

Water Commission Minutes  
1-6-2020

Called to Order: 5:30 PM

Members Present: Fran Huntoon, David Sander, Christy Witters, Bard Hill, Don Morin

Absent:

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Others Present: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kendall Chamberlin, W & Sewer Superintendent; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15; others present: Gary Bressor,

**1. Welcome** by Bard. No comments.

**2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda.**

Members of the public requested items A & E be heard earlier in the agenda. It was decided to move E to A:1 – no objections, and updates on the Bridge St. construction to A:2 – no objections

**3. Other Business**

a. Discussion on water and sewer infrastructure in the Peaceable Kingdom development becoming public

Josh provided information that if the Peaceable Kingdom project is brought up to Town specifications that the Commission could take it over after 1 year. Gary is looking for a commitment from the Town that if he builds to Town specification that the Town will take over the lines. Kendall stated that from the beginning of this project Gary has stated that he wanted the project to be public. At the time there was no policy pertaining to the size of the lines so the Town would now need to give a variance to allow for the 6” and 4” lines that now are required to be 8” & 6”. Gary stated that the 4” line services 3 homes and is not the main, water only. Sewer is 8”.

After discussion the Board decided to grant contingent approval if the project is built as designed. Kendall will inspect and pressure test the line.

Christy motioned to provisionally accept the project as designed, David seconded. All were in favor.

b. Discussion of the authority of the Water and Sewer Superintendent with regards to mandating changes to privately owned lines

Josh reported that this issue came up when there was a water leak on private property. Kendall ordered them to update their line to copper because of a health risk. The property owner questioned Kendall’s authority to order the update. VLCT said we need an ordinance that authorizes the mandate. Aaron is working on getting an ordinance together. Other towns are having the same issue. Kendall reported that the state law is very vague and we have been operating under public health authority.

After discussion the Board decided that there needs to be clear legal authority which necessitates an update to the ordinance from 1961 and possibly an interim policy to address private connections failing while doing the ordinance re-write. Josh will check to see if we can do an interim policy and provide an update at the next meeting.

c. Discussion on salary survey for Water and Sewer Superintendent position

Josh reported that a salary survey has been started for some of the department heads and asked the Board if they would like Kendall to be included. The survey will help determine how the employees of Richmond compare to other towns. The Board thought it was a good idea. Fran will work in the process with Josh, Kathy and Roger Brown the Selectboard designee.

d. Review of information to include in the Town Report

All the information is clearly seen on the spreadsheets now. The Board had no changes or questions.

e. Status report on sewer service for 91 Willis Farm Rd.

Kendall reported that the Town will not be taking over the school line since it cannot be verified as updated from the original installation. It has been proposed that a new line that would run parallel to the one for 91 Willis Farm Rd be installed so that should the school line fail in the future it could be hooked into. The school is looking for a letter from the Board prior to providing the right of way for the project.

After discussion the Board granted verbal approval and Josh will have an agreement ready for the Selectboard's approval at the next meeting.

f. Review and discussion of Delinquent Account Policy

The Board discussed that there are reasons to make exceptions to shutting off an account and there should an ability to make a judgement call. It was agreed to update the Delinquent Account Policy. David moved to accept wording, Christy seconded. All agreed. The modified policy will be available for the next meeting.

g. Update on Bridge St. waterline project

Josh reported there has been a good response from contractors interested in the project and we are still working with the Bressor's for temporary easements for machinery and to move fence.

The discussion included the possibility of a Public information officer if funding is available. Josh is the contact person otherwise. Kendall reported GMP is going to be replacing some utility poles and possibly burying the power lines at the same time the construction is taking place. The underground lines would potentially run from the intersection to the bridge. The Board felt this could be an opportunity and with timing short we should find out details for hooking customers up. There will be an update at the next meeting. .

h. Follow up on warrant approval process

Josh reported that the auditors thought it would be ok for the Town Mgr. to sign that the warrant has been reviewed but that it would not be considered an approval of the warrant. There was no problem with having a signature card for on file for any persons authorizing invoices.

The Water and Sewer Commission would like the all Boards to follow the same policy, Josh will add it to the next Selectboard meeting.

i. Update on posting policies and ordinances online

There was a discussion around website accessibility compliance. This will be an ongoing topic. Currently there is an ordinance and policy review and compilation project that should be completed in the next few months.

j. Superintendent's Report

Kendall reported GMP is replacing a pole in the park and relocating a line at the facility this week.

He reported that there is an asset management loan forgiveness program for the first 5 applications submitted that he would like to use to augment the GPS systems. David moved to apply for the loan, Christy seconded. All agreed.

Kendall reported that the Legislature is looking at managing the discharge of waste water system and he will keep the Commission updated as information is available.

Kendall added that the Montpelier wastewater facility is back open so things are normalizing but still busy.

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

- a. David moved to approve the Minutes of 12/16/19 as amended, Fran seconded. All were in favor.

**5. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn**

Fran moved to adjourn, David seconded. All were in favor, the meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM. The next meeting will take place at 6PM.