

Selectboard Minutes
8/16/2021

Members Present by Zoom: Bard Hill

Members In-Person: Christine Werneke, David Sander, June Heston

Absent:

Others Present In- Person: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Lauck Parke, Paul Hansen (Ecopixel), Laurie Dana, Martha Nye, Mary Houle, Stefani Hartsfield, Ronna Wheeler, John Linn, Logan Hegg, Trish Healy, Katie Mather, Jay Furr, Denise Nobel, Julia Parker, Hunter Wasser, Justin Graham (RiseVT), Kelton Bogasky, Elizabeth Parke, Connie van Eeghan, Jamal C, Ann Naumann, Sarah Reeves (CSWD), Rod West, Jonathan N., 802-355-3391, 802-373-8584, and the meeting was recorded by MMCTV

Others Present by Zoom: Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin.; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent; Ravi Venkataraman, Planner; Connie Bona, Finance; Kyle Kapitansky, Police Chief

Called to Order: 7:02 PM

Welcome by David

Public Comment:

1. Peggy Jones requested that one of the newly planted trees be in honor of Rodney Fuller Andrews. Peggy Jones said the town would be reimbursed for the planting and that information obtained from Caitlin Littlefield was that the cost was \$800, in addition there would be a plaque placed at the base of the tree that would be paid for by with funds that were not the towns. She said the memorial was on Saturday and hoped to have an answer by then.

2. Jeff Atwood apologized for his behavior at the last meeting, David replied that everyone in room agreed with what he was saying and did not want a repeat of the past. Jeff Atwood went on to say he wanted to answer the chairwoman's question from the last meeting. He said his efforts at helping with the housing crisis included work he did in Williston over a period of time covering from 2008-2018. He said his efforts were not accepted well in Williston, he felt it was wrong that he was not awarded sewer allocations saying the Williston board did not want low-income housing. It bothered him because he deserved to have the allocations and a member of the DRB in Williston has an interest in Finney Crossing who received the allocations. He said he wanted to work with Richmond on affordable housing. He said he wanted the Attorney General or Governor to call him to discuss the problem. David thanked him for his apology and his decorum. Christine acknowledged that they had exchanged heated words and she would welcome a conversation on this topic.

Mary Houle asked for prayers for the people of Afghanistan and our troops

Additions to the Agenda:

II. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a) Consideration of accepting the Town Highway Class 2 Roadway Program grant

David reported:

- that this was the approval for acceptance of the grant previously approved by the board

Bard moved to approve accepting the Town Highway Class 2 Roadway Program grant for paving on Cochran Road; June seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, David, June, and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

b) Consideration of request to close Baker St. for a block party on September 11

David reported:

- that this is an annual event for a block party

Discussion included:

- that Trish Healy said this has been a tradition since 2013 to promote community
- that last year it was cancelled, and they would follow any COVID regulations in place
- that the highway dept. provides barricades to block traffic
- that Katie Mather asked if residents attending the block party would follow CDC or state guidelines. She hoped it would be CDC guidance and require masking at the event because of kids not eligible for vaccination. Trish Healy said there are kids under 12 in the neighborhood so if masks are required then, yes, they would follow a protocol to keep everyone safe and have fun. Katie asked again which she would recommend to her committee, the CDC or state guidance. Trish Healy said she would refer to the Selectboard or outdoor guidelines, she said if masking is what is needed to make it successful that she could not speak for her neighbors but, if masking is what was needed, then ok. Bard suggested that whatever Richmond Elementary School (RES) guidelines were that they be followed. Christine said, middle school is requiring masks indoors but was not certain about outdoors. She suggested that because our state and CDC guidance differ, she thought following the school guidelines was appropriate.

Bard moved to approve the closure of Baker St. on September 11, 2021, from 3:30 – 8:00pm for the block party, with a rain date of September 18, 2021, on the condition participants follow the RES & CHMS mask guidance; June seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Christine, June, and Bard voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

c) Consideration of hiring a firm to redesign the Town website

David:

- that there were ten (10) bids received and reviewed and a decision was made to move forward with Ecopixel for \$12,880 which included an annual fee of \$2880 for support

Discussion included:

- that Josh thanked everyone involved in doing the proposal and reviews for the selection process
- that Paul Hansen of Ecopixel said he has been designing municipal websites for seventeen (17) years and he was looking forward to working with Richmond

Bard moved to approve PO# 4251 for \$12,880 to Ecopixel for design, development, implementation, hosting, and customer support; June seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Christine, June, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

d) Consideration of approval of applying for Vermont Outdoor Recreation Communities grant

Ravi reported:

- that the Recreation Committee voted to pursue the grant to facilitate replacing the playground equipment and rebuild the bandshell
- that the grant is a multistep process
- that there is no match required but a match is recommended, a typical amount of match is not yet known and could be clarified at a later meeting

Discussion included:

- that David asked if there would be any obstacles due to proximity to the river, Ravi said he did not believe there would be any problems
- that Bard asked if we are moving to approve it now, but still looking for info on the match, Ravi responded that we could move forward with the letter and wait to see if we got the invitation to apply
- that Christine asked what the total cost of both projects would be. Ravi said that the quotes were put together with the playground equipment coming in at \$120,000 plus whatever the bandshell would be

June moved to approve pursuing the 2021 Vermont Outdoor Recreation Collaborative grant for \$150,000 for improvements to Volunteers Green; Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Christine, June, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

e) Consideration of approving the use of \$2,500 originally spent on the Vermont Youth Project to go toward the Community Prevention and Wellbeing Initiative

Josh reported:

- that Stefani Hartsfield had asked if the \$2500 intended to go the VT Youth Project that was returned could be used to go toward the Community Prevention & Wellbeing project
- that the money came from the school and RiseVT who were in favor of passing it to the project

Discussion included:

- that Stefani Hartsfield thanked Connie for the help figuring out where the money originated from

Bard moved to approve allocating \$1,000 that was originally contributed by MMUUSD and \$1500 that was originally contributed by RiseVT for payment toward the Vermont Youth Project to be re allocated to the Community Prevention and Wellbeing Initiative based on the written approval from MMUUSD to re-allocate as such and RiseVT approval to re-allocate as such; moved to approve allocating \$2,500 to the Community Prevention and Wellbeing Initiative; June seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Christine, June, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

f) Follow up on final deliverables from Civic Wellbeing and discuss the Community Wellbeing and Prevention Initiative Work Plan

Stefani Hartsfield reported:

- on past surveys
- that volunteer leaders have not been working so a paid position is proposed

- that one of the things in the packet was a job description but that it did need to be addressed now
- that the United Way grant of about \$15,000 was approved
- that the workplan included in the packet was displayed and described
- that the goal was to get future funding for a paid position for one (1) year to see if the town position was really needed

Discussion included:

- that June said there was a lot of information provided in the packet
- that Bard asked about the position, Stefani said what would be best was a town employee, Bard said there are other community organizations that may be better suited to have that position. He said when new positions come up they should be transparent to the voters. Stefani said we need to go through those steps to be transparent, that there were three options are for discussion purposes. Christine said the word "position" was getting everyone caught up thinking about it. She said that the problem is there are ways to resolve the issues without a town position until some time in the future. She wanted to decide on ways to have the functions performed immediately which could be a contracted situation. She felt there was more work to be done but thought there were so many other positions that are needed. Clarifying how this work could be done over the next 2-3 years instead of having a position should be the goal. June said it covers three (3) towns, possibly the United Way could be in charge and have volunteers from each town with them paying the paid position. Stefani Hartsfield said she is a volunteer, and these are the very things that would be discussed.

g) Review of proposed amendments to financial policies

Josh reported:

- that at the last meeting twelve (12) financial policies were looked at. The goal tonight was to get feedback from the board.

Each proposed policy change was discussed individually:

1. Accts Payable Policy

Discussion:

- that Connie provides dept heads monthly status reports currently

2. Petty Cash and Cash Receipts Policy

Connie reported:

- that the changes are due to TD Bank moving out of Richmond
- that a courier comes on Thursdays to pick up deposits and checks received are deposited each day electronically by Linda Parent
- that the threshold changes are due to the bank's requirements

Discussion:

- that Christine asked if processes or procedures are being moved out of policy documents what was presented seemed like procedure. She asked if the change is due to bank changes if we did not bank with them would we go back to what the policy is currently, Connie said getting them approved before the auditors came was her objective, if we change banks we would need to change to whatever their requirements were. Christine said she did not feel this was policy, it was specific to the bank and

policy should not be driven by circumstances beyond our control. June said that the piece that is policy is a change in the amount of the deposit total. She asked if the board was ok with changing to \$100,000 from \$10,000. Connie said we can make it lower, usually we have less than \$5000 unless it is tax day. Josh said when we have \$3000 a courier is used, the \$100,000 is checks. Connie said because of the new system, it could be higher. Bard was more worried about cash as opposed to checks. He thought cash needed to be deposited immediately and checks over a certain amount needed to be deposited. Connie said we are supposed to be on an automatic Thursday schedule, if we have more money and a courier isn't available the deposit is driven in. Christine agreed with Bard that the policy should be simplified. Mary Houle thought the policy could be worded "all incoming money".

- that PACIF coverage will be looked into for loss
- that the amount should be kept at \$3000 and \$10,000, take out the procedure part of it and just have the deposits to be done by the next business day. Connie said there were 300 checks today and with Linda on vacation there is no one to do the deposit. David asked how checks are being deposited. Connie said she posts the checks, but they are not deposited yet.

3. Purchasing Policy

Discussion:

- that current thresholds for purchases were reviewed
- that Christine asked Josh about what other towns or VLCT had for guidance, he will find out and report back

4. Restricted and Unassigned Fund Policies

Josh reported:

- that this was presented to provide options
- that budget time may be a good time to finalize this policy

Discussion included:

- that Christine thought that accumulating funds in unassigned funds called into question where the money should be kept and thought the board needed some guidance
- that David said in past years the question has been posed to the auditors without clear guidance coming back
- that this discussion did not include reserved funds
- that Bard said past guidance has been 15-25% of the budget should be in reserves and having a bigger discussion was important to have
- that Connie said using vacancy savings to keep taxes down was something she advocated for, but restricted funds were different because those funds are used, then replaced and she views them as being used for cash flow. She said in the next two years highway will need to spend large sums on large equipment, and she anticipates the fund will be reduced to next to nothing at that time. Christine said that good planning and decisions had gotten us to where we are and having a good relationship with our bank creates ways to have the funds we need, when we need them. The question is how to manage the money the Selectboard is stewards of and coming back to the discussion from that perspective made sense. Bard said this needs a bigger discussion and it should be brought back.

h) Review of fourth quarter FY21 financials

Josh reported:

- that the information was provided in the packet
- that overspending and underspending were reviewed. It was noted that the audit may change the numbers being presented.

Discussion:

- that June said she had requested the Selectboard meet with the auditors before the audit so she could understand why we put school taxes in as income when it's not our income. Connie said it is a software limitation and the auditors say there would need to be adjustments one way or another. June said it is convoluted the way it is done. Josh thought the auditor may be available for the first meeting in September

i) Update on use of firearms on private property

Discussion:

- David asked Kyle if the booms were coming from a Jonnie Brook Rd. residence, Kyle thought that was likely, the assumption is it was from there adding there have been issues with fireworks in the neighborhood that could be the culprit and there has been other shooting reported.
- that there is no law against shooting in VT
- that there are laws about safety and recreational shooting
- that the Selectboard could choose to prohibit shooting by ordinance but could not regulate the type or size of the firearm being used, it is an all or nothing situation.
- that specific to 7/9,10, and 11 his report shows the volume of shooting was higher during that time and that there was some Tannerite being used, he learned that Tannerite needs an explosive license. The homeowner was informed and has said he would not be using Tannerite any longer.

Discussion included:

- that Christine thanked Kyle for the work done and acknowledging having learned something.
- that the Police Department has been posting on Face Book when mortar days are at the range
- that Bard said with the reboot of the website we may want to post information in more than one place

j) Presentation of results from Public Safety Survey

Hunter Wasser reported:

- that he thanked the Selectboard and Chief Kyle Kapitansky for the support of his research
- that the project goals were reviewed
- that over half of incidents in time period were non-violent or assistance calls
- that -0- incidence identity based harassment was recorded but the information is untracked
- that most vehicle stops were for moving violations

Discussion included:

- that Bard observed that there was a problem with this type of data set providing accurate information, Hunter Wasser said that is why we have to decide what data we want to have recorded in the future. Bard said that the working out of that collection

can be daunting. Hunter Wasser said he did not have a good way of collecting that data either. David asked if there was a way of determining crossover between categories. Hunter Wasser said each incident report has a code that required he and KK going through them so he could determine what category to place incidents into, only one category was selected to best fit the incident. David asked what activity would put an incident into drug use – Hunter responded that it could be possession of heroin.

Hunter continued:

- that there were 564 responses, 290 were usable – in some cases the forms were not completely filled out or were from people not living in Richmond
- that the survey showed that most respondents did not know how Richmond Police Department officers spend their time
- that when respondents were asked to rank issues, severe issues were overestimated and less severe issues underestimated
- that 55.52% of respondents suggested a change to public safety in Richmond with 40% stating they were satisfied.
- that changes in practices or policy changes to incorporate a mental health professional on staff, or have more community policing, a downsizing of the department with focus to include more on drug usage, and less on traffic

Discussion included:

- that Chief Kapitansky said he wanted to provide context on what respondents would like to see, some things he said are reactive, like the mental health crisis or domestic violence and thought it spoke well that they were not a priority for the department
- that Bard thanked Hunter Wasser for the work, he cautioned that the method matters and a random selection is best. This he said was not random, it was self reporting, and the results may not represent the community at large. He said frequency, intensity and duration were not accounted for and there was not a way to do that. Bard said that moving forward for changes the path is through the budget process and that there are community organizations and help already available and being used by the Richmond Police Department. Hunter thanked Bard for his comments.
- that Christine thanked Hunter Wasser, saying the issues are important to talk about and adding that the awareness and accuracy don't line up and then to say there are changes needed, she thought there may be clarifications that are needed to know that the desired changes are reflective of the actual time spent by officers. She thought we may need to do a better job at letting people know what the police department is doing and providing information on the community justice center and the Howard Center's mental health programs.
- that Kyle commended Hunter on his work trying to understand the data he was collecting and thanked him.
- that David thought having this information is great start to understanding Richmond's needs and thanked Hunter Wasser saying he looked forward to reading the final writeup. Hunter Wasser said he would make the information available.
- that Mary Houle said the quality of someone's response is based on the information they have.
- that Ann Naumann pointed out that this was a win-win situation and thought Hunter did a great job and thanked the Richmond Equity Group for sponsoring the work.

k) Update on process to review proposals to operate solid waste management transfer facility

Josh reported:

- that June, Rod West and himself met to come up with scoring criteria for the bids submitted

June reported:

- that the RFP was reviewed and what was being looked for was determined had four (4) scoring criteria.

Josh continued:

- that the scoring criteria determined was reviewed
- that Rod West was working on gathering information
- that decommissioning time if Casella was chosen needed to be determined
- that surveying the importance of a reuse zone to residents may be wanted

Discussion included:

- that Bard asked if days and times of operation were a criteria, June said it was equal between them. Bard thought it should be called out.
- that doing a survey for the reuse zone could have disproportionate responses because people who use the zone have interest in responding, those that do not would have no reason to respond
- that David said if Casella were chosen, he would like to see an opportunity for staff to be hired from CSWD
- that CSWD's proposal had an entrance change, the question was asked if the change should be included in the criteria,
- that switching over from CSWD to Casella's would take about four (4) weeks
- that Mary Houle said routing traffic through the mobile home park was inconceivable, to have vehicles through there was wrong. Sarah Reeves said there is no plan, there has been nothing brought to the town, it was just one option to be explored. If that will not work, and we receive the contract, we will come up with a different option. Mary Houle said that the lack of consideration for the 200 or more families was inconceivable. She asked if Peter Brown had been consulted since it is a private road, not a town road. Sarah Reeves said the town came to CSWD about fixing the traffic, there would have to be a lot of work done, she said there is nothing in the works, the idea was "is this something you would look at" and yes, it is.
- that Katie Mather asked if people in town could be surveyed to see if they have found other ways to distribute their things or if items that used to go to the reuse zone now just go into the trash. She said knowing the degree people have adjusted their habits could be important. Bard said looking into the dumpsters you can see things are in the dumpsters that would have been in the reuse zone. He said other places don't always want things that would have gone into the reuse zone.
- that Sarah Reeves asked about the decision to include an optional item having the same weight as a required item. June responded that the RFP said preference would be given to a respondent with a reuse zone and how the operator operates existing ones should be considered.

l) Update on follow up regarding the Rt. 2 repaving project

Josh reported:

- that a letter was drafted to go to the Transportation Secretary
- that a letter also went to the Governor to make him aware of our situation

Christine reported:

- that a response from Transportation Secretary Flynn was received earlier in the day
- that she hoped there would be further discussions

m) Update on process to fill a vacancy on the Selectboard

David reported:

- that there had been four (4) letters of interest received
- that the open position was to fill Cody Quattrocci's seat

Discussion:

- that June asked if the board was just reviewing letters or doing interviews, David said in the past it has been interviews, Mary Houle added that the interviews were done at Selectboard meetings and then the board would go into deliberative session. Christine thought that was a good plan.

n) Update on tax sale process for 357 East Hill Rd.

Josh reported:

- that the tax sale is scheduled
- that approximate taxes due are \$28,000 plus any mortgages and encumbrances.

Discussion included:

- that Christine asked if there was a formal notice that goes up. David said it was posted in Seven Days.

o) Update on survey work for Williams Hill Rd. hearing

Josh reported:

- that Chris Haggerty indicated he had made progress and has a meeting in Williston to double check records
- that he has the original survey bills for some of the road portions
- that the site visit is still on target

Discussion:

- that whether the school will be used for the meeting is yet to be determined, Mary Houle suggested the Library, Josh will look into using the Library

p) Review of Memorandum of Understanding with the Library

Josh reported:

- that the MOU was reviewed by several people and the town attorney with changes made for further review.
- that once the Library Trustees review and approve the MOU it will come back to the Selectboard for approval.

Discussion:

Laurie Dana said this has been years in the making and is looking forward to having an agreement in place

q) Update on feasibility of publishing the Grand List and Lister Cards online

Josh reported:

- that this was asked about at a previous meeting and Linda said that it could be done for about \$500 per year
- that there was agreement from the board to have the cards online for searching

r) Update on Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Josh reported:

- that the first ARPA funds of \$215,604.43 had been received
- that a page has been created on the website to provide information

Discussion included:

- that Christine thought this should be a continued discussion with a temporary committee formed from a cross section of board members, staff, and residents. She asked to have this brought back to the next meeting. Bard thought it may fit into the conversation on reserve funds. June agreed with Christine but thought it could be combined.

s) Review of Richmond Rescue Quarterly Report

There were no questions about the report.

III. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Minutes:

June moved to approve the Minutes of 8/2/2021; Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Christine, June, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Invoices and warrants:

Bard moved to approve the warrants as presented; June seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Christine, June, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Discussion:

- June was concerned there are a number of invoices showing payments not being received on time, then invoice amounts are corrected in pen. Josh said he thought it was a timing issue because of paying bills twice a month with checks going out the Thursday after a board meeting. June said she realized they were not charging fees, but it was a bad practice to be paying bills late. Josh will follow up with Connie.

Josh will send out Warrants for signature by DocuSign.

Purchase Orders:

Bard moved to approve PO 3761 to Reynolds & Sons for Scott Air-paks for the Fire Dept. in an amount not to exceed \$22,671.39.; Christine seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, June, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

June moved to approve PO 4211 to East Engineering for Thompson Road engineering for a FEMA project in an amount not to exceed \$17,500.; Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, June, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Bard moved to approve PO 3170 to Tesla Inc., for the police cruiser in an amount not to exceed \$51,190.; June seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, June, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Discussion included:

- that this would be for the vehicle only, outfitting it would add more expense
- that there is no Tesla police package yet
- that this will be picked up in Paramus NY, David offered to go
- that Mary Houle said she didn't see a specific delivery date, Chief Kapitansky said the car is being delivered to the dealership and could be picked up Aug 27, 28.

General Discussion:

David asked if we could do the tree decision tonight or it could be a Town Manager decision. Mary Houle said that when the family paid for the bench it was something new, but the tree is already there, she thought it was a good idea to have people donate trees and pay the price to have it planted. Josh said the board could move it and if they wished.

Bard moved to approve the request for the tree dedication provided all expenses do not come from town funds; June seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, June, Christine, and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

IV. Discuss Items for Next Agenda

COVID funding and committee organization

SB interviews

Follow up on Library for the hearing

Contract and motion for Town Center owners rep work

V. Executive Session if necessary -none

VI. Adjourn

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

The meeting ended 10:47 PM

CHAT

00:32:01 Denise Noble (she/her): just FYI I know of three adults who were vaccinated who have contracted covid in the last couple of weeks

00:36:27 Stefani Hartsfield (She/Her): Great work. Really exciting!! Thank you.

00:41:43 Stefani Hartsfield (She/Her): I believe if we get the grant we could then explore which items we prioritize from the list.

00:41:58 Christine Werneke: Thank you Stefanie

00:47:41 Denise Noble (she/her): YAY! THanks for all your work everyone!

01:26:07 Rod West: What is the insurance company's coverage threshold on cash losses?

01:28:34 Rod West: I would inform your policy, for sure.

01:28:37 Rod West: it

01:54:36 connie: I spoke to someone who is familiar with the firing range in Jericho. That large boom is from their. I was told the piece of equipment it was but it escapes me at t his time.

01:58:59 Stefani Hartsfield (She/Her): Thank you for the explanation of tannarite. Really helpful.

02:38:05 Ann Naumann:I think that the fact that the respondents don't know what the police are doing is a large opportunity. How can we share with people in town better the important work being done by our police.

02:38:26 katiemather: Ann, I

02:38:29 katiemather: Oops.

02:38:44 katiemather: Ann, I'm hoping that will be a robust section of our new website.

02:40:53 June Heston: Thank you so much, Hunter!

02:41:04 Connie van Eeghen, she/her: Thanks, Hunter!

02:41:19 Jay Furr: Great job, Hunter!

02:45:58 Denise Noble (she/her): Way to go !! Nice job!!

02:46:21 Hunter Wasser (he/him): Thanks everyone!

03:15:01 Jay Furr: <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/notice-of-tax-sale-town-of-richmond/Content?oid=33581603>

03:47:59 Denise Noble (she/her): thanks y'all!