls in an effort to develop and prioritize projects to improve water quality. Part of the project was also dedicated to the school property under a grant from the Friends of the Winooski River and Winooski River Natural Resources Conservation District. The project focused primarily infrastructure near roads and private property in the village area. Roads outside of this area would be covered under the Municipal Roads General Permit regulations.

Ms. Macrellis continued and discussed the various project areas, and noted there were eleven opportunities around the village area that could be accomplished utilizing available grant funds.

Ms. Witters referenced the Millet Street outfall (near Richmond Rescue) asked if certain proposed solutions worked the same with surface water as they did with storm water. Ms. Macrellis didn't feel that they could separate strategies in this case.

Mr. Brown asked if the goal was to remove sediment from storm water flow. Ms. Macrellis said not necessarily but reducing environmental contaminants was the goal – primarily phosphorus – but sedimentation was a concern for storm water.

Ms. Macrellis then addressed the concerns on school property. The campus has two gullies that are a concern, where active erosion has taken place in recent significant events. Part of this captures the runoff from the parking area as well. Since this was property owned by the school, but with influences from the roads uphill, the schools would be the ones to take the lead on stabilizing these areas.

1 Ms. Macrellis then focused on six opportunities in the village area:

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3
4 WR-06, Richmond Rescue (Wet Pond)

5
6 WR-07, Railroad Tracks (Gravel Wetland)

7
8 WR-11, Millet Street (Bioretention)

9
10 WR-09, Bridge Street Sidewalks (Bioretention)

11
12 WR-08, Our Lady Church (Bioretention)

13
14 WR-01, Thompson Road (Gravel Wetland)

15
16 These projects were more thoroughly outlined in the report produced by Stone Environmental. There
17 was discussion about the details of the projects and their designs. Mr. Brown asked what was the
18 timeline to complete this. Ms. Macrellis said that the grant close out was at the end of July, and the
19 town would be responsible for the retrofits and completion. Under the Municipal Roads General
20 Permit, the hydrologically connected road segment improvements needed to be completed within 20
21 years.

22
23 Ms. Witters asked if there were any three acre parcels in the village that would be subject to permitting
24 under the new regulations. It was supposed that only the schools would require permitting because of
25 the size of the campus.

26
27 The board thanked Ms. Macrellis for her presentation.

28
29 Conservation Commission: Annual Update – Judy Rosovsky

30
31 Mr. Hill asked Ms. Rosovsky to report on what the Conservation Commission has been working on
32 and what their needs they might have.

33
34 Ms. Rosovsky said the commission had been busy. The recent Master Naturalist program was being
35 organized and they had been involved heavily in the Andrews Forest project, and that continued with
36 the Master Plan work. They had been coordinating with the SE Group on this project, and also with
37 the VELCO easement issues.

38
39 They approved the Huntington Gorge funding, and Richmond Land Trust had completed that
40 acquisition.

41
42 Ms. Witters asked about the rip rap issue on Volunteers Green, and the discussion moved to that
43 agenda item.

44
45 Ms. Rosovsky explained why the Conservation Commission denied to recommend funding the town's
46 proposal to rip rap a portion of the Volunteers Green river bank. The commission felt that there was a
47 misunderstanding between those proposing options and those preparing solutions. The commission
48 wanted an answer as to why this was the only solution, and no alternatives were considered. They also
49 wanted to know if any research had been done to understand the down side of this option.

50

1 Mr. Hill talked about the previous discussions that the Selectboard had on this project. He noted that
2 based on the town's research, if we wanted to keep what we had with Volunteer's Green, we had to do
3 something. What was the right approach? It came down to stability, return on investment, and other
4 similar factors. Planting more trees that would just fall into the river wasn't a good option. Ms.
5 Rosovsky said that if the town wanted to use Conservation Reserve Funds, they would have to address
6 the commission's concerns. There was additional discussion. Mr. Hill requested that all previous
7 work on this be shared with Ms. Rosovsky and the Conservation Commission.
8

9 **3. Other Business**

10 **Discussion of Police Services**

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12
13 Mr. Sander recapped the history of the Public Safety Building. In 2014, then fire chief Tom Levesque
14 questioned the state of the town's facilities and urged the Selectboard to plan for future buildings,
15 which was passed by a voice vote at Town Meeting. This led to the 2016 committee and hiring of
16 Black River Design to perform a feasibility study. The initial building was a three-service building,
17 housing police, fire and rescue. The cost was over \$12 million, and universally felt to be too large and
18 too expensive for the town. Shortly thereafter, Richmond Rescue left the project, and the building was
19 shown for two services at \$8 million. Richmond Fire then came to the Selectboard and felt they could
20 continue to utilize their existing building with some improvements. With the building now just
21 housing the police, the cost wavered between \$3 million and \$3.5 million, with no identified site. The
22 Selectboard then wanted to ask the voters if they wanted to continue with this exploration of a building
23 knowing the cost could be up to \$3 million. A question was developed and defeated at Town Meeting,
24 however, the results were not clear. The police officers came to feel that this was a referendum on the
25 police department instead of a police building. The Selectboard then felt that public outreach was
26 necessary and is implementing a series of sessions designed to communicate to the public the services
27 that are provided and the costs of those services. Some in town feel that a police department is
28 unnecessary, and this has created a contentious discussion.
29

30 Mr. Brown reviewed the meeting from the previous Thursday. It started with some data analysis from
31 Ms. Witters, with help from our intern, Tim Scanlon. There was a real, legitimate concern about the
32 status of the department with the retirement of the chief and losing two officers. In the short term,
33 how does the town continue to keep the public safe – there is an ongoing interim chief process and the
34 facilities process would come later.
35

36 Mr. Hill said that whenever someone departs, we have to consider what we do about the vacancy. We
37 needed stability right now. Ms. Witters agreed and said that the interim chief would bring that
38 stability while a permanent chief is recruited.
39

40 Linda Donovan asked if there was a plan to hire this week. Mr. Hill said he would not promise
41 anything on a deadline but the process needs to be allowed to proceed. Ms. Donovan said she was
42 afraid that all of the officers could be gone within a matter of days. A review of options was being
43 discussed, and Mr. Hill said he wasn't interested in revisiting the entire police issue, but the focus was
44 on getting the department back to normal.
45

46 Bill Donovan expressed his concern that help be available late at night if someone breaks into his store
47 again. Mr. Brown objected to the idea that the town was going to get rid of the department. He felt
48 that the public had the right to know what and how the town spent money on the police but that didn't
49 dictate this direction.
50

1 Mo Forcier asked if we would have a Richmond Police Department.

2
3 Mr. Brown said for the record, he grew up in a town with police and didn't anticipate that this outreach
4 would lead to having no police force here. Linda Donovan said that with three police officers it was as
5 good as having no police force.

6
7 Mr. Brown said that first we would need to hire the interim chief and then discuss facilities questions,
8 and then go back to the public with future meetings.

9
10 Joe Greenough said he wanted to keep the Richmond Police Department going. The Vermont State
11 Police was a last resort, only if no one was left here. He wanted to see our police department stay as it
12 is.

13
14 Mr. Hill asked if anyone on the Selectboard was advocating to eliminate the department, to which no
15 one responded that they were.

16
17 Mary Houle said that there's no reason we could not advertise for officers to replace those leaving.
18 She also said that the NEPBA did not solve any problems for them.

19
20 The Manager spent some time explaining the recruitment and interview procedures for the interim
21 chief. He noted he had a review committee of Bob Stafford, Penny Shtull and Sean Burke – they had
22 chosen four of the nine applicants to interview, which were happening this week. Finalists would be
23 moved to a second interview with the department and Selectboard subcommittee, and an offer would
24 be made to the successful candidate.

25
26 There was other discussion surrounding the pay and employment conditions of the police department.
27 Mr. Hill noted that these discussions will continue for some time.

28 29 **Town Plan Update**

30
31 The Manager explained the Planning Commission has finalized the town plan, and their public hearing
32 will be on Monday, June 25th at 7:00 pm. The Town Plan is located online, and The significant
33 changes from the December, 2017 draft are focused on the Energy and Land Use sections. There has
34 been considerable debate about renewable and efficiency standards, wildlife conservation, concerns
35 about industrial scale renewable energy projects and allowances for development. Some of the
36 disagreements are quite nuanced and the Planning Commission has done their best to craft a plan that
37 meets statutory requirements while addressing as many concerns as felt practicable.

38
39 That said, there are still some folks who feel their concerns are not addressed. The Manager expected
40 that the Selectboard would hear from these folks during the two public hearings. Recent revisions in
41 state law have mandated that towns over a certain population must have two public hearings at the
42 Selectboard level prior to adoption.

43
44 This is not an update to the Town Plan, but an entirely new document with a new format. The
45 following adoption calendar has been developed that puts the plan before the voters in November:

46
47 6/25: Planning Commission Hearing

48
49 7/2: Present the draft with changes to the Selectboard
50

1 7/16: Selectboard should vote to warn their two hearings

2

3 8/2: Publish warning for both hearings

4

5 8/16: Last legal day to make ANY changes to the plan

6

7 8/20: SB Hearing 1

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9 9/4: SB Hearing 2

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11 9/17: Selectboard should vote to warn for Election Day

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13 10/4: Publish warning for Election Day

14

15 11/6: Election Day

16

17 The past three approval cycles were approved by the voters under the Australian Ballot method.

18 Therefore, this time should be no different but the Manager would confer with our town attorney to
19 confirm this.

20

21 The one caveat is that while the Selectboard is able to make changes to the plan during the public
22 hearing process, substantive changes need to go back to the Regional Planning Commission for their
23 review and approval. While that is more often a formality, significant changes may run the risk of
24 extended debate, throwing the plan off of the timeline. Staff should be consulted prior to making
25 significant changes to determine what may or may not be objected to by the RPC.

26

27 **Reports from Selectboard and Town Manager**

28

29 The Manager noted the Police Report, the budget status and Works in Progress with Calendar.

30

31 VTrans Bridge Replacement: On June 11th VTrans held the regional concerns meeting and revealed
32 their preferred alternative, which is to keep the original bridge up and open during the construction of
33 a new bridge on an alignment to the north of the existing. Some right of way acquisition is necessary
34 on the northwest corner, and they have this scheduled for the year 2023. Some repairs may be done to
35 the bridge during that time.

36

37 The Route 2 Culvert replacement has been pushed of until the 23-24th. This one week delay was well
38 appreciated by residents.

39

40 July 4th – the new folks on the committee have really been working hard to get things lined up this
41 year. The Manager felt this year will have one of the best parades and picnics in a long time.

42

43 Town Forest Update: The Manager spoke with Wright Preston about Prelco land and his management
44 practices – see the memo for a full report.

45

46 The Manager announced he had accepted a job offer with another town, and submitted his resignation
47 to the Selectboard with an effective date of September 13, 2018.

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50

1 **Approvals**

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3 **Approval of Purchase Orders**

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5 Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve Purchase Order 3515 to US Bank in the amount of \$37,704.86
6 for water tank debt, and was seconded by Mr. Brown. The motion carried 5-0.

7
8 **Conservation Commission**

9
10 Mr. Sander offered a motion to change Bob Low's appointment to the Conservation Commission to
11 Alternate, at Mr. Low's request, and was seconded by Ms. Witters. The motion carried 5-0.

12
13 **Approval of Minutes**

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15 Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve the minutes of June 4, 2018 and was seconded by Ms. Witters,
16 and the motion carried 5-0.

17
18 **Approval of Warrants**

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20 The warrants were approved.

21
22 **Executive Session**

23
24 Mr. Hill explained that there was a need to discuss personnel matters related to hiring an Interim Chief
25 of Police and the Town Manager in executive session.

26
27 Mr. Sander offered a motion to find that premature public knowledge about the interviews for Interim
28 Chief of Police and the Town Manager would cause the town or person to suffer a substantial
29 disadvantage. Mr. Ackerman seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

30
31 At 8:45 PM Ms. Witters offered a motion to enter an executive session to discuss the performance
32 evaluation, under section 1 VSA 313 (a)(3)&(5) with the Manager present, and Mr. Sander seconded
33 the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

34
35 During the Executive Session, Mr. Sander left the meeting early.

36
37 At 9:20 PM Mr. Hill offered a motion to adjourn the executive session and reconvene the regular
38 session. Mr. Ackerman seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

39
40 There was no further action taken.

41
42 **4. Adjourn**

43 Motion by Mr. Hill to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Ackerman. So voted.