

**R I C H M O N D S E L E C T B O A R D
R E G U L A R M E E T I N G
J a n u a r y 6 , 2 0 1 4 M I N U T E S**

Members Present: June Heston, Chair; Amy Lord, Vice Chair; Chris Granda; Ashley Lucht; Taylor Yeates

Absent: None

Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Bruce and Cara LaBounty; Mary Houle; Wright Preston; Marshall Paulsen; Fran Thomas; Brad Elliott; Mark Fausel; Peter Gosselin, Highway Foreman; Troy Liberty, Highway Department; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

June Heston called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Special Meeting to Decide Method of Vote

The first part of the Selectboard meeting was a special meeting of the voters to determine the method of voting for the Listers article which was approved by the Selectboard on November 18th.

Mr. Granda offered a motion to open the Special Meeting and was seconded by Ms. Lucht. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Manager explained that this was a special meeting of the voters to determine the method of voting the listers article. This meeting was mandatory under state law, and the motion must pass affirmatively in order for the article to be voted by Australian Ballot on Town Meeting day.

Ms. Heston moderated the meeting. Ms. Heston read the question which was to be decided: Shall the voters of Richmond decide the question, " Shall the voters of the Town of Richmond authorize the elimination of the Office of Lister and replace it with a professionally qualified assessor appointed by the Selectboard who shall have the same powers, discharge the same duties, proceed in the discharge thereof in the same manner, and be subject to the same liabilities as are prescribed for listers or the board of listers under the provisions of Title 32?" by Australian Ballot?

Wright Preston offered a motion to approve the question and was seconded by Fran Thomas.

Ms. Heston asked if there was any discussion on the motion.

Wright Preston asked if the Selectboard could vote on this tonight? The Manager said yes, all voters of the town present could vote on this question tonight.

Fran Thomas said that the town did not do a good job in promoting this meeting this evening. She said that it should have been a separate meeting and warned separately, and promoted more. She said that this had nothing to do with the question tonight but this was an important meeting that people needed to be aware of. A posting in the Burlington Free Press was not good enough, and people were not aware of what was happening.

The Manager explained that in early December he published a warning in the Burlington Free Press, on December 6th, and also posted notices on the bulletin board upstairs and downstairs. He said that

1 this had been discussed at more than one Selectboard meeting, however, turnout was light and perhaps
2 not enough people had been aware of this meeting.

3
4 Bruce LaBounty asked how would we get information to the voters. The Manager explained that there
5 would be an informational meeting as part of the Australian Ballot process, however, if that did not
6 pass the town usually held meetings to explain articles the night before Town Meeting.

7
8 There was more discussion on how to raise awareness. Wright Preston asked if we could place the
9 Governance Committee report and the minority opinion on the website. The Manager said they were
10 there, but it was difficult to find them.

11
12 Cara LaBounty said that she understood that a majority of the public felt that it would be Australian
13 Ballot anyway, and she was a little confused that this meeting was necessary. She commended Fran
14 Thomas for saying that this needs to be better communicated. She added that the resources of the
15 town should not be expended by both sides of the issue.

16
17 Mary Houle said that tonight there was the Governance Committee, the Listers, and Mark Fausel and
18 Fran Thomas and not one regular citizen.

19
20 Ms. Heston reminded the audience that the issue tonight was to vote this by Australian Ballot or voice
21 vote.

22
23 Marshall Paulsen said he was a regular citizen not on a board, but asked if the Governance Committee
24 had a recommendation on the method of vote? Ms. Heston replied they did not, just a recommended
25 course of action.

26
27 Ms. Heston asked for additional comment. There being none, Ms. Heston proposed to end comment
28 and vote. Ms. Heston asked all those in favor to say "aye," and those against to say "nay." Ms. Heston
29 declared that the "ayes" had it.

30
31 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to adjourn the special meeting at 7:20 pm and convene the regular
32 Selectboard meeting and was seconded by Ms. Lord and the motion carried 5-0.

33
34 Public Comment

35
36 Chris Granda said that in 2014 there were two Selectboard seats up for election. Petitions were due on
37 January 27th at 5pm. Mr. Granda also said he wanted to follow up on the creamery health issues and
38 asked what can the board do to move forward?

39
40 Wright Preston said that he, as Health Officer, would focus on making sure the building was secure.
41 There was some discussion on what this might entail, in particular fencing the perimeter. Ms. Lucht
42 suggested posting signs. Mr. Granda asked if this was worth an emergency health order and Mr.
43 Preston said it may, if the conditions were of great enough concern.

44
45 Mary Houle said that if people (in general) would read the signs, then people would stay out.

46
47 Linda Parent, Town Clerk, asked Ms. Heston to re-read the language of the listers article. Ms. Heston
48 did, " Shall the voters of the Town of Richmond authorize the elimination of the Office of Lister and
49 replace it with a professionally qualified assessor appointed by the Selectboard who shall have the
50 same powers, discharge the same duties, proceed in the discharge thereof in the same manner, and be

1 subject to the same liabilities as are prescribed for listers or the board of listers under the provisions of
2 Title 32?"

3
4 Approval of Minutes of December 16, 2013

5
6 Mr. Yeates offered a motion to approve the minutes of December 16, 2013 and was seconded by Mr.
7 Granda. After some minor edits were suggested, Mr. Yeates offered a motion to approve the minutes
8 as amended and was seconded by Mr. Granda and the motion carried 5-0.

9
10 Mr. Yeates offered a motion to approve the draft policy on transfers between town bank accounts. Mr.
11 Granda seconded the motion.

12
13 The Manager explained that as a routine order of business, the town sometimes moved money between
14 accounts temporarily. This has been done, in the past, without Selectboard approval. This year the
15 auditors had suggested having a policy for some oversight, in addition to the warrant policy introduced
16 earlier.

17
18 There was some discussion and it was agreed to amend the policy to read, "Selectboard Chair, or Vice
19 Chair if the Chair was unavailable."

20
21 Mr. Yeates offered a motion to adopt the policy as amended and was seconded by Mr. Granda and the
22 motion carried 5-0.

23
24 **2. 2015 Capital Plan - Public Hearing**

25
26 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to open the Public Hearing on the proposed 2015 Capital Plan. Ms. Lord
27 seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

28
29 The Manager explained the projects and amendments that had been made to the Capital Plan since the
30 ongoing budget discussions. Most importantly, the Winooski River Bank erosion control project was
31 pushed to FY0216; the Highway Retreatment, Gravel and Bridge reserve had been adjusted to what
32 was proposed in the budget.

33
34 Mark Fausel, chair of the Planning Commission, said that the Planning Commission had written a
35 memo to the Selectboard. That memo recommended keeping the Winooski River Bank project in the
36 budget, and reducing the bridge and culvert reserve to cover this expense. They also recommended
37 pushing the water storage tank project further out due to high costs.

38
39 Mr. Fausel said that the Winooski River bank erosion was threatening the water house as well and
40 should be a priority. Ms. Lucht disagreed. Ms. Lord asked how did we get this onto the Capital
41 Budget and the Manager explained that two years ago with all of the flooding, it was discernible that
42 the river bank had eroded in several spots, including Volunteers Green and the canoe access on
43 Cochran Road. There was never an engineering study done to determine how fast this was occurring,
44 when we might expect more to occur or even how much more we might be able to lose before
45 significant problems were to occur.

46
47 Bruce LaBounty said that we had a bridge and culvert reserve that had over \$200,000 but no plans to
48 use it. The Manager said true, however, bridges and culverts tended to be very expensive projects and
49 the money would go quickly. Although, no bridges were likely to be replaced without borrowing.
50

1 Mr. Yeates said we don't have a study to say that this project is needed and we don't need to spend
2 money if we can't say how badly this is needed.

3
4 Cara LaBounty asked how the town maintained the riverbank through the village. We paid our town
5 engineer to look at this but why, if we weren't going to do the project? If we can't do what's required
6 to maintain it, then we are in jeopardy of losing it.

7
8 Mark Fausel said he was also concerned about the water system and the impact more debt would have.
9 He asked if the Chlorine Contact Time project could be removed.

10
11 Ms. Lucht explained that the Chlorine Contact Time was an important part of the qualification of the
12 water tank project for priority state loan funding. She said that this was the loan that required bond
13 vote approval, and if it was defeated, then we will have to pay for the upgrades out of capital reserves.

14
15 Mr. Fausel said that those were excellent points, but the Planning Commission wanted the town to pay
16 attention to costs. Ms. Lucht said she felt that the Water and Sewer Commission was in tune to the
17 concerns of the system users.

18
19 There was additional discussion on the paving and gravel cycles and the eight year truck cycles. The
20 proposed budget had removed \$20,000 in increases from the paving budget and \$14,000 in increases
21 from the gravel budget.

22
23 Peter Gosselin, Highway Foreman, said he didn't want to push the truck cycle out further. Trucks with
24 more than eight years required more maintenance and repair than trucks with eight years.

25
26 Ms. Lucht said that she didn't want to try and save a couple of bucks by just getting to a number, if that
27 hurt capital plans. We needed to do what we need to do.

28
29 Mr. Gosselin said that if we level funded the road maintenance also, people could cut at town meeting
30 if that's what they wanted to do. However, he said, he felt people like the maintenance schedules that
31 were put into place.

32
33 Mr. Yeates said he didn't think that \$20,000 on retreatment was based on any real plan, and that it just
34 goes up \$20,000 each year. Mr. Gosselin said this works out to about \$97,000 per mile. Mr. Yeates
35 asked would we be able to hit the mileage on the 12 year plan with more, or less? There was some
36 discussion. Mr. Gosselin requested the Selectboard keep the numbers as shown on the schedule,
37 \$290,000 for retreatment and \$234,000 for gravel.

38
39 Mr. Granda asked if the mower and the Kubota could be used for the same job. Mr. Gosselin said that
40 the Kubota was now a John Deere, but no, the roadside mower was a large piece of machinery and the
41 John Deere was a small tractor that plowed sidewalks in the Winter and mowed fields in the Summer.

42
43 Peter Gosselin said he would rather see the Bridge and Culvert reserve be lowered, and road plan
44 funding restored. There was some discussion about this.

45
46 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to decrease the Bridge and Culvert Reserve by \$35,000 to \$2,000; increase
47 the gravel line by \$14,000 and increase retreatment by \$20,000. Ms. Lord seconded the motion.

48

1 Cara LaBounty asked what was in the Conservation Reserve Fund. The Manager replied about
2 \$236,000. Ms. LaBounty suggested the Selectboard ask the Conservation Commission for money to
3 use for the riverbank stabilization.
4

5 Mr. Yeates agreed with the prior cuts to gravel and retreatment. He said that two gravel plans were
6 proposed to be done in one construction season and he felt that the additional \$14,000 was not likely to
7 make a difference. Mr. Gosselin said he planned to do in May and June what they missed this year.
8

9 Ms. Heston called the question. The motion carried 4-1 with Mr. Yeates voting against.
10

11 Ms. Lucht said that the Winooski Riverbank project was a separate issue. She said we should keep it
12 in the FY2015 plan, but seek Conservation Reserve funds for it.
13

14 Mary Houle said that the Conservation Reserve Fund was renewed every five years, but we've had it
15 without ever getting a deed back because we contribute a portion for other entities. She said that if we
16 acquired an interest the vote would be taken by the voters.
17

18 There was additional discussion on this proposal. It was agreed that the project would stay as a
19 FY2016 project, however, if Conservation Reserve funds were available this year, it could start this
20 year.
21

22 Mr. Gosselin brought up the subject of the eight year truck cycle, since the next truck purchase was
23 originally FY2016 but had been pushed back to FY2017 because the last truck purchase was delayed a
24 year.
25

26 Mr. Yeates said these had to be left in for FY2017. He said that the short term impacts on the
27 residents needed to be considered. There was significant back and forth on this item.
28

29 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to move the truck purchase from FY17 to FY16. There was no second and
30 Ms. Heston declared the motion failed.
31

32 Mr. Yeates offered a motion to approve the full plan as amended and was seconded by Mr. Granda.
33

34 Ms. Lord said she understood where Ms. Lucht was going with those amendments, but she didn't feel
35 comfortable making that change at this time. The motion carried 5-0.
36
37

38 **3. Other Business**

39 Listers Pay

40
41
42 The Manager explained that this was a continuation of an item from the past several meetings. The
43 Governance Committee proposal had recommended pay for an in-house assessor at \$18.00 per hour.
44 The current lister pay rate was \$12.00 per hour. This was to be set by the Selectboard. The listers did
45 not request additional salaries funds for the current fiscal year.
46

47 Mr. Granda said he didn't see the wisdom in making a mid-year change to salaries. When considering
48 how to best perform this function, it would muddy the waters for those making decisions.
49

50 Ms. Lord said she didn't want to change the salaries until the vote on the listers article was done.

1
2 Ms. Lucht said the listers weren't asking for more money, just a pay increase. What would we do if
3 we ran out of salaries funds?
4

5 Cara LaBounty said this was a request for a pay increase, and we didn't need to go all the way to
6 \$18.00. She said that in six months they had only spent \$4,000 of their \$16,000 salary line. If they
7 felt that they would spend the rest during the January, February and March timeframe then it became a
8 personality issue.
9

10 Ms. LaBounty said that she had asked the Manager for what additional information the Selectboard
11 needed but he was unable to provide any guidance. Ms. Lucht said that she wanted the listers to make
12 the case for the pay increase.
13

14 Ms. LaBounty said that during her time in office, the Common Level of Appraisal had increased from
15 95.69% to 97.93%. She didn't want to give her services away. Ms. Lucht agreed there was a value in
16 the role of lister.
17

18 Ms. Heston supported an increase, we know the position is underpaid. Maybe not a 50% increase but
19 something was warranted.
20

21 Mr. Granda said that it wasn't that he didn't support an increase, but it was the timing of the issue.
22 Also, it is an elected position and the listers knew the pay rate when they ran for election.
23

24 Ms. LaBounty said that this pay rate hadn't changed since 2005. Mr. Granda said this was never
25 intended to be a living wage position. It is different. Ms. Labounty asked how? This was
26 intentionally making it so people did not want to run.
27

28 Ms. Lord said she didn't want to change this fiscal year, and would wait until the next fiscal year. She
29 felt most of the work was coming in the Spring, when funds would be needed.
30

31 Mr. Yeates said that since 2005, if the whole pay scale for employees had been moved for costs of
32 living, what would that equal in addition to the \$12.00 wage? It would be fair to move that far.
33

34 Ms. Heston said that the Selectboard would continue this discussion in Executive Session.
35

36 There was additional discussion, which turned to the FY2015 budget.
37

38 FY2015 Budget 39

40 The Manager summed up the changes so far, including the earlier Capital Plan amendments. The
41 budget's tax impact was up overall by 1.25 cents, or 2% more in taxes.
42

43 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to approve the amended FY2015 budget and was seconded by Mr. Yeates.
44 Mr. Granda said it was tough to keep tax increase at 2%, but it was important to do in today's
45 economy.
46

47 The motion carried 5-0.
48
49
50

1 Appointment of Ben Kinnaman to Richmond Economic Development Committee

2
3 The Manager explained that Mr. Kinnaman indicated his desire to fill the seat vacated by Heidi
4 Bormann. All REDC terms were one-year terms, to be appointed following Town Meeting.

5
6 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to appoint Ben Kinnaman to the Richmond Economic Development
7 Committee, and was seconded by Ms. Lord. The motion carried 5-0.

8
9 Reports from Selectboard and Town Manager

10
11 Ms. Lord reported that the Economic Development Committee was preparing a survey to be the basis
12 of interim zoning for the creamery parcel, and should be coming out soon.

13
14 The Manager reported on the Cell Tower issue, and the fact that no significant movement had
15 happened since before the holidays. It was acknowledged that the VTel application was not a small
16 scope project, and would have 180 days of review instead of 60. AT&T had not yet attempted to
17 schedule a hearing on their proposed sites.

18
19 The Manager also reported that the Snelling Center for Government had been engaged to help the
20 town recreate its website, at no cost. Future development may be done with an independent consultant
21 for some cost, however, the new site was free of charge.

22
23 Mr. Yeates reported on the Emergency Management tabletop exercise planned for January 23rd. He
24 was hopeful that it would be an important and useful tool heading into the more complex CAT2
25 exercise to be held in the Summer.

26
27 Mr. Granda asked if there were an update on the emergency fund proposal. Mr. Yeates said that this
28 exercise was more of a functional area exercise, however, perhaps this fund could be created under the
29 finance area.

30
31 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to enter an executive session to discuss personnel matters, namely the
32 lister pay issue, at 8:55 pm and was seconded by Mr. Granda and the motion carried 5-0.

33
34 Mr. Yeates offered a motion to adjourn the executive session and reconvene the regular session at 9:15
35 pm and was seconded by Ms. Lucht. The motion carried 5-0.

36
37 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to increase the Listers Pay to \$15.00 per hour effective immediately and
38 was seconded by Mr. Yeates and the motion carried 4-1 with Ms. Lord voting against.

39
40 Warrants

41
42 The warrants were approved and signed.

43
44 **4. Adjourn**

45 Motion by Mr. Yeates to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Lord. So voted.