

Water Commission Minutes

9/8/2020

Called to Order: 6 PM

Commissioners Present: Bard Hill, Fran Huntoon, David Sander, Don Morin

Absent: Katie Mather

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kendall Chamberlin, Water & Sewer Superintendent; the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15;

1. Welcome by Bard. No comments.

2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda. None

3. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Discussion of PFAS on a Richmond agricultural field and citizen questions related to water supply

Bard explained this is on the agenda following an article in VT Digger regarding PFAS that included a photo of an agricultural field in Richmond. His wife asked if this is a concern for Richmond. Bard did speak with a representative from the State and found that there had been testing near the Monitor Barn on Rt. 2 in Richmond. They anticipate that the fields in that area will not be approved for a permit renewal to spread septage on the fields should they re-apply when the current permit expires. He was also told that it was virtually impossible that PFAS from the fields near the Monitor Barn would find their way to the well that supplies water for the Town.

b. Consideration of approving a letter to Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation regarding Act. 21

Josh gave an overview that Act 21 is looking at requiring testing for PFAS in all public water systems. This will cost an estimated \$17,200 per year for testing. The Act discusses onetime funding for this cost. The letter asks that the State look at funding this for multiple years if testing will be required beyond one year.

Bard suggested adding in a per customer cost.

Josh stated that this would be roughly \$57 per customer in Richmond.

Bard suggested that the burden of testing for pollutants be passed along to the polluter and asked if that is typically the practice.

Kendall confirmed that it is typically the practice that the polluter pays for testing.

Bard asked to add a sentence that indicates this is in consistent with past practices of holding the polluters accountable for the costs.

Bard asked that we copy Richmond's State representative and State senators.

David moved to approve the letter as amended. Fran seconded. Roll call vote: Fran aye, David aye, Don aye, Bard aye. Motion passed

c. Follow up on water tank engineering report

Don stated that the stains and leaks on the water tank are concerning to him. Especially the rusty sections that indicate the rebar is rusting. He is concerned that the Town will need major repairs within a couple of years, but he is not an expert, so he is suggesting that we hire an engineer that was not involved in the project to give an opinion on the condition of the tank. He is also concerned that the coating on the tank is flaking off.

Bard stated that the coating was asked for by people who live nearby. These residents did not like the look of cement and felt that the coating made the tank more aesthetically pleasing.

David trusts the engineers that we hired initially and he is not concerned. But, he is not an engineer so he is not sure if he should be concerned. He is also not sure where we would get the money to pay for a correction should any deficiency be found.

Fran stated that we have an opinion and it was explained that there is nothing to be very concerned about so do we really need another opinion?

Bard, we may contemplate putting out a bid for an independent review to look at the state of the tank as a due diligence question. This would get us a cost estimate for an investigation that we could then consider.

Don is concerned that Green Mountain Engineering hired Carl Childs as a consultant and feels the opinion from Carl may be biased due to this relationship.

Kendall stated that Carl's report was very inclusive. The tank itself is structurally sound and the weeps have not grown. The weeps will not freeze as long as they are active and the water is moving. If there are any issues in the future we do have Carl's detailed report which we can use as evidence that the tank was reviewed.

Don would feel better if there is another opinion. He is concerned about the structural integrity of the tank.

David stated it is his recollection that the original opinion was that the weeps are common and occur in all concrete tanks.

Kendall noted we passed the weep test before any patching of the weeps occurred.

Bard asked can State water quality engineers provide any guidance on this?

Kendall stated that the State will actually be looking at the tank in the next few weeks during a routine inspection.

Bard said then let's ask the State inspectors to include this in their review and then we can discuss the results of this report to decide next steps.

Don stated if the water tank was completely buried he would not have a problem with leaks. But since it is exposed to weather he feels it is more concerning as frost could exacerbate the problem of leaks.

Bard replied, that is fair as other tanks have leaks but are fully buried. He proposed that we table this until we see the review from the State.

Fran agreed that Bard's proposal was plausible.

David concurred.

Don felt this is a good path forward given this is not an immediate concern but a more long term concern.

Kendal concurred that this was a reasonable way to proceed.

d. Update on Bridge St. Infrastructure Project

Josh reported that the project has reached substantial completion. There are only punch list items to be completed at this point.

e. Superintendent's Report

We are scheduled for a sanitary survey from the State.

They have been marking and locating water valves and manholes.

Starting to switch over to winter operations.

Thanked the Commission for their letter to OPR as OPR has been more responsive to Richmond's needs lately.

Septage remains steady.

Don asked about budget on the sewer water job that we just completed. Josh stated we are under budget but will get final numbers and share in more detail at a future meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

A) Minutes:

David moved to approve the Minutes of 8/17/20, Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran aye, David aye, Don aye, Bard abstained. Motion passed.

B) Purchase Orders: none

C) Warrants:

David moved to approve the warrants, Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran aye, David aye, Don aye, Bard aye. Motion passed.

5. Discuss Items for Next Agenda and Adjourn
Items for the next agenda:

Update on budget for Bridge St. project and report on Tank. Both of these will be added to a future agenda, not necessarily the next agenda.

Adjourn:

David moved to adjourn; Fran seconded. Roll Call Vote: Fran aye, David aye, Don aye, Bard aye. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM