

Selectboard Minutes  
10/19/2020

Members Present by Zoom: Christine Werneke, David Sander, Roger Brown, Bard Hill  
Absent: Katie Mather

---

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kyle Kapitansky, acting Police Chief; Ravi Venkataraman, Planner; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent; Richmond Fire.; the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15,

also present: Martha Nye, Rebecca Rouiller, Stefani Hartsfield, Brandi Littlefield from the Howard Center, Justin Graham from RiseVT, Charlie Baker from CCRP, Peggy Curtis, Marshall and Gretchen Paulsen, Judy Bush, Naomi Hahr, Judy Rosovsky, Mark Hall, Barb Winters, Ike Patch, Rod West, Karen Yaggy, Darcie Rankin, Jessie Heiser, and Frances Thomas

Called to Order: 7:03 PM

**Welcome by David.**

**Comments from the public:** none

**I, Additions or Deletions to Agenda:** none

**II. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**

**a) Consideration of appointment to the Recreation Committee**

Ravi reported:

- that he has received four (4) letters of interest but that one (1) person dropped out.
- that there are three (3) applicants and only one (1) position open
- that the board could add two full-time members if they chose to

Discussion included:

- that David asked what the will of the Board would be
- that Christine said she is curious why we should expand the Committee. Bard replied that in the past increasing the size of boards and commissions has been preferable. Ravi said that the commission recommended accepting more members and would use the momentum to achieve the goals set for the year.
- Christine asked what the number of commission members is currently. Ravi said it is a seven (7) member board with two (2) alternates adding that the expansion would mean a nine (9) member board with two (2) alternates.
- that Roger asked about quorum issues. Ravi replied that currently a quorum is 4 it would need to be 5 with the expansion

Roger moved to expand the Recreation Committee by two (2) members; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Discussion continued:

- that Josh said any committee or board can have non-Richmond residents provided Richmond residents are the majority of the committee.

- that Bard asked if the board was silent on who takes what seats. Ravi said they had no recommendation.

Roger moved to appoint Kate Anderson to a two (2) year term; Naomi Hahr to a one (1) year alternate term; and John Linn to a one (1) year term. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

#### **b) Consideration of appointment to the Housing Committee**

Ravi reported:

- that there is one applicant, Mark Hall

Bard moved to appoint Mark Hall to the Housing Committee; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

#### **c) Update on Community Outreach Program**

Brandi Littlefield from the Howard Center reported:

- that the Howard Center is there to help with many types of needs
- that 802-488-7778 is the community outreach number / 8:30AM – 8:00PM  
802-488-7777 is First Call a 24/7 mental health crisis number
- that the program members have diverse training in trauma, mental health, substance abuse, housing solutions & hoarding solutions and much more
- work with law enforcement in partnership to respond to individuals with unmet social service needs.
- that anyone can call, not just law enforcement
- that safety is always at the forefront

Discussion included:

- that with the pandemic individuals that have not had mental health issues are having trouble.
- that Kyle said that from a police stance there is not a negative thing to say, he is happy for the service they provide.
- Bard asked if we need to have more community outreach. Kyle said that he would like to see more community outreach and has looked at how the funding matrix works adding that the Howard Center works in tandem with police at times for safety and that they are not a replacement for the police.
- Bard said that since we are in budget discussions this should be added to the discussion. Josh said that Kyle's need is overnight and weekends and that is being worked on adding that because Richmond does this as a cooperative with seven (7) towns having more time for Richmond would mean the Howard Center having to add another person and that would impact all seven (7) towns.
- Gretchen Paulsen said that Kyle would like to have services later and weekends, has anyone asked the other towns about the added service. Brandi Littlefield said they have not, service is based on volume and community services that are available to refer people to.

David thanked Brandi for coming and the work the Howard Center provides.

#### **d) Update from RISE VT**

Justin Graham from Rise VT reported:

- on Rise VT's activities
- that it is a public health initiative for overweight and obesity prevention
- that Rise VT has adopted the CDC strategies for prevention of obesity
- that Rise VT serves populations of about 10,000
- that Rise VT works with schools and communities to prevent obesity

Discussion included:

- that Christine said she remembered when RISE VT was just getting started. She wondered if Justin had any statistics that measure how the program is working. Justin said that students are measured in other communities that have been established longer and there is proof that the program is working.
- that Bard said knowing that the good things we try doing are doing good is important to know
- 

David thanked Justin for coming and presenting to the Selectboard.

\*David switched e) and f) to accommodate the speaker from CCRP

**e) Consideration of approval of health insurance plans for Town staff**

Josh reported:

- that a few options had been looked at and reported on at the last meeting
- that last year there were two options offered for employees to choose from
- that at the last meeting the options discussed included funding health insurance for employees at the platinum level and allow the employee to choose between the platinum plan and a high deductible plan.
- that the board wanted to look at another higher deductible plan and Josh reported what the silver plan looked like

Discussion included:

- Christine asked if Terry (from Hickok and Boardman) was going to sit down with employees to talk about what the choices mean to understand individual needs. Josh said that was the goal and happened last year.

Roger moved to offer 3 healthcare plans from MVP for Town staff in 2021. The health care plans to be offered will be Standard Platinum, Non-Standard Gold 3 High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP), and Non-Standard Reflective Silver 2 HDHP. The Town will fund each plan at the cost of full premiums for the Platinum Plan at the level selected: individual, two person, or family. The Town will pay for the premiums of the Gold and Silver plans, with the difference between Platinum premiums and the Gold or Silver premiums being deposited into an HSA for the employee; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**f) Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission Annual Report**

Charlie Baker reported:

- that he is looking for feedback on the services provided by CCRPC
- that Bard is on the executive committee, that Josh and Ravi are active participants and he thanked them all for the work they do
- that CCRPC offers technical assistance to municipalities

- that the Route 2 repaving is set for 2022 and VTRANS should be in touch with Richmond soon. Josh said he has not heard from them yet. Charlie said he was willing to help facilitate the discussion.

Discussion included:

- that Bard said that pedestrians and bikers could benefit from wider shoulders
- that we need to deal with some issues before they get too far down the road or they will not be able to happen. Charlie said VTRANS has been willing to work with towns, like they did in Williston for their bike lane.

Charlie Baker's report continued:

- that housing vacancy rates are low and there is not a healthy housing market currently
- that affordable housing is an issue
- that racial equity and public engagement is being worked on and been looked at since 2014 adding that the environment is now ready to make progress.

Discussion continued:

- that Christine said his job is hard and that Richmond is working on affordable housing and racial equity. She said she would send him information about the Equity Group.
- that Bard said there are new initiatives at the state level that call out questions about how things will impact people and what will be done to mitigate the impact as decisions are being made.

David thanked Charlie for his time and presentation to the board.

**g) Consideration of approval of request to close Esplanade St. and Pleasant St. on the evening of Oct. 31, 2020**

Josh reported:

- that for a number of years, Pleasant St has been closed for Halloween and that Marshall Paulsen had gotten permission to do so. Now Stephani Marshall has asked that Esplanade be closed adding that Kyle let Josh know that the Selectboard needed to approve the temporary closing of roads.
- that both street residents have COVID precautions in place

Discussion:

- that Marshall Paulsen said he met with Chuck Senate who is working on the Halloween event at the green and that he too is looking to provide options for families. He would like to see some coordinated effort to let families know on FPF
- that Stefani Hartsfield said that these things happen organically and that we do not want to necessarily advertise but to let people know we are taking precautions.
- that Josh said in checking with fire, rescue, water & sewer there were no concerns about the streets being closed.
- that Roger asked if everyone was going to be wearing masks. Stefani and the Paulsen's said that it is a requirement from the governor that everyone wear masks.
- that Bard thought the school might be a way to get the information out.
- that Roger said we should acknowledge that this could be a spreading event and just a few months ago we were working hard at having masks worn to prevent spread.

- that Marshall suggested that the groups get together and put a common blurb out about Halloween goings on. Stefani agreed.
- that Christine thanked them for their efforts to keep everyone safe and still provide a good time for the children.
- that Christine thought that having a way for a household to opt out for whatever reason would be important. Bard said, lights out means no trick or treating at that house.

Christine moved to close Esplanade and Pleasant Streets on October 31, 2020 from 4-9; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

#### **h) Review of proposed agreement for art curation at the Town Center**

Bard reported:

- that it should have start and end dates
- that all the SB members should sign it

Discussion included:

- that Kathy asked if under Criteria “may” meant the curators could change or omit the questions as they wanted. Bard replied that “may” should be changed to “will” or “shall” to keep the criteria content.
- that Roger said he was not comfortable with the fact that what is up there now for paintings some feel are political and we are saying nothing political. Roger wanted to know who decides what is or isn’t political or religious. Bard replied that the outside of the building is controlled by the Selectboard so it is within the Selectboards authority to delegate it’s authority, there could be something up at the windows or nothing at all adding that Radiate is willing to be the curator.
- Roger asked Bard if the art currently up is considered political saying that one persons a-political statement is someone else’s political statement. Roger said he is worried that having one group being able to determine this could cause the stifling of someone else, the very thing that the current paintings fight against.
- that Christine said opinions have been very varied and determining some more specific guidance might be needed adding we have to put forward something that would be a trial saying she thought this tried to accomplish that. Christine asked if there was an appeals process if someone does not like the decision. Bard asked if the process should be within the board or outside of it.
- that Bard added that there should be a termination clause, with a certain number of days for notice.
- that Kathy asked about the current artwork and how long it could remain once the agreement is in place. Bard said that the paintings could be retroactive to when they were installed.
- that the lawyer will look it over
- that Roger is concerned about free speech on town property.
- that Christine said using the term “curator committee” vs “Radiate Art” should be consistent throughout the document.
- that Christine asked if Radiate would be supporting an individual that wants to do a pro-life or anti-abortion if content is ok but the imagery isn’t. Christine asked what role Radiate is playing. Rebecca Rouiller responded that it would be a process that included an online form. She said they are willing to help people if it is the plan that is selected. She said that the committee would take the submission to it’s logical

conclusion. Christine asked if the paintings would be themed or would there be an array of multiple issues. Rebecca said she thinks it would be a single proposal.

- that Roger said these are not easy issues so after the lawyer looks at the agreement we should come back and talk about it again.
- that Darcie Rankin said the idea of marginalizing a group is not the intent or spirit of the group, that it is the opposite of that. Roger replied that he thinks that a variety of viewpoints is important and that he appreciates that they are willing to take this on. That hard discussions are what brings change.
- Bard suggested having a link to the Radiate bylaws for people to look at would be helpful. Then have the attorney review and be ready for a vote.

Josh took notes to provide to the attorney for updates to the agreement.

**i) Review of proposed rental rates for potential tenants for the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Town Center**

Christine reported:

- that Town Center Committee has been meeting on a few things including the heat at the library.
- that the committee is working on the wording for Town Meeting to change how town center funds are used for residents to vote on.
- that the committee has been looking at code violations and evaluating what the long term plans are for the Town Center and Library buildings should be.
- that those are important discussions because of talking to potential tenants. She believed it would be two (2) years before renovations or decisions would be made leaving how to determine the priority of tenants to be discussed tonight.
- that MMCTV would like to use the front right side of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor about 1007 sq ft. MMU paid \$8.46 per sq ft for the whole space. The PO is paying \$18.73. MMCTV has accepted \$15.30/ sq. ft. for rent and that would include electric, water and sewer, they would pay for phones and internet. Christine said they would like to have some improvement costs be reduced by their rent. Bard said they should have approval from the Selectboard before doing any improvements where rent reduction would be expected.
- Bard asked about a termination clause
- that Kathy asked if Christine knew what MMCTV's current electric usage was. Christine said she will look into what their electric costs are monthly
- that the Community Senior Center and the Historical Society are looking at the three (3) back rooms and would also use the common areas that include the kitchen and bathrooms. This was more difficult to determine rent, she proposed the rent be 0 to show it as an in-kind, services trade off. Christine said that as we look at the value of the organizations could we say, we have no appropriations for them, so we could be recognize the value they provide to the town by providing space for them.

Discussion included:

- that Bard said, this is a two (2) year window with no commitment beyond that. Christine said that is correct, then we decide what happens next. At this point we are trying to identify that there is a good opportunity to recognize that this is a mutual benefit.
- that Bard said rental insurance would need to be a condition of the lease that covers their own property. That the space should be well defined. That we need to

follow our conflicts of interest policy so that members of the committees will not be able to vote on decisions being made.

- that Roger said he is concerned that as organizations move into Town oversight or orbit that the Town takes over more of a role in those organizations thus becoming more of the Town infrastructure. He is in favor of moving forward.
- that Bard asked if parking would be specified or not addressed. He added that there should be language about common areas.
- that David said trash collection should be included in the lease language.
- that Karen Yaggy thanked everyone.

David asked if there is general agreement to proceed? Christine said to clarify she would be adding the items from our discussion to drafting an agreement and continue discussions with the organizations.

**j) Consideration of a request by the Cross Vermont Trail Association, supported by the Richmond Conservation Commission, to increase by \$936 the use of Conservation Funds to repair damage to the class 4 section of Johnnie Brook Rd.**

David reported:

- that the expenses ran over the \$8400 originally requested.

Bard moved to approve the request for the additional \$936 for the repair of Johnnie Brook Rd; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**k) Hearing on amendments to Richmond Zoning Regulations regarding requirements for property owners claiming exemption under 24 VSA 4413**

Bard moved to open the hearing on amendments to the Richmond Zoning Regulations Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Ravi reported:

- that this was previously reported
- that this is a clarification of the process

Bard moved to exit the public meeting; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Bard moved to adopt the amendments as presented; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**l) Consideration of approving participation in the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program**

Josh reported:

- that this is related to the permit for stormwater mitigation.
- that this is work we are required to do.

Bard moved to approve the grant application as outlined in the letter of intent, Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**m) Update on Police Chief hiring process**

Josh reported:

- that the work of narrowing the candidates down is still being done.

**n) Update on special meetings of the Selectboard to focus on the FY22 Budget**

David reminded everyone that there is a special budget meeting tomorrow at 7 and also on Monday Nov. 9, 2020.

-

**o) Richmond Rescue Quarterly Update**

Josh reported:

- that he has received the Richmond Rescue update and it showed that they had received money from a grant intended to help emergency work.

**p) Update on Dugway Rd. project**

Josh reported:

- that the easement is being finalized
- that the process is long and arduous

**III. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders**

**Minutes:**

Bard moved to approve the Minutes of 10/5/2020, Christine seconded. Roll Call Vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

**Invoices and warrants:**

Roger moved to approve warrants as presented, Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Josh will send the warrant out for signatures using DocuSign.

**Purchase Orders:**

**IV. Discuss Items for Next Agenda**

update police chief  
budget work  
Radiate Agreement  
Town Rent

**V. Executive Session if necessary- Real Estate and HR**

Bard moved to find that premature general public knowledge about a real estate negotiation and about a personnel issue would clearly place the Town at a substantial disadvantage; Roger seconded. Roll Call Vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Bard moved to enter into executive session to discuss a real estate negotiation under the provisions of 1 VSA 313(a)(2) and to discuss a personnel issue under the provisions of 1 VSA 313(a)(3) of the Vermont State Statutes and to invite the Town Manager, Josh Arneson, into the executive session; Roger seconded. Roll Call Vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

The Selectboard and Josh Arneson moved into Executive Session at 10:35PM

Roger moved to exit executive session; Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Roger, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

## **VI. Adjourn**

Bard moved to adjourn; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Christine, Bard, Roger, and David voted affirmatively. The meeting ended at 11:39PM.