

Richmond Selectboard Minutes
9/8/2020

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

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager;
Kyle Kapitansky, acting Police Chief; Connie Bona, Finance; Ravi Venkataraman,
Planner; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent; the meeting was recorded
for MMCTV Channel 15,

Also present: Greg Elias, Jay Furr, Mary Houle, Linda Parent, Martha Nye, Kathleen Templin,
Jeff Forward, Wright Preston, John Johnston, Sue Roberge, Stefani Hartsfield, Sau , Ann
Naumann, Rebecca Rouiller

Called to Order: 7:02 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 making an appointment to the Andrews Community Forest Committee

David explained the Andrews Forest Committee currently has one vacant seat.

Wright Preston explained that the Andrew's Community Forest Committee met and recommends Jesse Cray for the appointment.

Bard moved to appoint Jesse Cray. Christine Seconded. Roll Call Vote Christine aye, Bard aye, David aye. Motion passed.

b) Consideration of adding allowances for fee waivers in the Fee Schedule

Ravi said that the Selectboard has the authority to waive zoning fees. Ravi also noted that the public should be informed of this process by adding language to the Fee Schedule. This is language that is similar to language seen in other towns with a similar process to waive fees.

There was discussion to clarify that this language only relates to development permits. Also noted that there is no appeal of the Selectboard's decision on a fee waiver.

Christine moved to amend the Town of Richmond Development Permit Fees schedule to

include the language relating to fee waivers. Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote Christine aye, Roger aye, Bard aye, David aye. Motion passed.

c) Consideration of a request to waive permit fees

Josh explained that this request comes from Mary Houle. Permit 17-033 was originally issued in 2017 and at the time the Selectboard waived fees associated with the permit because of the loss of property suffered by Mary due to Tropical Storm Irene. This permit is now in the process of being closed out but the Acting Zoning Administrator found that three decks had been built that were not included on the original permit. An after the fact permit needs to be issued for a total fee of \$90. Mary is requesting that the Selectboard waive this fee as this is tied to a permit in which fees were initially waived.

Roger moved to waive the \$90 permit fee for permit #20-123. Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote Christine aye, Bard aye, Roger aye, David aye. Motion carried.

d) Discussion of summary of transportation topics

Josh explained that there have been a number of transportation related topics discussed at the Selectboard over the past several months. The Selectboard had tried to deal with each one as they came up. The summary is an attempt to collect all transportation related topics in one place, including the work that that Transportation Committee is currently involved with. The goal is to develop a plan to move forward with each topic on the list. This is also intended to be a living document and can be added to as other topics develop.

Roger would like to include sidewalks to the documents. He has also been looking into crash data to try to better rank the speed study candidates. Hinesburg, Huntington and Kenyon Rd. have had the most accidents in the past. Wes White, Cochran and East Hill Rd. are the next three highest for crashes. He recommends we move forward with the top three in crashes for speed studies. In terms of sidewalks he noted that Jericho has a continual process to apply for grants for sidewalks. Thinks we need to look at construction companies and get a system set up where we always have a sidewalk project in the pipeline.

Christine wanted to include bike paths and asked if there has been discussion of a bike/ped path from the park and ride to the village.

Roger noted that this has been an ongoing discussion. John Kaplan from the State felt this is not a great candidate for grant funding because it is not as easy to connect and there is not confidence that it will be used enough to justify the grant money. Roger noted there is more of a shoulder on Rt. 2 than on other roads in Town.

Bard noted we have been talking about this project for decades and a complicating factor is that this is a State highway and it has not been built to state specifications to have four foot shoulders. The State sees many complications to building the path including wetlands and existing natural and manmade features.

Jon Kart, noted there have been many studies. There was a 2014 study on this. The second part is to connect the park and ride to the mobile home park. He noted that the department

that John Kaplan works in is not sufficiently funded to fund this type of a project. But, VTRANS may have funds when they do the reclamation work on Rt. 2 as Bolton and Waterbury were able to get wider shoulders with this work. We will need to lobby for this.

Bard agreed we need to be focused and persistent.

Roger wants to also look at other places in town where we need sidewalks. He also does not know how many people would use a path from the village to the park and ride. The school to Southview may be a sidewalk that would be better utilized.

Bard noted that his point is that the State did not build Rt. 2 to their own specifications and the State needs to be asked to meet their own specifications.

David noted that the State will be rebuilding Rt. 2 but there are many pinch points that limit the width of the road. We need to lobby to get our needs addressed.

Jon Kart supports improving sidewalks in many places. There are multiple grants and we need to pick the right grant for the right project. The ask on Rt. 2 is to ask VTRANS for money in their own budget for this project. John Kaplan's grant may be a better fit for another sidewalk in Richmond. Suggests that all projects we would like to have done are lined up and ready to go for grants.

Bard stated that CCRPC can aid in prioritizing projects and matching them with appropriate grants. Bard wants to invite VTRANS to a public meeting to discuss Rt. 2 project.

Christine asked if there are things the Transportation Committee is considering that are not on this list?

Jon Kart stated the Rt. 2 path needs to be included, the work on paths on the north side of Town and Bridge St. plan. These three are items that the Transportation Committee are currently working on.

e) Discussion of options for Library HVAC System and basement moisture mitigation

Josh explained that at the last meeting the Selectboard asked consultant JJ Johnston to explore heating options for the Library in the range of \$50,000. JJ has come back with a heating project that would cost just under \$50,000 and also a moisture mitigation project that would cost about \$11,000.

The Town could move forward with both of these projects and then complete the remaining portions of the HVAC project once funding is secured. Or the Town could wait on these projects and only do them if the heating system fails. Then move forward with the full HVAC and moisture mitigation project once funding has been secured. The second option is more cost effective, as efficiencies can be found by doing the project at one time, but does risk the building being without heat for some time should the system fail.

For funding on the entire project, the Selectboard could chose to move forward with a special meeting in November to ask the voters to borrow the necessary money for the entire project.

However, Town Clerk Linda Parent has expressed concern that the general election will be confusing with mail in voting due to COVID. Adding this in would make matters even more confusing.

The other option is to wait for a vote on funding until Town Meeting in March.

Christine stated the Town Center and Library Committee is challenged with looking at what the entire cost of renovations of the Library and the Town Center building will be. She does not want to put us in a position of asking for funding one project at a time. She would like to go to the voters with a more complete picture of the total cost of renovating both projects. Waiting until March may be the best decision. The Committee feels that they would like to stabilize the heating in the library to ensure that it lasts through March. Then hold a vote on the total cost to renovate both buildings in March.

Bard concurs that this makes sense and proposes separate articles one for the Library and one for the Town Center.

JJ Johnston explained that the moisture mitigation piece is a smaller part of the full moisture mitigation job and includes the vapor barrier, sump pump, and sump pump alarm. This is part of the larger project.

Christine noted that the moisture mitigation was put in place because the furnace will be located in the basement so it would be good to address at the same time the furnace is being installed.

Jeff Forward supports moving forward with the heating and moisture projects. He is concerned we may not have a plan for both buildings in time for a March vote. Would want to ask how we consider the campus of buildings, are they one campus or two buildings? Wants to know if we can use the Town Center money for an emergency repair as he considers both the heating and moisture mitigation emergencies.

Roger asked if there was water coming through the walls?

JJ said there is evidence of water coming through the walls.

Roger asked if we need to excavate and put drainage around the building?

JJ stated there would be a drainage system outside and vapor barrier inside.

Connie Bona stated we also need to vote on the Town Center Reserve Fund in March to get approval from the voters. If we save the money in this account right now it will help offset the larger cost for the entire renovation.

Christine noted the Committee needs to come up with a full plan for both buildings. For tonight's discussion it is about making a decision on using the \$50,000 voted on at the last meeting to pay for the heating component. We do not have a source of funds for the \$11,000 for the moisture mitigation project.

Connie stated we are running low on unassigned funds and she is concerned about future projects such as FEMA projects that will deplete these funds.

Christine is proposing that we spend the \$50,000 on only the heating project.

JJ Johnstone clarified that this would be a direct contract with New England Air and BreadLoaf would not be fully managing the project.

Christine noted the Committee is aware of this but was comfortable that the project could be managed by both Josh and members of the Committee.

Connie asked if the change in management of the project necessitates a need to go back out to RFP since this is now only part of the entire project that was bid.

Bard suggested that we look at the bid documents to see if we have any leeway to carve out just the heating portion of the project.

Bard moved to approve the heating project contingent on ensuring we are in compliance with procurement policy and the bid document to contract for only a portion of the project that was initially bid. Christine seconded. Roll Call Vote Christine aye, Bard aye, Roger aye, David aye. Motion passes.

f) Update on Police staffing and expenses

Josh updated that there are three items to discuss: the School Resource Officer, staffing shortage from February to December 2021, and the increased cost of dispatch.

MMUUSD is currently discussing the School Resource Officer. They are taking a closer look at the position in light of calls for police reform since the George Floyd killing in May. The school may decide to keep the SRO position unchanged, eliminate it entirely, or change the model to one where the SRO spends less time in the school. This could lead to an elimination or reduction of the \$39,800 budgeted to be received from the school for this officer. This money went toward offsetting the wages for a fourth officer in the Richmond PD. If this funding is eliminated or reduced the Town will have to decide if we want to hire a fourth officer or limit to only three officers.

Josh updated that the newest Richmond PD officer is also in the Army Reserves. He has been called for deployment which is scheduled to run from February through December of 2021. This further complicates our staffing for these months. Figuring out a schedule for these months will be one of the first duties of the new Chief, but we most likely will be more reliant on the Vermont State Police for coverage during this time.

Josh updated that the Town had been receiving dispatch services for free from the Vermont State Police, along with over 100 other agencies. The Police will now begin charging for these services. They looked at total calls that each agency generates and divided the total cost of dispatch services between all calls received to determine an average cost per call. Richmond is slated to be charged \$63,000.61 per year. This will be a flat fee and not be based on a per call basis. The fee will be implemented over four years, at 25% per year. Richmond will be receiving a bill of \$15,750 in FY22 for dispatch services. I will call around to see what other options we have but this breaks down to about \$13.35 per call. It is doubtful that the Town can get a better price in FY22. This will be an ongoing discussion and exploration of options in the coming years.

Bard noted that we should look at data regarding calls that we respond to on the highway. We end up absorbing costs for our Town and the highway. Feels it is odd that the VSP are raising the cost of dispatch as we support VSP on the highway. We may need to work with our legislators to see if there is a legislative solution to the costs.

Christine ask if dispatch services can be explained better?

Kyle Kapitanski stated currently VSP provides all dispatch which includes 911 calls, dispatching Richmond PD to calls, traffic calls, restraining orders, arrest warrants, etc. They are our source of communication for everything we do.

Christine asked if we went to another dispatch service would we get the service that Richmond PD needs?

Kyle Kapitanski, this would be factored in to any decision to move to a different dispatch option.

Christine wants to ensure that if we make a change then we also get the service that we need.

Roger wanted to know if we could bill the State Police for coverage on the Highway.

Kyle noted that we probably could but we also rely on the State Police for assistance in other areas.

Bard noted that VSP is moving from funding dispatch with statewide taxes to a direct billing system.

g) Update on Police Chief hiring process

Josh explained that the hiring committee decided to offer interviews to five of the 17 applicants. Two of the applicants declined interviews. We will be interviewing three applicants this week. Two will be invited for a second interview and public forum which will be scheduled for later in September.

h) Discussion of process for adoption of police department policies

Josh explained that Acting Chief Kyle Kapitanski has been approach by some residents who are asking for changes to the Fair and Impartial Policing Policy for the department. This is on the agenda tonight to discuss the process for making a change to a police policy, not to debate the merits of the proposed new policy. There will be time at a future Selectboard meeting for that discussion.

The Police Chief is the person with the authority to adopt a Fair and Impartial Police Policy. The Selectboard could vote to ask the Chief to adopt a new policy and the Chief would take that vote under advisement when reviewing the policy.

I suggest that the Selectboard nominate two members to review a proposed policy with Acting Chief Kapitanski and discuss the proposed changes with the residents asking for the new policy. Then a policy that has been reviewed by two members of the Selectboard may be brought forward for discussion and consideration by the entire Board.

Bard noted he wanted to have this on the agenda as an education piece so the public understands the process by which policies are adopted.

Roger would like to aid in a discussion about a Fair and Impartial Policing Policy. He also asked if there should be a citizen advisory committee.

Kyle Kapitanski noted there is a new executive order signed by the Governor which will affect police statewide and this may include a citizen advisory committee so we may want to hold off on forming a committee until there is more guidance from the Governor. This was made public in the last 48 hours.

Ann Naumann stated she brought this policy forward to Kyle Kapitanski and would like to form a working group to work on the policy.

Bard, should we start now or wait for a new Chief?

Christine stated that she thinks we should start now to frame the discussion and understand the request for changes to the policy. She wants to be sure it achieves its intended outcome. But, she does not have time to commit to working on this herself. Katie may be interested in assisting but she is not at this meeting this evening so we cannot speak for her.

Bard suggested moving forward with Kyle, Josh, and Roger. He noted we can ask for more SB involvement if necessary.

There was discussion on difference between ordinance and policy.

Ann Naumann's concern is that the police chief can change a policy at any time how do we ensure that it goes forward?

Bard advised that the smaller breakout group should discuss this question.

i) Discussion of health insurance options for Town staff

Josh updated that he and Finance Director Connie Bona spoke with Teri Martineau of Hickok and Boardman and Kelley Avery of VLCT in regards to health insurance. The main question was what they are seeing other employers do for employee contributions to plan. They are not seeing any one trend but did note that plans where the employer pays 100% of the premium are on the decline. There are options to transition to having the employee pay a portion of the premiums and Hickok and Boardman and VLCT could assist in this process. Rates for each plan are expected to be announced on September 16.

Bard inquired about next steps to move forward.

Josh stated we could talk about it once rates are announced which is expected to be prior to the next SB meeting.

j) Update on agreement regarding curation of artwork on town property

Bard stated that he and Katie met with Rebecca from Radiate and discussed what principals are important to be included in a written agreement for art space that is rotating. Rebecca will continue working on an agreement and more details will be available at a future meeting.

k) Consideration of proposal from Radiate Art Space regarding window replacement

Josh updated that this agenda item is a bit ahead of where the conversation is at this point. Rebecca is only saying that Radiate would like to have functional windows again at some point and would be willing to raise the money for the windows. If they go with this option they would come back to the Selectboard and have a more in depth discussion with the Selectboard to ensure that the Board would support this as part of their lease.

Bard noted that Rebecca is interested in replacing windows sooner than the Town would plan on replacement windows. They want more natural light in the space.

Christine wants to be sure that we do not make a material change to the Town Center building and risk future uses, such as tenants in the basement, by replacing windows.

Connie asked if the Art Space would propose to manage the project themselves or if they would donate to the Town and the Town would use the money to replace the windows.

Bard envisions this as an agreement where the Town would approve the work for a professional installer.

Josh stated that he thought those details could be worked out at a later date once the funding is secured.

l) Follow up on inventory of Town property requiring landscaping

Josh explained that this is a jumping off point to look at land the Town owns with the goal of developing a plan for ongoing maintenance as well as plans for trees and landscaping.

m) Consideration of participating in the Municipal Roads Grant in Aid Equipment Purchase Program

Josh explained that the grant will allow the Town to purchase a hay bale shredder for \$1600. This machine retails for around \$8,000.

Discussion was had about the purchase and what line item it will come out of. Josh stated it will come out of the Small Equipment Purchase line in the Highway budget.

Bard moved to approve the grant application. Christine Seconded. Roll Call Vote, Roger aye, Christine aye, Bard aye, David aye. Motion passed.

n) Consideration of entering into a contract for town-wide reappraisal

Josh explained that the Town is due for a Town wide reappraisal due to a dropping Common Level of Appraisal which measures how the appraised values of properties compares with recent sales.

The Town went out to bid for appraisal services. The RFP was posted on our website, the State bid website and we contacted seven companies directly. We received two bids.

- NEMRC: \$174,960
- Tyler Technologies: \$265,800

I recommend that the Selectboard proceed with making a motion to hire NEMRC to conduct the Town-Wide reappraisal. We currently work with NEMRC for Assessor Services and find them to be very professional.

There is currently \$141,231 in the reappraisal Reserve Fund. Another \$14,500 is budgeted to go into the fund in FY21 bringing the total to \$155,731. This will leave us with a balance of \$19,229 to cover for the reappraisal. Part of that will be covered by the annual Act. 60 Reappraisal Grant which we receive each year.

The reappraisal will begin in July of 2021 and will be completed by June of 2023. The billing will occur for 24 months starting on July 2021 at a rate of \$7,290.

Bard said that it looks like there will not be any affect on taxes if the Act 60 grant continues to be provided to the Town at the current level.

Roger, asked if there is a better way to do appraisals? He has heard of a more annual process and wonders if this is something we could explore and if it would be less expensive.

Josh stated that we could look into that for future years.

Roger moved to accept NEMRC for a Town-Wide reappraisal at a cost of \$174,960. Bard seconded. Christine aye, Roger aye, Bard aye, David aye. Motion passes.

o) Update on Bridge St. infrastructure project

Josh stated that substantial completion of the project is complete as the water and storm water lines are installed and functional. Final paving has been delayed a couple of times but should occur the week of Sept. 8 – 11.

p) Update on Dugway Rd. project

Josh explained that we are still waiting on the completion of the archeology study and finalizing of a couple of easements. Once this paperwork is completed we will begin to prepare the project for bid. Construction will not occur until the Spring of 2021.

Bard asked on current trends of construction bids, are they up or down?

Discussion of costs increasing.

Minutes:

Christine moved to approve the Minutes of 8/17/20, Roger seconded. Roll Call Vote: Roger aye, Christine aye, Bard abstained, David aye. Motion passed.

Invoices and warrants:

Bard moved to approve PO# 3767 to Reynolds and Sons Inc. in the amount of \$15,428.76, Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Christine aye, Roger aye, Bard aye, David aye. Motion passed.

Bard moved to approve PO# 3964 to Union Bank in the amount of \$25,000, Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Roger aye, Christine aye, Bard aye, David aye. Motion passed.

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

Josh will send the warrant out for signatures using DocuSign.

IV. Discuss Items for Next Agenda

Health Insurance

Police Chief Hiring

Preliminary review of lease agreement for MMCTV

Art curation agreement

DRB Advertising schedule

V. Executive Session if necessary- none

VI. Adjourn

Bard moved to adjourn; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Christine aye, Roger aye, Bard aye, David aye. Motion passed

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 PM