

Selectboard Minutes
5/3/2021

Members Present by Zoom: Christine Werneke, David Sander, Bard Hill, Cody Quattrocci, June Heston

Absent: none

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Laurie Brisbin, Delinquent Tax Collector; Kendall Chamberlin, Water & Sewer; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15, also present: Cara La Bounty, Martha Nye, Allen Knowles, Susanne Parent, Wright Preston, Greg Elias, Ed Clodfelter from NEMRC, Monahan, Kathleen Templin, Jessie Heiser, Rebecca Rouiller, Alison Anand, Wendy Deforest, Karen Yaggy, Logan Hegg

Called to Order: 7:03 PM

Welcome by Christine who provided information on meeting procedures

Comments from the public: None

I. Additions or Deletions to the agenda: None

II. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a) Consideration of appointing Delinquent Tax Collector

Christine reported:

- that it is the responsibility of the Selectboard to appoint a Tax Collector after town meeting
- that the Selectboard has reviewed the work and performance of Ms. Brisbin and that her appointment would be until the next Town Meeting in 2022.

David moved to appoint Laurie Brisbin as Delinquent Tax Collector for a term lasting until Town Meeting 2022; June seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Christine thanked Laurie for the work that she does.

b) Consideration of appointments to the Development Review Board (DRB)

Christine reported:

- that at the last appointment there was an opening that still needed to be filled

Bard moved to appoint David Schnakenberg to the DRB for a term ending in March 2024 and to appoint Alison Anand to a one (1) year term as an alternate member of the DRB; David seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

David thanked them both for volunteering

c) Consideration of approval of expenditures from the Andrew's Community Forest Fund

Josh reported:

- that there are two requests from the Andrew's Community Forest

Wright Preston reported:

- that the committee has approved both projects

Discussion included:

- Allison Anand asked if the area where the pins were expected to be had been dug down to locate them since they sometimes get buried, Wright said he has the GPS coordinates and used a metal detector and could not find them after hours of looking

David moved to approve up to \$800.00 from the Andrew's Community Forest Fund to hire Todd Liberty to saw logs of hemlock on the landing into dimension lumber to be used for projects in the Andrew's Community Forest; June seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

June moved to approve the use of \$450.00 of Andrew's Community Forest Fund to hire Chris Haggerty of Button Surveyors to find or set 4 survey pins on the Andrews Community Forest and Maplewind Farm boundary line; Cody seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Wright Preston said he would reach out to the neighbor to be sure that the boundaries are agreed upon.

d) Consideration of approval of a proclamation recognizing May 2 – 8 as Professional Municipal Clerk's Week

Josh reported:

- that this week is annual "Professional Municipal Clerk's Week" and this proclamation would acknowledge Linda Parent's work

Discussion included:

- that David said Linda has always provided him accurate information anytime he has had a question
- that Alison Anand thanked Linda
- that Linda said it was her pleasure to serve as Town Clerk
- that Angelike Contis, from MMCTV, said that Linda's videos are always the ones most watched
- that Linda was thanked for her patience and service to the residents of the town

David moved to approve the proclamation recognizing May 2-8 as "Professional Municipal Clerk's Week" and extending appreciation to Richmond's Town Clerk Linda Parent; June seconded.

A friendly amendment was requested to include Assistant Clerk, Martha Laing in the proclamation.

David moved to approve the proclamation recognizing May 2-8 as "Professional Municipal Clerk's Week" and extending appreciation to Richmond's Town Clerk, Linda Parent and Assistant Town Clerk, Martha Laing; Cody seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

e) Consideration of approval of leases for tenants at the Town Center

Christine reported:

- that this work has been going on for some time
- that this is to replace the tenant that occupied the space on the third floor
- that the agreements have been reviewed by the town lawyer
- that these are two (2) year leases

Discussion included:

- that Linda said she appreciated all the work that went into this and looked forward to having them in the building
- that the space being rented is about half the third floor

David moved to approve the leases as presented for office space on the third floor of the Town Center building with MMCTV, the Community Senior Center, and the Richmond Historical Society, and to name Town Manager Josh Arneson as the duly authorized agent; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Karen Yaggy said the Historical Society is very excited to have the space. Angelike Contis said MMCTV was also excited to be at Town Center

f) Consideration of approval of purchasing picnic tables for the lawn at the Richmond Free Library

Rebecca Rouiller reported:

- that programs have been outside more because of COVID and having the picnic tables would be a way to utilize outdoor space without having to set up tables each time
- that money is being donated to the town toward the purchase of the picnic tables from several groups
- that the picnic tables would be for anyone to use
- that the town would own and maintain the picnic tables
- that the Wi-Fi hotspot from the library is extended to that area

Josh reported:

- that we got bids for the tables
- that the cost for the tables is \$2280.00 including shipping
- that \$1550.00 has been donated and the additional money could come from either unassigned funds or the Recreation Equipment line

Discussion:

- that June felt the funds to pay for the picnic tables should come from the Recreation Fund
- that Wendy De Forest thanked Rebecca Rouiller and stated that the difference between these tables and others in the town is the Wi-Fi hotspot
- that there will be three (3) tables with one of them being ADA accessible

- that they will be metal tables, not wood
- that Christine said she liked the ADA accessibility and agreed with the idea of having the costs come from the Recreation Fund
- that MMCTV could do an outdoor video camp and having the tables would be helpful

June move to approve the expenditure of up to \$730 from the budgeted Recreation Equipment line to be put toward the purchase of picnic tables to be placed on the lawn of the Richmond Free Library; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Karen Yaggy asked if the Historical Society should make the check out to the Town, Josh replied yes

g) Consideration of delaying the reappraisal process

Christine reported:

- that there has been a town-wide reappraisal planned for June 2021
- that the timing of the appraisal has been questioned due to COVID and high sales
- that there is a signed contract to begin work July 1

Josh reported:

- that he thanked June and Ed Clodfelter from NEMRC for digging into this
- that in conversations with Ed Clodfelter it is possible to delay the reappraisal with a 3% increase in costs for a total increase of about \$5000
- that the annual assessor's fees were included in the reappraisal number
- that the reappraisal fund will have enough money to pay the additional money if necessary

June reported:

- that the general assumption is that taxes will go up with a reappraisal but that is not necessarily true
- that we are not at a point where we are required to do a reappraisal
- that Richmond sales are up about 11% with statewide sales being 30% so she was concerned about artificially inflated prices when finding comparable properties

Ed Clodfelter reported:

- that sales up to April 1st of this year in Richmond were at 85.6% at 85% a reappraisal is needed so the town is not in a legal position to have to do a reappraisal adding that after the equalization in January it will become necessary to have the reappraisal
- that COVID has had an impact but median sale prices were already up the previous year
- that information back to 2018 sales were presented and showed the gradual price increases for home sales in Richmond
- that residential sales less than six (6) acres are being valued less than the market is paying
- that mobile home assessments are over valued and the only way to resolve inequities is through a reappraisal
- that anyone buying a property knows that prices have gone up

Discussion included:

- that June asked if the numbers were weighted, Ed Clodfelter said they were not
- that June said that the mean sale numbers were up 11% and would like to hear from others, Ed Clodfelter said his concern is that if the market continues to go up there will be a bigger impact than what we are seeing now
- that Bard said the census looks at income and Richmond income has grown since we are at the edge of Chittenden County
- that Bard said those who live in the mobile homes that depreciate instead of increasing in value as other homes do may be paying more than their fair share. His concern is that there is an increased disparity between those values that depreciate vs those that have increased by waiting any longer. Ed Clodfelter agreed that the gap would widen.
- that Linda Parent thought we should go ahead with the reappraisal to create equity. The last reappraisal was in 2008 and did not include going into the homes where many improvements are made. She felt some people are underpaying on taxes and the process will take a few years so she felt we should go ahead.
- that Cara La Bounty asked Ed Clodfelter if this was a two (2) or three (3) year process, he replied two (2).
- that Cara La Bounty asked Ed Clodfelter what the number of appeals were last year. Ed Clodfelter thought it was under 5 adding that the majority of residents do not appeal. Cara La Bounty said the mobile home park inequity should be understood adding that mobile homes can be looked at and be changed. Ed said an update was already done once and could be done again. Cara La Bounty said if the number one reason to do the reappraisal is the mobile home park inequity why do an entire town reappraisal, could we not do just a mobile home park update. Ed Clodfelter said it could be done.
- that Cara La Bounty said errors could be corrected and asked if once a town reappraisal is done did Ed Clodfelter think more people would object to their assessment. Ed Clodfelter said the number would be more than five (5). Cara La Bounty said between COVID and the town offices not open she did not think this was the year to do the reappraisal and we should wait.
- that Bard said he used the mobile home park as an example and within the mobile home park there are newer and older homes and mobile homes that are not in the mobile home park
- that June said she understands Cara La Bounty's point but that the reassessment is about everyone paying their fair share. That there are good reasons for going ahead and good reasons for not adding no one has a crystal ball.
- that Ed Clodfelter said NEMRC will go with whatever the town decides
- that Allen Knowles said he did not think it is just a COVID year, it is climate change and people with money moving in, that doing the reappraisal should be done.
- that Cara La Bounty said the thing to remember is that the stabilizer for those that make improvements is the building permit and that is the catalyst for the work that NEMRC does and reiterated that if it not required, we should wait.
- that reassessed values would not be known for two (2) years
- that Christine thought there is risk in waiting if property values continue to rise so a decision needs to be made on the information available. If no action is taken, then the reappraisal would continue or a motion to delay would be needed and asked the board if there was a will to have a motion made. June said she was the

one that had pushed for this but with the information at hand she would not move the motion. Bard said that the ability to change one's mind based on the facts was important.

- No member of the board moved to delay the reappraisal so the appraisal will move forward, Josh will put information on the website to alleviate anyone's concerns.

h) Consideration of approval of a Resolution for the NBRC Grant for the expansion of the sewer system into the Gateway District

Josh reported:

- that the NBRC grant is being applied for to construct sewer in Phase 1 of the extension
- that the grant would cover 50% of the cost with users in the expanded district paying the costs

Bard reported:

- that this is a resolution to apply for the grant, we could get it or not
- that there is still outstanding information
- that if the expansion is not approved by the residents in the districts the expansion would not go forward

Discussion included:

- that Kendall said it is a good deal if we get it
- that June asked where Phase 1 goes, Josh replied, to the Reap's Farm down Route 2
- that Bard said that the boundaries of the Water Sewer District are now defined and that there is a map that will be updated to show the expansion in phases.
- that David said the boundaries of the Water Sewer District had been the village and over time the district was expanded beyond the original district up to the school, the fire dept and Thompson Road.
- that Bard thanked town staff for producing the map

David moved to approve the Resolution for the NBRC grant with Josh Arneson as grant manager; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

i) Consideration of approval of a letter to the Secretary of Transportation regarding the Rt. 2 paving project

Bard reported:

- that there have been discussions for several years about the Route 2 corridor that included parking, sidewalk, curbs, and a left turn signal when the state would be redoing the road
- that changing the title of the project has changed the scope of the work the state is willing to do

- that the letter is to outline the town's needs and wants to the Secretary of Transportation

Discussion included:

- that Christine thought the letter was essential and was inline with what the state is requiring in some areas
- that Allen Knowles said that the Transportation Committee is in total agreement with Bard

David moved to approve the letter to the Secretary of Transportation regarding the Town's requests for the Rt. 2 paving project; June seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

j) Review of invitation to bid to operate a solid waste management / transfer facility on the town owned property currently leased by CSWD

Christine reported:

- that we have been negotiating with CSWD and the idea came up to offer it to others

Josh reported:

- that he thanked Kathy Daub-Stearns for putting the framework of the RFP together using the lease and that he and Logan Hegg had reviewed it and made revisions
- that CSWD has said that all items would be removed by CSWD if the bid went to someone else.

Discussion included:

- that there may be things like fencing that have become a part of the property
- that Logan Hegg thought there may be other levels of permitting for a private company to take over the transfer station
- that Bard said private haulers have had drop off centers without having to create a new district, and this may be a question for VLCT
- that Karen Yaggy asked if residents would still be able to use the Williston drop off, Bard said that we are not looking to have a different district, we are looking to have a transfer station
- that Logan Hegg said that his sense is that if we shift our position and leave the CSWD do we have the ability to use other drop offs and he thought we should get some legal advice
- that there is some mistrust between the district and the town
- that the details will be incorporated and be brought back for further discussion
- that CSWD will be coming to discuss their budget in 2 weeks

k) Update on repair to Dugway Rd.

Josh reported:

- that there will be a slight increased cost to the repairs on Dugway
- that work began a few weeks ago and is moving along well

- that trash was unearthed with additional fees for disposal
- that a railing is required that was not anticipated and will be another \$9000 but may be covered by FEMA

Discussion included:

- that having the barrier is prudent
- that Josh said the engineer has been photographing the process
- that Josh will send the historical report to Karen Yaggy
- that Karen Yaggy asked for Josh to send any pictures
- that Bard asked that the historical report should be posted on the website
- that Karen Yaggy said that coming from the Huntington end and seeing the work being done is amazing

I) Review of Richmond Rescue Quarterly Report

There were no questions or comments on the report.

III. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Minutes:

David moved to approve the Minutes of 4/19/2021; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Cody, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Warrants:

Discussion included:

- that June asked about the notations and what they meant for the Eyemed invoice; Josh responded that \$31.44 is what is due a month, \$15.72 is half since the invoice is paid in two payments
- that June asked about the report attached to the Arrowhead invoice; Josh responded that the report was for all expenses from the Andrews Community Forest, not just for Arrowhead
- that June asked who requested the CCRPC PO; Josh responded that the PO was requested by Ravi. June asked that if a number is crossed off and changed it should be initialed and that the person requesting the PO be identified.
- that June will speak with Connie about other questions she has related to reports generated

David moved to approve the warrants and invoices as presented; June seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, David, Cody, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Josh will send the warrant out for signatures using DocuSign.

Purchase Orders:

Discussion included:

- that Josh reported that these are all related to loans.
- that June asked why no one was requisitioning these, Josh said that it should be he or Connie and he will fully fill them in.

- that these are for money already approved for spending

David moved to approve PO 4111 to Union Bank for payment on the 2018 Fire Truck payment in an amount not to exceed \$54,615.09; Cody seconded. Roll call vote: David, Bard, Cody, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

David moved to approve PO 4112 to Union Bank for payment on the 2017 Grader payment, in an amount not to exceed \$32,149.72; Cody seconded. Roll call vote: David, Bard, Cody, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

David moved to approve PO 4113 to Union Bank for payment on the 2019 Dump Truck in an amount not to exceed \$28,354.13; Cody seconded. Roll call vote: David, Bard, Cody, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

David moved to approve PO 4114 to Union Bank for payment on the 2020 Dump Truck in an amount not to exceed \$29,119.01; Cody seconded. Roll call vote: David, Bard, Cody, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

IV. Discuss Items for Next Agenda

update on communication with town staff hires

library MOU between trustees and the Selectboard that will clarify responsibilities

DRB reimbursement waiver from La Bounty

DRB conversation on consistency concerns from residents

Financials – June is perplexed even after sitting down with Connie and would like to invite an auditor in to help explain things with NEMRC inconsistencies

budget review with CSWD

update on website RFP

appointments to boards, committees, and commissions

zoning changes related to construction of parking lots in wetlands

V. Executive Session if necessary- none

VI. Adjourn

David moved to adjourn; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: David, June, Cody, Bard and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

The meeting ended at 9:35 PM.