
**RICHMOND SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 1, 2018 MINUTES**

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

Absent: None

Others Present: Paul Bohne, Town Manager; Mary Houle, Josh Arneson, Peter Gosselin, Marie Thomas, Megan Cockrell, Joe Golden, Logan Hegg and John Kart

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

1. Welcome and Public Comment

Mr. Hill welcomed those in attendance.

Mrs. Thomas spoke of attending a Leadership Conference where there was an emphasis on citizenship and pursuing a requirement that all high school students would be required to serve their municipality in some manner.

2. Items for Discussion with Those Present

Consider Approval of a Purchase Order in the Amount of \$19,220.40 for the purpose of Reimbursing Mathew Parisi for Expenses on His Elevation Change Project.

MOTION by Mr. Sander, seconded by Ms. Witters, to approve the purchase order.

VOTE: 4-0, Mr. Ackerman abstained. The motion passed.

Consider Approving the Purchase Order for the Fire Truck.

MOTION by Mr. Sander, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve the purchase order.

VOTE; 5-0, the motion passed.

Consider Signing the Warning for the "Town Plan" Ballot for the November 6, 2018 General Election.

MOTION by Mr. Sander, seconded by Mr. Brown, to sign the warning.

VOTE: 5-0, the motion passed

Town Plan Public Hearing

Mr. Hill explained that this was the third public hearing for the Town Plan. He noted that Action #7 of Goal #2 had been modified. Ms. Witters read the initial and final modification, which was:

(Added at first Selectboard hearing on 8/8): "Consider adopting the State's Energy Stretch Code in the town's zoning regulations for new construction, renovations, and additions."

(modified from second Selectboard hearing on 8/27): Changed Text: "Consider adopting all or parts of the State's Energy Stretch Code in the town's zoning regulations for new construction, renovations, and/or additions."

Mr. Sander offered a motion to open the public hearing and was seconded by Mr. Brown, and the motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Ackerman said that if this action was the only thing that we've been talking about, the Planning Commission did a good job on the plan.

Jack Linn asked what the purpose of a public hearing was, and said that it was to get the public's input. He objected to Mr. Brown's earlier interactions at the previous public hearing. Mr. Brown and Mr. Linn discussed this.

Ms. Witters said that the Selectboard did hear from the public.

Stefanie Hartsfield asked if this would be voted on at Town Meeting, and Mr. Hill said that it would be on Election Day, November 6th. Ms. Hartsfield asked how the town would be able to spread accurate information, or perhaps an executive summary could be used.

Ruth Miller said that MMCTV will continue to stream the meetings from their website.

Mr. Hill said that the documents would also be on the Town's website.

John Rankin said he was pleased that at least a small change was made. He was worried that older homes in the village would not be able to meet the new code, and renovations and additions would be harder to do. He felt that the Selectboard hadn't read the Planning Commission's letter on the stretch code, and how it may change (legislatively) making it a moving target. He said that this probably wouldn't be moved by the Planning Commission, but the Energy Committee would continue to push it.

Jeff Forward said that the Selectboard was responsive in the public hearings. His greatest concern with energy efficiency is with new construction.

Mary Houle felt that permit denials over failure to comply with the stretch code would lead to burdensome legal appeals. She mentioned that those who drive electric vehicles rely on coal for electricity.

Mr. Brown spoke about the Town Plan and what people might agree or disagree with. This action wasn't what we will do, but what we will consider. There was no mandate to adopt the energy stretch code.

Mr. Sander offered a motion to close the public hearing and was seconded by Mr. Ackerman, and the motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Sander said he was impressed with the civility of the public hearings, and they were overall positive.

Mr. Hill and Ms. Draper reviewed next steps. The Selectboard declined to make any further amendments, but can place this on the ballot for November at their September 17th meeting.

Police Services Discussion

Director of Police Services Paco Aumand was present to update the board on several police items. First, he updated the board on the status of recruitment – the recruitment had closed on August 31st, and three candidates with differing levels of certification were identified as possible recruits. Two were level 2 certified, and one was level 3. The level 2e were able to do most of what a level 3 was trained to do except homicides and domestic investigations. They were functionally adequate but the department should aspire to hiring level 3 officers when they can.

Mr. Aumand continued and said that he was trying to fill a vacancy as soon as possible, but was obligated to hold a formal review process for all candidates. Hiring uncertified candidates sets us back from getting someone to fill a patrol slot because the academy for January was full, and it took six to nine months to certify and field train a new officer.

Ms. Witters asked how we were short staffed, and pointed out that Waterbury was getting by on two troopers. Mr. Aumand said that the times those troopers were not on duty the Middlesex barracks covered calls. Richmond relies on the Williston barracks to cover 18 shifts in September. Ms. Witters asked how often there was a need to call them, and Mr. Aumand said so far, since July, they had handled 14 complaints. Ms. Witters asked if this was a problem for Richmond, and Mr. Aumand said it was a problem for the State police.

Mr. Aumand then reported that the Crime Research Group is engaged to analyze the town's calls for service by type, time, and other factors. There was also a deployment analysis. Feedback from the public is that they want a police department here, but the question was at what size – maybe the same size as before.

Mr. Ackerman felt that people wanted the same presence maybe not the same size. Mr. Aumand said that cost is a factor also for most people.

Mr. Aumand added that he felt that the current vehicle policy was seen as a benefit by the officers, and attractive to new candidates.

Mr. Brown noted that he felt that the recent listening sessions were oriented towards a new building. People didn't want to spend money unnecessarily, but also wanted more community engagement.

Ms. Witters wanted to show statistics on when policing is required, making it more efficient with police on duty when they needed to be.

There was additional discussion on this, and whether or not there would be a formal committee to examine policing. Mr. Hill said that there was never any intent to appoint a committee that had decision authority on the police, but a process where Mr. Brown and Ms. Witters were managing outreach to the public. Mr. Hill noted we needed a reboot of this process and having some data was key. Mr. Brown and Ms. Witters spoke more about the need to work with Mr. Aumand to keep the wheels turning on this.

Mr. Aumand then moved on to the electronic control device discussion. Mr. Hill asked if the board was comfortable moving forward with acquisition of electronic control devices as outlined at the last meeting. Ms. Witters said no and felt resources would be better spent on de-escalation training. She felt that tasers might escalate a situation.

Mr. Sander asked Mr. Aumand in what situations might require a taser. Mr. Aumand said that any aggressive situation where an officer might feel threatened.

Mr. Ackerman said this was an intermediary step between lethal force, and Mr. Aumand agreed. This was another tool to affect an arrest where the use of force is needed. The legislature looked at this issue carefully, and created legislation and a model policy that accepted the use of these devices in Vermont.

Mr. Ackerman asked if this would have affected the outcome of the recent shooting, and Ms. Witters noted that the State Police trooper carried one (it was not used).

Stefanie Hartsfield asked about mental health training for the officers. Mr. Aumand said that Act 180 requires some training in that area but he wasn't sure about current officer's training. Ms. Hartsfield was not comfortable with some language about contacting a crisis team. She didn't feel that there was enough information to vote on. Mr. Aumand noted that the state law mandated training before deployment.

Mr. Hill tried to get a sense of where the Selectboard was on the issue. Ms. Witters was not comfortable moving forward. Mr. Brown said that statutorily an officer must attempt to de-escalate the situation. There were greater requirements for tasers than for some other weapons. Ms. Witters said that the state had this policy because a child was killed, and the mother wanted to see this happen. She said we needed to do more research and hear more from the community.

Mr. Sander said he was leaning towards a "no" on the purchase. These can be great tools but there is the potential for misuse.

Mr. Ackerman said that training was certainly needed, but was in favor.

Mr. Brown saw this as an aggressive tool and learned more about it. The police do use aggressive, offensive weapons, and need more training and a more responsible weapon. We shouldn't buy these because they are a good deal, but was leaning towards a purchase.

Mr. Hill said that before a purchase we should review the policy and training that's available. There was some additional discussion.

Mr. Aumand wanted to reinforce that regrettably, use of force by the police was a fact of life. He would like to come back with more information.

The Selectboard continued to discuss the issue. Mr. Ackerman offered a motion to approve Mr. Aumand's proposal. Mr. Sander seconded the motion, saying that the Selectboard should give the police officers the tools they need, and added that this should be pending a review of the full policy and training proposal. Mr. Ackerman agreed.

Mr. Brown asked if we didn't approve this now, what happens to the used tasers that are available. Mr. Aumand said that UVM Police were looking to sell them. There were some technical questions and answers about the equipment. Mr. Brown didn't want to leap at a good deal; this should be a good decision for the right reasons. He needed more information.

The vote failed, 2-2-1 with Mr. Mr. Brown and Ms. Witters voting no and Mr. Hill abstaining.

Mr. Hill asked Mr. Aumand to articulate a clear training plan and policy and bring this back to the board.

Town Forest Management Plan Update

Hannah Phillips, chair of the Town Forest Management Plan steering committee, was present to explain progress on the new plan. She provided a brief presentation and talked about deadlines. The Selectboard agreed to review the final proposal at their November 5th meeting, and asked for a list of differences between the interim management plan and the proposed permanent one.

3. Other Business

Financial Discussions

Finance Director Connie Bona was present to discuss several items. First was a new grant writing and procurement policy. Ms. Bona explained the need for assigning a responsible party to a grant for reporting and management purposes. There was some clarification on language of the new policy but the board agreed with the principal. Ms. Bona would amend the proposed policy and bring this back at the next meeting.

The next item was a sheet outlining current health benefits for employees, as well as some other alternative plans for comparison. The Manager noted that no decisions were expected, but the board had wanted to know more about plans and costs. Ms. Bona said that Blue Cross plans were expected to go up by around 3% for the next plan year.

Ms. Bona presented four quotes for the bank notes for the Highway Truck, Highway Grader, and Fire Truck. TD Bank was the lowest overall, by having a slightly higher rate on the two five-year notes, but a lower rate on the larger and longer seven year fire truck note.

Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve the quote from TD Bank for three bank notes as follows: FY2019 Highway Truck, \$150,000 over 5 years at 3.48%; FY2019 Grader, \$150,000 over five years at 3.48%; replacement fire truck, \$360,000 over seven years at 3.62%. Ms. Witters seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Town Manager Recruitment Update

The Manager explained that the second round interviews would be completed on the 13th of this month. Mr. Sander spoke a little about the first round of candidates. This discussion would continue at the next meeting.

USPS Lease – 2nd Renewal

The Manager explained that in 2013 the town renewed the lease with the US Post Office for an amended five-year term. The second term was up, and the USPS was interested in keeping the terms the same although they requested several items for repair. There was some discussion, and the Selectboard agreed to the new lease. Mr. Sander offered a motion to sign the proposed lease renewal with the USPS under the previous terms, adding the repair items. Ms. Witters seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Reports from Selectboard and Town Manager

The Manager noted the Police Report, and other reports were reviewed. It was noted that a meeting with CSWD would be held on the 12th.

The Manager noted this was his last meeting with the Selectboard as Town Manager and thanked everyone for their patience and the opportunity to live and work here.

Approvals

Approval of Purchase Orders

Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve Purchase Order 3641 in the amount of \$105,947 for the 98 Jones Mill Road flood elevation project, and was seconded by Ms. Witters. The motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve Purchase Order 3531 in the amount of \$11,613.17 to Mayheux for air conditioning repairs to Town Center, and was seconded by Mr. Ackerman and the motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve Purchase Order 3643 to Sullivan, Powers & Company for the annual audit, in the amount of \$22,000 and was seconded by Mr. Ackerman. The motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve the minutes of August 20, 2018 and was seconded by Mr. Brown. The motion carried 4-0-1 with Mr. Hill abstaining.

Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve the minutes of August 27, 2018 and was seconded by Mr. Brown. The motion carried 3-0-2 with Mr. Hill and Mr. Ackerman abstaining.

Subrecipient Grant Contract

The Manager explained that this was for the prior windstorm claim, but was an outstanding contract.

Mr. Ackerman offered a motion to approve the subrecipient grant contract for the October 2017 wind storm with the State of Vermont, and was seconded by Mr. Sander. The motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Warrants

The taser purchase from UVM was removed until September 17th. The warrants were approved.

4. Adjourn

Motion by Mr. Ackerman to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Sander. So voted.