

Richmond Water Commission Minutes
8/3/2020

Called to Order: 6:01 PM

Present by Zoom: Fran Huntoon, David Sander, Bard Hill, Katie Mather, Don Marin
Absent: none

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kendall Chamberlin, Water & Sewer; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; and the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15

1. Welcome by Bard. No comments.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda.

Don asked about an update on the water tower. Bard asked if Kendall would add it to the superintendent's report, Kendall agreed.

3. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Review of letter to Secretary of State regarding Office of Professional Regulation

Discussion included:

- that Bard said sending a letter was discussed at the last meeting. Kendall remarked that he and his crew have to be licensed by the Office of Professional Regulation and that Aaron has been trying to register for his exam for months and that there are multiple other problems that need to be addressed. He said he hopes that a letter from the Selectboard would get things straightened out.
- that the letter addressed issues such as, difficulties with scheduling, not getting return calls when messages are left and online challenges with the portal
- that Bard asked if licenses and renewals have an impact on income? Kendall yes. Bard suggested an edit to the letter be made to reflect the economic impact of the issues.
- After review and update the letter was approved.

David moved to approve the letter as amended; Fran seconded. Roll call vote: Fran, Bard, Katie, Don, David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

b. Update on Bridge St. Infrastructure Project

Josh reported:

- that the majority of the initial project is completed
- that the water line on either end of the bridge is functional
- that the punch list of items being addressed
- that work has begun on the water line extension and will take 3 weeks to completion with one-way traffic during that time
- that the historical signoff has been received
- that sidewalks are scheduled to be replaced next year with paving curb to curb done then. He added that the paving patch work was planned for this project

Discussion included:

- that Bard asked about mitigating damage from potential rainfall expected this week. Josh replied that if rain is heavy the dirt areas may need to be fixed
- that Kendall reminded everyone that Pete should be reminded not to change anything related to the project until the warranty period has expired. Bard agreed saying that if we start moving things around then the warranty would be voided
- that Don asked if when the punch list was drawn up did Kendall and Josh do the walk around with the engineer? Kendall replied that the walk around was to review road surface work, so it was Josh and Pete that did the walk around. Don said he would like all three to do it.
- that Don asked if by patch paving, did we save money? Josh replied yes, knowing we were going to do paving in a year.
- that Josh added that Kendall has had a crew member onsite throughout the project and even if he did not do the walk through, since it was above ground, he has overseen the part of the project done underground.

c. Superintendent's Report

Kendall reported:

- that he would like to hear Don's thoughts on the water tank.
- Don said he is concerned that water coming through a concrete tank, especially when the rebar is not coated, is going to be a problem and that the Town will have a fair amount of expenditure to fix the leaks.
- that Bard replied that there is a history to the tank leaks with Kendall adding that the tank passed the leak test passed but you could see the leaks. He said that the warranty was extended, and the contractor returned several times and repaired leaks.
- that Kendall said the engineer did not find anything of significance.
- that Don is still concerned that the concrete will spall with thaw and freeze cycles.
- that Bard said, we have heard from the experts on what we need to do. Asking Don, are you saying there is a level of risk and we should do something about it? Don replied we should hire an expert on water tanks and have them do a report. He said he feels the Town is going to have extensive repairs to pay for and the water users should not have to pay for it alone.
- that Bard responded that the engineer gave us a report, are you suggesting a second engineers report? Don said he wanted an unbiased opinion on longevity. adding we did not build or design the tank and should not have to pay to repair it. Bard asked Don, should we be engaging an independent engineer? Don was in favor of that adding the \$1.5 million dollar tank is leaking, something should be done.

Don moved to get estimates to obtain an independent opinion from an expert that is familiar with water tanks on the water tank for repairs or design flaws; Katie seconded.

Discussion on motion:

- Fran asked Don where in the report it was suggested there is a problem. Don responded anytime there is water going through concrete it freezes thaws and the concrete spalls then the reinforcing steel will rust and expand causing more leakage.
- Bard read from the report "... the leaks/ weeps are not imperative but unsightly".

- Josh said the report was not done by Green Mountain Engineering. Kendall added that Carl is the expert. Kendall did not feel that another assessment was necessary. Bard asked Don, before we call the vote, maybe have you could have a conversation with the engineer about his findings. Don said he did not think it would change his opinion. Bard responded what you are asking for is exacting what we are reading here and to redo something we have done suggests there is something wrong with the work the engineer did. Don then agreed that he would call Mr. Childs. The motion was tabled.

Kendall continued with the Superintendent's Report:

- saying more customer service has been taking place with meter replacements
- septage meeting with the State because of bottlenecks not being able to get septage hauled out.

Discussion included:

- that Bard said the state oversees our treatment plant but have no ability to direct how we operate. Kendall replied that they are coming from the point of view of how they can help. Bard said they should invite commission members to the meeting.
- Kendall said septage haulers are complaining about not being able to unload whenever they want. Bard said there is a line between local town governess and state governess. Please let them know the commission finds themselves in an unusual position.
- Katie asked Kendal what the complaint is that haulers are making? Kendall replied that haulers are not able to dump whenever they want because the Town has problems getting the septage trailer picked up. When that happens, he said the volume backs up and it can take days to catch up. He said that Montpelier, Richmond, and Shelburne are the only plants accepting septage from haulers. Bard asked if haulers could go out of state? Kendall said he did not know. Kendall felt that the problem is due to the largest receiver being shut down by the state and there is not another place to go. Josh asked if the state could put pressure on Casella's to get us empty faster? Bard suggested that there is a supply demand curve, maybe prices should be raised, adding it is something to contemplate. Kendall said he hopes to have the state help with Casella's. Bard said he would be interested in an economist's perspective. Kendall said a new plant would be north of a million dollars and it would take 2 years to build.
- that Bard said we have not wanted septage to underwrite the plant so if haulers went away it would not matter. He said he will be interested to hear what comes of the meeting.

Kendall continued with the Superintendent's Report:

- saying training has kicked up again for employees
- that he and the crew have been prepping for the storm coming in

4. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Order

Minutes:

David moved to approve the Minutes of 7/20/2020; Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Katie, David, and Fran voted affirmatively. Don abstained. Motion passed.

Warrants:

David moved to approve the electronic warrant as presented, Fran seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Fran, David, Don, and Bard voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

In response to a question related to when a purchase order was approved Josh said he will make certain that the approval date appears on Purchase Orders in the future.

5. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn

follow up on the water tank

Bridge Street update

update on the septage conversation with state

6. Adjourn

David moved to adjourn; Fran seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Fran, Bard, Don, and David voted affirmatively. The meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.