

**RICHMOND SELECTBOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
April 2, 2018 MINUTES**

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Members Present: Bard Hill; David Sander; Stephen Ackerman; Roger Brown; Christy Witters

Absent: None

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Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Mary Houle; David Sunshine, DRB; Mark Fausel, Planning Commission; Judy Rosovsky, Conservation Commission; Virginia Clarke; Ian Bender; Fran Thomas; Dave Thomas; Don Morin; Stephanie Choate & Carol Mader, Richmond Farmers Market; Linda Donovan; Kendall Chamberlin, Water Resources; and Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

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Bard Hill called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**1. Welcome and Public Comment**

Mr. Hill asked if there were any comments from the public.

Stephanie Choate & Carol Mader from the Richmond Farmers Market wanted to gauge the board’s interest in amending the park ordinance to allow for more than one alcohol vendor at a time during the farmers market. There was some discussion about the recent history of allowing one alcohol vendor, and the concerns at the time of persons bringing in alcohol for consumption in the park (Volunteers Green) while that remained prohibited. Ms. Mader added that additional alcohol vendors, such as wine, beer or spirits vendors, would not displace food or crafts vendors.

There was some light discussion but the Selectboard agreed to consider an amendment at the next meeting. The Manager noted that there was an introduction phase, a second reading which might occur on May 7<sup>th</sup> and the town’s charter specified that ordinances would become effective 60 days following adoption – this would be in July at the earliest.

Mary Houle said that the Farmers Market timeframe had no bearing on the Selectboard’s need to act. She didn’t want loopy goosey alcohol in the park.

Mr. Brown asked if the Farmers Market was still in need of help, and Ms. Mader noted that new members and a new manager (Ms. Choate) were on board.

**2. Items for Discussion with Those Present**

Town Plan Update – Mark Fausel

Planning Commission chair Mark Fausel talked about the status of the Town Plan rewrite. He recapped that the original final draft from last Fall had been pulled back after some objections at their public hearing in December. Since then he had been working with staff, the Planning Commission and Virginia Clarke on amendments to develop a new draft. They were aiming for a May public hearing, which would allow time for the Selectboard to hold public hearings over the Summer and move the plan forward to a public vote on adoption in November. There was some other discussion on

1 the nature of the changes and that the main focus was on natural lands and energy, which had to  
2 address new legislation in acts 171 and 174.

3  
4 Mr. Brown asked where the public was in terms of support for the recent changes. Mr. Fausel said  
5 that overall he felt that there would be support for the changes, and the plan was more of a guide. The  
6 zoning bylaws counted more towards achieving goals but that was a different issue that would be  
7 addressed later.

8  
9 Mr. Hill asked if there were any “deal breaker” issues right now. Mr. Fausel said maybe for some, but  
10 the plan needed to satisfy the whole town not just a few.

11  
12 There was some additional discussion on the energy section, natural resources and conservation. Mr.  
13 Fausel expressed some concern about the tight timeline, but was hopeful that it would not need to be  
14 pushed off until the next Town Meeting. The Selectboard thanked Mr. Fausel for his report.

#### 15 16 Development Review Board update – David Sunshine

17  
18 Development Review Board chair David Sunshine reported that the DRB was moving forward and  
19 that application volume was light. He reminded folks to apply early for their projects as it takes time  
20 to prepare and approve an application. There were two members up for reappointment on the board  
21 and he supported both.

22  
23 There was some discussion back and forth with the Selectboard on zoning, and the changes that would  
24 need to be made following adoption of the town plan. Mr. Ackerman, a former DRB member, noted  
25 that it takes time for board members to become comfortable with ordinances and regulations.

26  
27 The board thanked Mr. Sunshine for his report.

#### 28 29 Highway Work Plans – Peter Gosselin

30  
31 Highway Foreman Peter Gosselin presented his work plans to the board. He began with a guardrail  
32 inventory he recently completed where he assessed the condition of all guardrails in town, with notes  
33 on their condition. The old post and wire railings were obsolete and out of code and should be  
34 replaced first, with other notes on some railings needing to be reset, and then tending to the rest. He  
35 noted there were several places that would qualify for adding railing due to slope issues, where there  
36 were no railings now.

37  
38 There was some discussion by the Selectboard on the locations of the worst rails. The board wanted  
39 Mr. Gosselin to move forward on replacements and asked for costs associated with the replacements  
40 so that they can consider reallocating funding.

41  
42 Mr. Gosselin then spoke on his summer work program, and reviewed each months’ work scope.  
43 Following that, Mr. Gosselin spoke about the State Structures and Highway grants. He wanted to  
44 replace a failing culvert near the bottom of Stage Road. This was about .6 miles from Route 2, and  
45 was a sixty inch culvert and the total cost was estimated at \$221,725. The maximum grant would be  
46 \$175,000, with a 20% match from the town. For the Highway Grant, he wanted to apply for the upper  
47 Bridge Street section to include milling and paving with some storm water replacement work. This  
48 was to be coupled with the proposed Bridge Street water line replacement that was under the bond  
49 passed at Town Meeting. He felt this project was valued at \$237,855 and also had the same limit and  
50 match requirements at the structures grant.

1  
2 The Selectboard agreed to support both applications. The board thanked Mr. Gosselin for his reports.

3  
4 Conservation Commission Recommendation on use of Conservation Reserve Fund

5  
6 Conservation Commission chair Judy Rosovsky presented an application from the Conservation  
7 Commission for \$4,500 of the Conservation Reserve Fund towards a contract with the SE Group to  
8 create a final management plan for the Andrews Forest. The SE Group had originally been retained by  
9 the Conservation Commission to create a recreation plan with funds from an Urban Forestry grant.  
10 They would expand the original scope to include the additional work, for a total of \$19,000. Other  
11 funding would come from Vermont Land Trust matching funds that were sourced from the Open  
12 Space Institute.

13  
14 There was some discussion on the uses proposed for the property as well as the needs of the property  
15 as far as parking or trails. As part of the closing on the project the Vermont Land Trust had set up a  
16 fund for the town to use for management and improvements. Ms. Rosovsky noted that she was not  
17 planning on utilizing the Andrews Management fund for this contract.

18  
19 Ms. Witters offered a motion to approve the request from the Conservation Commission to utilize  
20 \$4,500 of Conservation Reserve funds towards a contract with the SE Group to create a management  
21 plan for the Andrews Forest. Mr. Ackerman seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5-0.

22  
23 **3. Other Business**

24  
25 Annual Board and Committee Appointment Preview

26  
27 The Manager explained that the town had solicited interest in vacant seats for the towns various  
28 boards, committees and other appointments. The list was for review tonight and for appointment on  
29 April 16<sup>th</sup>. There were a few seats with competitive interest. The Manager read through the list and  
30 noted those interested in reappointment and which people interested who were not part of a board at  
31 this time. Judy Rosovsky had submitted a letter to the board noting certain appointment changes she  
32 was supporting on the Conservation Commission.

33  
34 Following the preview, the board interviewed candidates for the vacant Planning Commission seat.  
35 The board interviewed Virginia Clarke first. She noted her background which included 6 years each  
36 on the Planning Commission and Selectboard, as well as her work on the first Town Plan in the mid  
37 1990s. She talked about her recent work with Mark Fausel in trying to improve the Town Plan draft  
38 and her attendance at recent Planning Commission meetings.

39  
40 Mr. Hill asked if there was any friction or tension on any issues. Ms. Clarke noted acts 171 and 174  
41 needed particular language addressing them in the Town Plan and that she felt the first draft did not  
42 adequately do that. She said that it had been a negotiation to try and get agreement on changes. The  
43 board thanked her for her interest.

44  
45 Next, Don Morin spoke to the board and noted his history in town from back in the 1970s. He had  
46 grown up in Vermont and was not a builder, and owned several properties in town and he had  
47 experience with the zoning. He felt that it was becoming unaffordable to live in Richmond and had  
48 concerns about the health of the tax base. He was in favor of more development, particularly  
49 residential density in the village. The board thanked Mr. Morin.

1 Mr. Ackerman asked Mr. Fausel about reappointment of Brian Tellstone. Mr. Fausel replied he was in  
2 support of his reappointment. The Selectboard would make appointment decisions at the next meeting.

3  
4 Policy Review: Highway Maintenance Policy

5  
6 The Manager suggested that the Selectboard adopt a Highway Maintenance policy that lays out a basic  
7 level of maintenance that the Town is responsible for. This explains what the department does and  
8 how we achieve our goals. This was a first-look, and had not yet been run by our attorney. VTrans  
9 has similar policies, as do some towns in Vermont, although most are limited to Winter maintenance  
10 (Waitsfield is a good example). This is a review of a FIRST DRAFT, with no timeline on  
11 implementation.

12  
13 Ms. Witters talked about street sweeping and storm water basin cleaning – these were going to be  
14 required with the new Municipal Roads General Permit and Storm water Master Plan. Mr. Ackerman  
15 suggested removing personnel from the policy. Mr. Hill agreed, and said that we shouldn't tie  
16 personnel or staffing levels to policies such as this. The board agreed that with a few changes this  
17 should come back for consideration.

18  
19 Policy Adoption: Personnel Guidelines

20  
21 The Manager explained that this was the final review and request for approval of the revised personnel  
22 guidelines. The current guidelines are obsolete and last updated in 2005. The new policies include  
23 more sections and address some longstanding discrepancies between full and part-time employees,  
24 making the benefits pro rations more equitable.

25  
26 Ms. Witters noted several edits for the document, and suggested a final spellcheck before it is  
27 approved. There was some discussion, and other minor suggestions. The board requested this be  
28 updated as indicated and returned for approval at the next meeting.

29  
30 Radiate Art Space Lease

31  
32 The Manager explained that the lease for the basement space was done annually, and the lease was  
33 now with Radiate Art Space. The terms were identical to previous leases.

34  
35 Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve the lease with Radiate Art Space and was seconded by Mr.  
36 Ackerman.

37  
38 Mary Houle asked if the emergency exit had been repaired. The Manager said yes, and that this week  
39 carbon monoxide detectors would be installed, wired into the alarm system for the building.

40  
41 Ms. Witters noted that she teaches a class in that space and would recuse herself from this vote.

42  
43 The motion carried 4-0-1 with Ms. Witters recused.

44  
45 Follow Up on Major Items

46  
47 Employee Health Insurance

48  
49 Mr. Hill explained that there was some concern over the cost of employee health coverage and also the  
50 level at which the town pays. Currently, the town pays 100% of the premiums for the Blue Cross/Blue

1 Sheild Platinum plan, at all levels of coverage, from Single to Family. This benefit was also  
2 guaranteed in the police union contract, making changes for other employees difficult.

3  
4 Mr. Sander suggested changing this for new hires but felt that it was too much of a compensation  
5 change to switch everyone but the police. He was willing to serve on a committee to see what could  
6 be changed. Mr. Ackerman also volunteered, with staff support from the Town Manager and Finance  
7 Director.

8  
9 Kendall Chamberlin, Water Resources Superintendent, said that these discussions create nervousness  
10 in his department. He wanted to formally request that existing employees will be consistent with the  
11 police and not create two classes of employee. He suggested that rather than an open-ended goal, a  
12 cost target should be established.

13  
14 Mr. Hill said he wasn't prepared to make these decisions tonight and he would rather have a small  
15 committee look at this issue and report back. There was too much information to consider during  
16 regular Selectboard meetings and it needed appropriate time and attention. There was some other light  
17 discussion, and the Manager said he would gather information first and distribute to the committee  
18 members and then schedule meetings.

#### 19 20 Police Building and other issues

21  
22 Mr. Hill explained the issue began as a public safety building but gradually became just a new police  
23 department. The cost of the building became a divisive issue, and the Selectboard placed a question on  
24 the ballot to gauge the public's interest in continuing. With the failure of that question, the board was  
25 bound to take a new approach to understand the values of the community and determine the best  
26 solution to achieve those values. With regional policing some years away, the Selectboard had to find  
27 out what other options may be considered and present the choices and costs to the public.

28  
29 Ms. Witters noted that Linda Donovan was in the audience to speak on this issue.

30  
31 Ms. Donovan spoke about the importance of Richmond's police and that the general public wasn't  
32 aware of all that they did. She asked that the police reports be placed online again so that people could  
33 understand what they deal with, and she also noted the School Resource Officer's importance to the  
34 schools. There was additional discussion on this and related subjects.

35  
36 Ms. Witters said she wanted to know what were the major calls and issues that the Police handled.  
37 Where was time most spent? Once we identify our issues we can determine how to respond.

38  
39 Mr. Brown and Ms. Witters volunteered to head a committee to examine these issues. The Manager  
40 was directed to solicit on Front Porch Forum for volunteers.

#### 41 42 Reports from Selectboard and Town Manager

43  
44 The Manager briefly reviewed the reports: The board reviewed the Police Report. The Regional  
45 Planning Commission is holding a "Convening of Housing Committee Members" workshop on April  
46 30<sup>th</sup>. While Richmond has not been active in affordable housing for some time, the Manager planed  
47 on attending to get a sense of what our neighbors have been able to achieve.

48 Comcast – Highway and Fire are set for installation on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Water Resources and the Town  
49 Center building need more work – Comcast wants to install a new conduit beneath Bridge Street for

1 Town Center. The Manager wasn't so sure that was acceptable at this point, but there was an existing  
2 conduit that was of an unknown terminus and may be usable for this purpose.

3 Email switchover – we own a .gov domain and are going to go “live” with email shortly. Our  
4 gmavt.net emails will forward for a period of time to get people familiar with the switch. This will  
5 enable us to have more control over our email systems and issue a greater number of addresses, to  
6 include certain boards and committees.

7 The Andres Forest was now owned by the town, although the Manager urged to stay out of the parking  
8 lot until after mud season as it was not yet up to standards or maintained.

## 9 10 **Approvals**

### 11 12 **Approval of Minutes**

13  
14 Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve the minutes of March 19, 2018 and was seconded by Ms.  
15 Witters. The motion carried 5-0.

### 16 17 **Approval of Warrants & Purchase Orders**

18  
19 There was a question about freight for FW Webb that the Manager was asked to identify. Warrants  
20 were reviewed and approved.

21  
22 Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve Purchase Order 3498 to People's United Bank for \$25,000 for  
23 debt payments on East Main Street and was seconded by Ms. Witters. The motion carried 5-0.

24  
25 Mr. Sander offered a motion to approve Purchase Order 3486 to US Bank in the amount of \$24,658.50  
26 for debt on the fire truck and Jericho Road and was seconded by Mr. Brown. The motion carried 5-0.

## 27 28 29 **4. Adjourn**

30 **Motion by Mr. Ackerman to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Sander. So voted.**