

**RICHMOND WATER AND SEWER
COMMISSION MEETING
REGULAR MEETING
June 17, 2013 MINUTES**

Members Present: Ashley Lucht; Chris Granda; Amy Lord; Harold Irish; Bruce Bailey

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Kendall Chamberlin, Richmond Water/Sewer Superintendent; Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Peter Pochop, Green Mountain Engineering; Maureen Kangley; Sheila Bailey; George Gifford; Harriet Riggs; Jack Linn; Bob Fischer; Angela Cote; Heidi Bormann; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Mary Houle; and Ruth Miller was present from MMCTV to tape the meeting.

Chair Lucht called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

1. Welcome and Public Comment

Ms. Lucht asked if there was any public comment.

Maureen Kangley said she was at last week's Development Review Board hearing about the Chlorine Contact Time project, and wanted to know the costs. She wanted to know the cause of the wires to be buried and the costs of the proposed water tank.

Ms. Lucht explained that the Chlorine Contact Time is a project to lengthen the time that chlorine remains in contact with the water before it enters the general system. The State had identified a deficiency in the current time that this takes, and the solution is to install additional lengths of pipe to increase the time the water has before it enters the general system. Also, the water house has no standby power and is need of a generator. In the event of a flood, the driveway entrance is submerged and no one can reach the water house. This project was about \$200,000 including the generator, piping, driveway, electrical improvements and safeguards.

There was some discussion regarding the ability to reach the water house during a flood. Kendall Chamberlin said that in usual floods it is just the entrance that is submerged, but in Irene nothing could get to the house since the house itself was inundated. Peter Pochop of GME added that the new entrance location was 3.5 to 4 feet higher in elevation, matching the rest of the driveway.

Ms. Lucht said that on the water tank, depending on the location, it could be a \$1.3 million project. No land had yet been secured.

Ms. Kangley agreed that water was important and we all needed it, but why all of the sudden did we need to do these things? She felt like the tank was the most important thing right now.

Ms. Lucht added that we also have East Main and Bridge Street, but those votes can wait. Unfortunately, the identified public health issues can't wait.

Harriet Riggs asked if this could be cost-shared with the town. Ms. Lucht said this could be a possibility, and the water task force will review all ideas and ways to cost-share with the town. She added this idea was voted down in 1998.

Bob Fischer said by no means did water users want the town to pay for the water. He asked if the system was a utility and did the state regulate how much the rates could rise?

1 Ms. Lucht said that it was not a Public Service Board regulated utility. Mr. Fischer said that it was
2 putting a burden on the people that live here.

3
4 Cara LaBounty asked how far the driveway was being moved. Mr. Pochop said to the existing
5 driveway entrance that the Richmond Historical Society uses, and would cost about \$11,000, without
6 legal fees related to deeds. The current driveway is shared with Gary Bressor. Cara LaBounty said
7 that the flood plain regulations allowed the town to raise the driveway.

8
9 Jack Linn asked where the rest of the money went. Ms. Lucht explained that it was in the cost of the
10 new water line, and buried electrical.

11
12 Mr. Linn said to raise the rates and then propose more projects was very confusing.

13
14 Heidi Bormann asked for more clarification on this project, and Peter Pochop provided some more
15 details. There was additional discussion.

16
17 Harold Irish read a statement aloud regarding his vote at the May 16th Customers Meeting on the
18 rates, and a subsequent email from Chris Granda. He said his vote against the rates was because
19 there was no solution to helping elderly people pay, and he therefore resigned. He requested that the
20 Town Clerk post this statement on the Front Porch Forum. Mr. Irish left the meeting at 5:55 pm.

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22 Ms. Lucht said she was unaware that Mr. Irish intended to resign.

23
24 Mr. Granda read aloud the email referred to by Mr. Irish. He requested that his email also be posted,
25 and felt people needed to take the time to understand the issue. He felt that a unanimous vote was
26 needed on large issues.

27
28 Mr. Bailey said that septage had a lot to do with his vote. He said you can't put 1/3 of revenues into
29 savings. He also found the statutes on the septage but it just didn't look right to him. We can't afford
30 all of these projects, and the 300 families on the system can't afford it.

31
32 Mr. Granda asked what the response was from the water rate task force? Ms. Lucht said the task
33 force looked at the budget issues today (as opposed to in the future). She pointed to data provided
34 by Kendall Chamberlin tonight showing that septage was declining already, and we're down to
35 \$144,000 where before we had predicted \$150,000. The task force wasn't comfortable using all of
36 the anticipated septage to go to rates.

37
38 Mr. Bailey objected to increasing capital contributions as much as had been done. Mr. Bailey wanted
39 to see the mandates from the state, and objected to doing any new projects until he was satisfied. He
40 wanted to focus on the tank, but didn't agree that we needed a new site. Maybe a pump was the way
41 to solve the issues. Finally, he suggested a charter change to amend the membership of the Water
42 Commission to be all members of the system. His rate was now about \$240 a quarter, and doubling
43 that was almost \$2,000 per year.

44
45 Mr. Granda agreed this was a difficult issue, and has been through the numbers but we're not yet in a
46 pickle. He said that this would take leadership and are we going to help people get through this?

47
48 Mr. Bailey asked if we were going to vote just for show?

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50 Ms. Lord said we'd have to pay for new items, and no one had an appetite for more projects without
51 additional answers.

52
53 Ms. Lucht stated her case about increasing reserves as the way to solve future project needs. She
54 said that drastic changes have to be made.

55

1 Mr. Bailey disagreed, saying that there was a big problem with temptation of using that money.

2
3 Heidi Bormann said that the Richmond Economic Development Committee never recommended the
4 water line, and that the parking lot on Depot Street was not driving the rate increase. She says she
5 was told there was money in the budget to do the water line.

6
7 Mr. Bailey said that when the town votes on funding for a project, it should include all costs.

8
9 Ms. LaBounty said that the septage was a huge issue. She says now we're estimating less than
10 \$100,000 but has a new facility been competing with us? Have they lowered rates? Should we be
11 trying to bring in more business?

12
13 Mr. Granda said the committee has been over this. He wanted to suggest a reduction to the rate
14 payers by adjusting the allocations on the sewer model, on the recommendation from Ms. Lucht and
15 the water task force, this should be done to reduce rates. However, time in this meeting was running
16 out.

17
18 Mr. Bailey reminded everyone he would not be at the next meeting.

19
20 Ms. Lucht said there was other business that needed to be taken care of.

21
22 Approval of Minutes: April 15, 2013; April 29, 2013 May 16, 2013

23
24 Ms. Lucht said that since all were present, these minutes could be approved by one vote.

25
26 Mr. Bailey offered a motion to approve the minutes of April 15, 2013, April 29, 2013 and May 16, 2013
27 and was seconded by Mr. Granda. The motion carried 4-0.

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29 Approval of Purchase Orders

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31 Kendall Chamberlin brought several FY2014 purchase orders for various purchases to be approved.

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33 Mr. Bailey offered a motion to approve Purchase Order #2960 for water leak repairs to various
34 vendors in the amount of \$23,500 and was seconded by Ms. Lord. The motion carried 4-0.

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36 Mr. Bailey offered a motion to approve Purchase Order #3099 for phosphorous polymer to various
37 vendors in an amount not to exceed \$6,600 and \$49,500. Ms. Lord seconded the motion and the
38 motion carried 4-0.

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40 Mr. Bailey offered a motion to approve Purchase Order #3100 for sludge disposal to Chittenden Solid
41 Waste District in the amount of \$81,000 and was seconded by Ms. Lord and the motion carried 4-0.

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45 Warrants

46 The warrants were reviewed and approved.

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48 **2. Adjourn**

49 Motion by Mr. Bailey to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Lord. So voted.