



Josh Arneson &lt;jarneson@richmondvt.gov&gt;

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## Weigher of Coal

3 messages

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**Jay Furr** <jfurr@furrs.org>

Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 12:15 PM

To: Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>, Linda Parent <lparent@richmondvt.gov>, Selectboard Bard Hill <bard.hill@richmondvt.org>, Selectboard Christy Witters <christy.witters@richmondvt.org>, Selectboard David Sander <david.sander@richmondvt.org>, Selectboard Katie Mather <katie.mather@richmondvt.org>, Selectboard Roger Brown <roger.brown@richmondvt.org>, kdaubstearns@richmondvt.gov

Greetings!

Some of you know me, some of you may not. I'm one of the Richmond Justices of the Peace (first term) but more importantly, I've also had the privilege of serving as the town Weigher of Coal for a few years. Each year around this time, the town manager sends out a request for volunteers for town appointed positions. Usually, since I'm already in the job and have been hard at work not actually weighing coal, it's sufficed to simply let him know that I'd be interested in staying in the position and since no one else has wanted it, I've been kept on board.

However, yesterday I got an email from a gentleman named Jeff Forward letting me know that he is "throwing his hat into the ring" for the position.

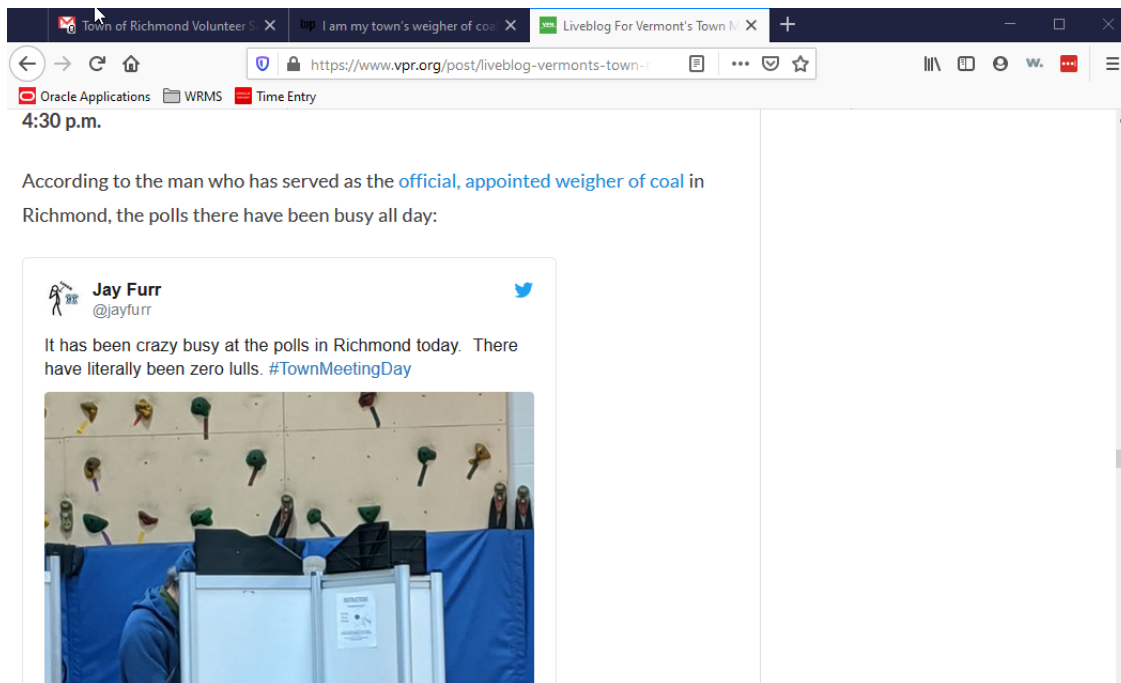
I can't imagine that Weigher of Coal **routinely** has competing candidates for the job, but that said, I figured it might be helpful to let you know a bit more about why I like the position and would like to keep it.

It amuses me tremendously to serve as Weigher of Coal, what with it being a position that there is literally no way to carry out. Since Richmond does not have a set of official municipal scales (no town in Vermont does), there's actually no way to officially "weigh coal". I know once upon a time towns **did** have a real need for a weigher of coal because of homes heated via coal... and someone had to be available if there was a dispute over whether a specific load of coal was short.

Now? Not so much. But it's a position with a long and ... well, I can't say *glamorous*, but you know what I mean, history. Richmond has had many, many Weighers of Coal over the years and I am only the latest to have the honor.

However, I am **probably** the first Richmond Weigher of Coal to write a published op-ed in the Washington Post, of all places, about the nuances of the job. In May of 2018 I wrote a long letter to the Post about the job (in the context of our town ethics policy) and they elected to run it in the print and online editions as an op-ed. You can read it here: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/i-take-my-government-post-with-no-responsibility-whatsoever-very-seriously/2018/05/11/83e6e102-5478-11e8-abd8-265bd07a9859\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/i-take-my-government-post-with-no-responsibility-whatsoever-very-seriously/2018/05/11/83e6e102-5478-11e8-abd8-265bd07a9859_story.html)

After the article ran in the paper, I promptly began getting pings from places like Vermont Public Radio and Seven Days about the job. For example: the VPR live blog for Town Meeting 2020 reshared a tweet of mine, happily noting that this was coming from the Weigher of Coal. It's weird, but somehow I'm on various people's radar in my Weigher of Coal capacity.



It's pretty silly, isn't it? You don't see the town Fence Viewers getting that kind of notoriety. :)

Anyway: I would like to keep on in the position of Richmond Weigher of Coal if you'll have me.

Thanks,

Jay Furr

**Josh Arneson** <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>  
To: Jay Furr <jfurr@furrs.org>

Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 12:44 PM

Jay,

Shall I use this email as you official letter to the SB for appointment?

Josh Arneson

Town Manager  
Town of Richmond  
P.O. Box 285  
Richmond, VT 05477  
(802) 434-5170

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**Jay Furr** <jfurr@furrs.org>  
To: Josh Arneson <jarneson@richmondvt.gov>

Thu, Mar 12, 2020 at 12:54 PM

Sure. Thanks.

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