

**RICHMOND SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE VOTERS
January 22, 2018 MINUTES**

Members Present: Bard Hill; Jon Kart; David Sander; Steve May

Absent: Steve Ackerman

Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Lee Jones; Jeffrey Hard; Ian Bender; Dave & Fran Thomas; Jack Linn; Dan Martin; Marcy Harding; Henry Bush.

Bard Hill called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Welcome and Statement of Question

Mr. May offered a motion to open the floor and was seconded by Mr. Kart and the motion carried 4-0.

The Manager explained that the Voters of Richmond were called to answer the following question:
Shall the voters decide the Police Building Question by Australian Ballot at the March 6, 2018 Town Meeting?

Mr. Hill asked for comments.

Henry Bush asked for clarification on the original ballot question, and whether it meant that the town could spend up to \$3 million before seeking approval for more. The Manager read the question placed on the ballot by the Selectboard in December:

Do the voters of Richmond support continued efforts by the Selectboard to finalize a plan for new building to house the Richmond Police Department at a cost not to exceed Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000), provided that the voters have the opportunity to approve or deny funding before any construction is awarded?

The Manager explained that this was a question meant to gauge the public's willingness to continue the development of a future building proposal. This did not allocate any funding towards a new building, or seek funding from the voters at this time.

Dave Thomas offered a motion to have this article voted on by Australian Ballot at Town Meeting. Jack Linn seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Fran Thomas asked that the Selectboard continue the meeting after the vote to discuss the police department generally.

There was discussion. The audience suggested that the Selectboard further explain what a yes vote meant on this question, and what a no vote meant.

Marcy Harding said that with all of the costs before construction, the price of the building concerned her and that the town could spend a fair amount of money before going before the voters.

1 Mr. Hill recapped the building committee's work and explained the so-called soft costs of design,
2 planning and engineering that were included in the projected building cost. It was noted that the
3 building committee and architect had spent almost \$30,000 so far in developing what the public has
4 seen.

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6 There was some additional discussion on the question, then Mr. Sander called the vote. By a show of
7 hands, the motion passed, and the article would be voted on at Town Meeting by Australian Ballot.

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9 Discussion on police services continued.

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11 Dave Thomas asked if regionalization would be a factor for our current department?

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13 Mr. Hill explained that dispatch regionalization was being considered now and was on the ballot for
14 several Chittenden County towns to establish. Richmond was interested in this, and it could work well
15 for the region. Regional policing was not likely in the near-term, although it could make sense. Mr.
16 Hill also mentioned a Senate bill that was proposed which would require towns to explain how they
17 intended to handle police services since the State Police were getting out of service contracts and
18 focusing on emergency response and in particular highway patrol and investigations. Would this be an
19 opportunity for Richmond to expand and become a regional service, or would some other regional
20 entity make more sense? This would be a continuing discussion this year.

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22 Mr. Kart noted that about seven years prior there was a community meeting (following Chief Miller's
23 retirement announcement) where the vast majority of those who came voiced the opinion that
24 Richmond should continue to keep its police department.

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26 There followed a general discussion on regionalization of policing and what that might look like.

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28 Fran Thomas said that any contracts for service by the police department should be approved by the
29 voters. She said that the town ran the risk of growing the force into a contract but when the contract
30 was cancelled then Richmond would be paying more.

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32 Jack Linn said he had always felt we had more police than we needed and Richmond wasn't big
33 enough to have Police as 28% of the budget.

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35 There were some additional comments essentially stating the same thoughts. Following this, the
36 Selectboard adjourned.

37 38 **2. Adjourn**

39 Motion by Mr. Sander to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Seconded by Mr. May. So voted.