

Town of Richmond Selectboard Meeting

Minutes of February 22, 2022

Members Present: Jay Furr, June Heston, Bard Hill, David Sander, Christine Werneke

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Duncan Wardwell, Assistant to the Town Manager; Connie Bona, Finance Director; Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner; Peter Gosselin, Highway Department Foreman; Kendall Chamberlin, Water Resources Department Superintendent

Others Present: Meeting was recorded by MMCTV, Erin Wagg,, Chris Haggerty, Joseph McLean, Rick Brigham, Samuel Waters, Lauck Parke, Rebecca Rouiller, Wright, Rod West, Jeff Forward, Patty Brushett

Others Present: The meeting was recorded for MMCTV.

Call to Order: 7:00pm

Welcome by: Werneke

Public Comment:

Arneson: First there is a Public Informational Hearing for Australian Ballot items on Monday, Feb 28, virtual only meeting by phone or Zoom. Secondly, thank you for everyone at Cochran Parade, family, town staff, volunteers, kids who make signs, permits, State of Vermont. Everyone helped to create an amazing experience.

Werneke: MMCTV recorded an amazing event. Jay did some recording at Cochrans. Check out the archives at MMCTV. It was a phenomenal weekend evening with fireworks and snowstorm.

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda: None

Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

Executive Session: Pending litigation related to Williams Hill Rd.

Furr move to find that premature general public knowledge of the Selectboard's discussion of a pending civil litigation related to Williams Hill Rd. to which the public body is a party, would clearly place the Town at a substantial disadvantage. Heston seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion Approved.

Furr move to enter into executive session to discuss a legal matter under the provisions of 1 VSA 313(a)(1) of the Vermont State Statutes and to invite the Town Manager, Josh Arneson, Attorney Joe McLean and Surveyor Chis Haggerty, into the executive session. Heston seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion approved

Heston moved to exit the executive session. Furr seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion approved

Presentation of FY21 Audit

Werneke: We have prioritized the next 40 minutes to be on items that are not decision making due to guests and town staff. We want to recognize Rick Brigham a representative of Sullivan, Powers & Co. and Connie Bona the Town of Richmond Finance Director.

Brigham: I going to walk through the Audit document. It will be broad overview and go over the internal control letter and provide an opportunity to ask questions. Thanks to Connie, Josh, and Town staff for creating a successful and smooth audit. Pages 1, 2, & 3 provide the crux of the audit. We help put it together in a financial format. Highlights management of financial statements. My job is to tell you if financial statements are fairly stated or not. There are 3 choices: Unqualified Opinion, Qualified Opinion, or Adverse Opinion. Town of Richmond achieved an Unqualified Opinion; there are no qualifications that needed to happen to financial statements in order to fairly state them. If you focus on pgs 4-10 then this is a simplified and user-friendly view called the Management's Discussion and Analysis. This is put together by Josh and Connie and they reviewed by Auditors. It shows what happens to the numbers over the year. If you look at pgs 11-12 then this is a government wide financial statement like a balance sheet that shows where our assets and liabilities stand at any time. We include the fixed assets and the debt like a normal business. This is the Town of Richmond treated as a business.

Heston: On page 7 of the report the earnings from investments is down considerably from \$38,433 to \$10,418. Why is that?

Brigham: This is probably a better question for Connie or Josh.

Bona: Yes, the bank interest changed significantly.

Heston: On pg 8 what is miscellaneous income?

Brigham: It can be any number of things like grants, unexpected fees, it depends on each Town. Connie can print out the ledger for that account to see specifics.

Brigham: On pg 13 is the fund financials and don't put in the fixed assets and debts. We put it down to current assets and liabilities. The big numbers are the General Fund and Unassigned Fund Balance. The Unassigned Fund Balance is \$620,023 and last year it was \$391,890 which is a good increase. Good healthy balance as it can range from 10% to 25% of Town Budget. Some Towns put it into Property Taxes. A lot Towns try to build up the Reserve so not cut short for cash flows.

Heston: Is there a best practice for reserves?

Brigham: Usually look at 25% of budget but varies by Town. Our experiences with COVID, illustrate how the Reserves can help make a difference. Pages 16-17 show the Water & Sewer Fund financials. These are enterprise funds, so we treat like a business and put in the fixed assets and debt. You can see how the Water fund increased by \$498,401. The Sewer fund increased by \$146,946. This is good net positive changes. Pgs 21-50 show the notes of the financial statement. This shows the "in the weeds" details of debt, interest rates, cash, FDIC insured, fund balances, reserves. There is a lot of great information.

Heston: On pg 29 it talks about Custodial Credit Risk. Can we talk about that?

Brigham: We evaluate the credit risk of whether your cash is insured. If you have a lot of uninsured cash, then that is a risk if the bank fails. This discloses the FDIC insured balances, the uninsured collateralized letter of credit to secure debt instruments. You can there is no uninsured balances that is not collateralized. This puts us in a good non-risk position.

Furr: I have a question on two numbers of pg 30 & 34. On page 30, in Grants Receivable we have \$370,314. If we go to pg 34, the second paragraph, second line, we have a \$367,615 of grant revenue not collected within 60 days. Why are those two numbers not the same?

Brigham: On pg 34 you are looking at deferred inflows which relates to Grant Receivable. Because you did not collect \$367,615 of the \$370,314 it is considered a liability because it is not in hand in first 60 days to pay bills. The two numbers are not meant to relate. One number is meant to show the total grants receivable. The other is of the total grants receivable this was not collected within 60 days.

Furr: So, the \$367,615 represents delinquent receivables?

Brigham: It isn't delinquent it just wasn't collected within 60 days which is the government audit accounting standards to be able to book the full receivable without an offsetting liability. If you look at pg 51 this is budget actual of general fund and same thing for Water & Sewer. You've been seeing these all year long. You have probably already seen these. If you are looking for small funds like special revenue, capital project fund you will find them on pgs 63-64. These give you special revenue funds and balance sheets and reappraisal fund. This is where you can find smaller fund balances. On pg 73 you will find the Internal Control letter. It says we've reviewed your internal control and noted on material weakness on pg 75. About 98% of the balance sheet accounts have been reconciled and in a good place. If we find a few things that have been recorded wrong or accounts payable got missed, then we note the adjustments or material weakness. Connie did an amazing job with the time-consuming tasks but we still need to note a few adjustments.

Heston: How is a balance sheet off if the other reports are in order?

Brigham: It starts with the balance sheet. They would usually be based on reconciling these balance sheets accounts. All of these have been posted. We do a lot of digging in the weeds. These are things we found, and we point it out. This is all year end stuff. We point it out so that the things we found this year won't be repeated next year. Thank you again to the staff and manager. We got along great and happy with the outcome.

Heston: What is RSI?

Brigham: RSI is Required Supplementary Information which are a lot of schedules in the back

Heston: You recommended that we shouldn't have multiple accounts? It is in the second document.

Brigham: Multiple accounts can create extra work reconciling each one individually. If you condense into a few accounts, then that reduces number of cash accounts reconciled. You would end up with one spreadsheet to simplify journal entries and interest accumulation. We noticed that other Towns do it and it saves a lot of time.

Heston: The Selectboard reviews this information to help build the budget. If we are talking about moving the audit to September when we need to build the budget in Oct/Nov/Dec.

Brigham: You should not wait for the audit. Connie can give you a update at any time. The audit will point out small adjustments. You can get the numbers right off the system.

Bona: I only want to back the audit up a week. Money is still coming in from taxes and water from prior fiscal year. We have until Aug 30 to collect that. If the audit process starts the next week, then I don't have enough time for adjustments. An extra week helps to pick up on stray accounts receivable.

Werneke: This has been discussed in the past. Why is the timing process off from audit to budget process? While we have not had any major adjustments what would happen if we did? Do other Towns adjust or follow different fiscal years?

Brigham: A lot of towns use their numbers and I just validate their numbers. You can post adjustments to your accounts once I walk out that door without having to wait for the report.

Werneke: So we should use the process in real time even though the report is not out. We benefit from the information the audit is deriving. That is happening in Oct/Nov and we finalize in Dec for budget vote.

Bona: When we start the budget process, I am using the actuals in our system. I put all the new year budget sheets together before the end of September. The main thing we are looking for are adjusted entries that affect reserves or unassigned funds.

Werneke: Any questions or comments from public? No. Thank you, Rick!

Review of the FY23 Capital Plan

Werneke: Department heads and town staff spent a lot of time to put together a capital plan FY23. Would Connie or Josh provide an overview. This is not a vote but a discussion item. This is an opportunity for Selectboard to provide some feedback.

Arneson: The vote will be in future. We will have a hearing and collect feedback before officially adopted by Selectboard. We have been looking at this since summer. FY23 budget to pay for major portions of equipment without loans and using unassigned funds, restricted funds, and reserve funds. She looked at all capital equipment across all departments and tried to accomplish the same strategy. Connie did a great job working with Department Heads.

Bona: This is a great group of people who helped me cycled through items. The objectives are to stabilize taxes and administrative fees and interest. The document which shows the capital plan for five years. It shows what we are buying, the replacement cycle and how we are paying for it. As I talked to Department Heads it just didn't add up to me, so I looked back 15 years. Over the last 15 years we have spent over \$725,000 in interest on loans which is huge. For instance, we have a 2005 fire truck that should have been retired but we cannot because we still have a loan on it that we are still paying interest. We dug down into the life cycle of different equipment. How much does older equipment cost us in repairs? How much could we get for a trade-in? How can we stabilize what we are collecting in taxes and utilizing in reserves? We were able to do this because of the unassigned funds in FY23 budget. From this point forward we should

not have to take a loan for a piece of equipment or special projects. This is a huge savings. If we look at the Highway spreadsheet, the 15-year interest tab shows how much our loans have cost us.

Furr: On the Highway tab what is line 6, what are the numbers not labeled?

Bona: That is the interest we paid from our loans. We got all of these on a good cycle and carried it out 15 years. You can see dump trucks cycle through more than once. If you scroll down and to the left, you can see the block of negatives which are trade-ins. We have had some good success with trading in the dump trucks and pickup trucks. If you look at FY23 column you can see where we use Unassigned Funds. If you look at the trade in, unassigned funds and capital reserve in FY23 we had \$151,000 left. How can we pay for this? We collect taxes to pay loans. Lines 17, 13, 33 down deposits for Pete's big purchases next year and how much we are putting into reserves. I am using FY23 as a base for how much total taxes we need for Highway capital. How can we keep that number stable throughout 15 years? It will go up a little but then we level off at \$190,000 in FY26. If you look down to Reserve Line of 190,000 allows us to build and use those capital reserves without taking a loan. We carried same theory to Fire, Police, Water & Sewer. In the General Summary tab, we have an idea how it adds up between all departments. At \$1,136,053 in FY23 and following this plan to FY37 considering inflation it is not a bad increase. This plan allows us to get new fire trucks without taking out big loans. The second spreadsheet is for buildings and infrastructures. No big surprises in Highway, Fire, Recreation, General Summary weren't that bad. The Town Center is an issue as we do not know what we are doing. If we take a \$3,000,000 loan over 30 years, it will be about \$150,000 per year depending on ARPA funds. Still a way to go before any recommendations on how we proceed with Town Center. If you go back to Highway tab FY23, the Recreation and Transportation Committee have put together some million-dollar proposals. Two of them are sidewalk projects but we might receive \$800,000 for each project. If we use some of our sidewalk reserve, you will see the green cells (Total Taxes Raised in columns FY26 & FY27) where it isn't as level as the equipment spreadsheet. Pete, do you want to speak about the Bridge and Culvert Reserve or Guardrail reserve?

Gosselin: The Bridge and Culvert Reserve is our matching funds for the Structure Grants we apply for every year. About every fourth or fifth year we get about a \$175,000 Structure Grant for a \$250,000 project so we will pull from the Reserve. Also, that Reserve builds up for major repair of Bridges or large diameter culverts. For instance, a T-style concrete bridge built in 1924 is going to need replacement in 10 to 15 years. That could cost \$1-2 million depending on design. The Reserve covers all our infrastructure. About 5 or 6 years ago we had many requests about guardrail replacements which are old and probably put in the 1950s. Our budget of \$3,000 per year which does about 50 feet of guardrail. With 8-10 miles of guardrail that is a needle in the haystack. We started the Reserve such that when it reached \$20,000-\$30,000 we would pick off a large project. Our money is at about \$10,000. Our plan is the Southview roadway project then Kenyon Rd and many other places that require. Plenty of 500 ft stretches where we need to make replacements. We need a sizable amount of money to do these projects. A crucial Reserve we need to have.

Bona: This allows us to avoid spikes and sticker-shock. Looking at water & wastewater and the Gateway Project, Kendall had me plug in \$1,000,000 for Gateway extension with water and the same thing for wastewater. What surprised me was if it is \$197,000 in FY23 then it would be a little lower in FY37 due to lose of loans. It is even more dramatic in the wastewater tab which starts at \$196,000 and goes down to \$130,000 in

FY37. Our finances are in a good place with the Reserves especially if going to FY37. This takes care of emergencies and wastewater plans.

Werneke: Kudos to all the details and work going into this. The purpose of tonight is to get feedback for a future vote. Any feedback from Selectboard.

Heston: This was very helpful.

Hill: I agree very helpful. I see that flattening out the loan payment cycle is an admirable pursuit. For Water & Sewer we should review this with the Commission. While we want to flatten out the spending spikes, we want to see how it influences tax payments and water/sewer user fees.

Furr: Setting money aside and being able to spend it is the smart way to go.

Bona: Is there something more or less you would like to see?

Werneke: My caution is to be careful of the presentation of the plan. As a government we need to be careful not to promise money outside of the current year. It is unlikely we want to borrow lots of money. But be careful to not say we would never take out a loan. This represents good management practices to help reduce risk and budget swings. It is important how we present this to the public. Every decision needs to be made in the moment and not to promise things we might not be able to do like “never taking out a loan.”

Bona: Do you want to see the 15-year plan or just the 5-year plan?

Werneke: I think the 5-year plan is responsible to present options. It is okay to have an internal document that shows options for 15 years, but it is probably beyond our scope.

Hill: I like seeing the 15 years but what do we know about the cost or design of fire trucks 15 years out.

Heston: The State mandates the 5-year plan so it is more realistic to show that.

Bona: The word document provides a general overview without including the spreadsheets.

Hill: For instance, the cost of replacing the slate roof of the library is not for another slate roof. If we replace the roof, then how much would we save for a roof replacement. It depends on when and circumstances.

Werneke: Some things have longer life cycles for 15 years like a building. Where a police car or fire truck makes sense on a 5-year cycle. It would be helpful if there was a document that lists your assumptions for replacements (gas or electric). You collected a tremendous amount of insight from the Department Heads for future use. It is also important to understand how numbers materialized.

Bona: A lot of this is based on the depreciation cycle.

Hill: If you defer a lot of maintenance for a long time you end up with a big spike like Water & Sewer faced. A whole bunch of loans that disappear in 10 years. Guardrails are a little sketchy and you start to realize that might need replacement sooner rather than later. In other words, deferred maintenance catches up.

Werneke: Thanks to everyone who put some much work into this. It was very well done. This will come back to the Selectboard for a vote on a future date.

Consideration of approval of job description for Elected Town Treasurer

Werneke: There has been an elected Town Treasurer that has served for many years. There has been a shift in that role. Job description needed to be updated. Because this is an elected official, we want the Selectboard to approve the job description.

Heston: A sentence that says “completes the duties...” has been deleted. I wonder why as it should follow State statute. It is not the same as listed later in the document. “The primary job function is to complete statutory financial duties, in particular Title 24.” Above in the document the following was deleted: “The primary job function is to complete statutory financial duties, in particular Title 24” Will people know Title 24 VSA, Chapter 51?

Werneke: Can we take the section that was deleted at the top of the document into the bottom section.

Heston: It was deleted to review quarterly reports. I think our Treasurer should look at them monthly even though the Selectboard only reviews them quarterly.

Bona: Let’s take a look at how much we are paying on a monthly basis. All the items on the document are not what is currently done by the Treasurer.

Heston: I think you added review quarterly reports. I think it should be monthly reports. It is a 10-20 hour per month job. If we find that isn’t enough time to do monthly reviews, then we have that conversation.

Bona: The Treasurer will not be gathering the data. Therefore, you are asking me to a full reporting every month instead of a budget status report which is time consuming.

Heston: I think the Treasurer should be in the system and able to run their own reports.

Bona: We can change the job description to reflect that they would create and not just review the reports. That may be more than the person is bargaining for as they might assume they are just signing checks and loan documents. This was an eye opener to us

Heston: I feel a Town Treasurer should look at the financials monthly.

Bona: Clarification that the Selectboard does not have authority over the Treasurer. They work together. VLTC says the Treasurer and Selecbord should work together on deciding matter of investing our money.

Arneson: Maybe we find a middle ground. The Treasurer reviews the budget status report every month or reports that Connie creates quickly. Every quarter she spends several hours developing a quarterly report. The Treasurer would look at the simpler reports on a monthly basis or ask questions for further details.

Heston: I like that idea. What do others feel?

Werneke: Hearing nothing I assume everyone agrees.

Furr: I agree.

Hill: I am looking at Title 24 for baseline comparison.

Heston: Is the current Treasurer signing checks? Are we taking that off the job description?

Bona: You can see it is up above. "The Treasurer must review warrants and corresponding invoices, sign necessary checks, and notify the Selectboard if there are insufficient funds to cover the checks." We are just replacing some old verbiage.

Hill: Title 24 Chapter 51 sub chapter 002 section 1571 says "the Town Treasurer shall find quarterly reports with the legislative body. The Statute envisions some details that we revisit.

Werneke: I feel this is not ready for a vote. I suggest you send feedback to Josh and Connie separately. I don't think it is productive to go through this level here. We should note any questions ahead of time so we can review later. Any other questions or feedback from Selectboard on this matter.

Furr: I agree, I want to read Title 24 as well.

Hill: Maybe we designate two members of the Selectboard to work with Town staff on the job description.

Heston: I would volunteer to do that.

Hill: I vote for June & Jay.

Furr: I am ok with that.

Werneke: Thank you so much for June & Jay to work with Town and bring something back for us to review as Selectboard.

Bona: I suggest we include the elected Treasurer with the conversation as well.

Werneke: Fantastic point. Let's have that in the Minutes so Josh can follow up on that.

Public Hearing to consider adoption of a rule requiring the wearing of face coverings indoors in public spaces

Furr moved to open the public hearing to consider adoption of a rule requiring the wearing of face coverings indoors in public spaces. Heston seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed

Werneke: We need to read the rule aloud or just the Title if the Selectboard decides to do so.

Heston moved to forgo reading the entire rule aloud and read only the title. Furr seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed

Werneke: The title of the rule is “RULE REQUIRING WEARING FACE COVERINGS INDOORS IN PUBLIC SPACES” adopted by Selectboard on January 18th and running from February 4th to March 5th, 2022. Depending on how the Selectboard votes, the rule is still in effect until March 5th. If approved, then the rule would run from March 6 to April 4. Act 1 says Selectboard would have another opportunity to extend the rule through April 30th. This a rule for the Town of Richmond for public indoor spaces. The rule does not specify any enforcement. I am looking forward comment or questions.

Furr: The rate has come down, but I would rather have it extended

Arneson: Richmond Resident Bruce LaBounty requests end of mask mandate.

Werneke: Any other member of public want to make a comment for or against mandate?

Hill: What is the current mandate in the school systems?

Werneke: The Agency of Education is not extended the State rule of masking in schools. The State is allowing individual schools to make individual decisions about mask mandates. Guidance is provided that 80% vaccination rate schools can make that decision about mandates. I have many perspectives as a professional. I have met with many federal and state policy makers. I would struggle on how I would vote on this. This is the first time ever that my public inquires have tipped toward ending the mask mandate. I have investigated scientific guidance and advice in world public health industry. Masks alone aren't the thing social distancing, hand washing, vaccination rates, masks together provide the safety net. Case counts are not useful tool due to number of at home tests. The iteration of the strain continues which is unknown to its infection spread. I don't know best answer but how do we protect those most vulnerable like non-vaccinated children or other high risks for hospitalization.

Furr: How often have we declared victory? When is it all over when it is not? None of us know the future on what each new disease will present. I am hesitant to just get rid of the mask mandate. There is no enforcement if you walk into Richmond Market without a mask. Even if you want to not wear a mask nobody is going to enforce it. This is advice from the Selectboard of what we think should be done. I don't feel good saying we should get rid of the masks now.

Erin Wagg: A mask mandate is good encouragement for being safe and taking care of each other. How are our schools & hospitals dealing with these consequences? Are schools and hospitals suffering? We should keep the mask mandate if the schools & hospitals still see a need.

Werneke: The hospitals are under tremendous pressure, stress and strain of workload. We are pulling in FEMA and other volunteers for mental health and patient care. This might be due to having incidental findings of COVID where a patient might need care for a broken hip but end up getting isolated. The best thing we can do for our health care workers is to take care of ourselves. Our health care workers are burnt out and getting sick due to stress and injuries over two years.

Rod West: Why is the Selectboard maintaining a mandate when it is publicly acceptable or mainstream? It is putting you in a hazard in terms of your leadership. I suggest Selectboard should remove mandate and provide health measures and guidance for how to promote public health. I want guidance that isn't shaming people in terms of having a

mandate but turning it around to promote staying home when sick or other measures for public health.

Heston: I wear a mask and I think our leadership is about respecting essential workers. We extend this with the authority the State has given us. We should do it for our residents. Even if 50% of the people are not wearing a mask at a place like Stowe then I still wear a mask to respect the employees who see many people every day. I think it is the right thing to do the extend this for another 30 days. We can stay on the downward swing if we keep the mandate.

Furr: I am amazed at how many people are immune compromised. We can show some leadership by wearing masks to help many people.

Werneke: I see a chat from Patty Brushett I might be helpful to ask our business orders. I came tonight undecided but now feel we should keep the mask mandate. We are asked to look at vaccination rates and meet a floor was the only guidance. We have only one more chance to extend this after tonight. To what end do we know this the mandate is still needed? COVID is not going away. When does it transition from a public health crisis or pandemic to addressing individual health needs? That is the reality of the tough transition we have to do.

Sander: Four nights ago, I would have continued the mandate. The cases are going down which suggests the pandemic is going down. But I still do not feel comfortable rolling the dice. I'd rather wait another 30 days and explain to people we were more prudent on being too cautious.

Werneke: Patty Brushett states we will know when the hospitals aren't overwhelmed and the schools don't have a mask mandate.

Sander: One person reached out to me to say they were in favor of the mask mandate.

Heston moves to close the public hearing to consider adoption of a rule requiring the wearing of face coverings indoors in public spaces. Hill seconds

Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed

Furr moved to adopt the Rule Requiring Wearing Face Coverings Indoors In Public Spaces and to have the Rule in effect for 30 days starting on Sunday, March 6 through Monday, April 4, 2022. Sander seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander in favor. Werneke abstains. Motion passed

Consideration of approving the replacement of two basement windows at the Town Center

Werneke: This request was reviewed by the Town Center and Library Committee. Rebecca Rouiller, the director of Radiate Art Space requesting some functioning windows. She seeks healthy spaces for Spring and Summer and got some quotes from Jay Labare to put in windows in place of boards. There is the likelihood that these windows would be removed for in next few years but are important now for providing good air quality and a safe and hospitable learning environment.

Rouiller: Thank you for the excellent summary.

Werneke: The Town Center and Library Committee recommended we approve this request.

Heston: Can you give us the plan for future considerations of Town Center in two years?

Werneke: This is a good discussion for future agenda. We met with Town stakeholders and representatives. We also had a public discussion for ideas. We have many issues to consider for an architect to present for building size and needs. For instance, police evidence room cannot have water pipes running through it. We are 3-4 years away from where any new building windows may be. In regard to the windows in the Radiate Art Space it might impact one of the murals.

Heston move to approve replacement of two basement windows at the Town Center for a total cost not to exceed \$3,182.30 to be paid for with \$1,000 in donations from Radiate Art Space and up to \$2,182.30 from the Town Center and Library Reserve Fund. Furr seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed

Consideration of approving a vendor for IT Managed Services

Arneson:

In 2019 we put out an RFP for IT services for Administrative operations of the Town. We chose Tech Group and have been using for last three years. We figured it was a good time to look at other IT services as Tech Group's current plan was going away. Water & Sewer does not currently have the same managed services included with Town but have been doing it in-house. A managed services provider for Water & Sewer makes sense with potential high-risk breaches. We reviewed a total of 4 bids. Two of those bids moved on in our selection process: Tech Group and simpleroute. Water & Sewer currently uses simpleroute for some security and email situations. Summary of two RFP proposals to consider:

Tech Group proposal had a few different options. One option is to stay with the current program which is going up in price and does not include Water & Sewer. They also proposed an Essential Care and Complete Care services. Essential Care services does not include help desk time. Complete Care services provides unlimited help desk time and in-person for anything covered by scope. If we want to add a computer or server or new project they would be charging an hourly rate for that. The Complete Care services is similar to the simpleroute services in price and scope of services including Water & Sewer. The Complete Care overall annual service fee of \$22,386

simpleroute proposal includes same as Tech Group with unlimited help desk, backup of local computers/server, virus monitoring, installation of anti-virus/software updates, providing reports, asset inventory management. simpleroute also includes 4 hours per month of assistance not included in current project scope. This is not provided by Tech Group. So if we have a new project or a new computer within the year we are able to use at now additional charge. Dark web monitoring is also included in simpleroute but missing in Tech Group. Water & sewer computers would be able to be backed up to the Admin server. The simpleroute overall annual service fee of \$23,688 on a yearly basis. The price difference for Water and Sewer costs are \$3,240 for TechGroup and \$5,922 for simpleroute based on the number of computers we have. We asked for different quotes for Admin and Water/Sewer just to see if there was a better fit. Kendall & I recommend simpleroute as our best provider. Currently we do not have a budget item in Water & Sewer for FY2022 to pay for this. We would need to overspend somewhere in the next 4

months. We would then add an item to the Water & Sewer budget for FY2023. This is critical as we see an increase in computer threats.

Our recommendation is simplerout with some savings and improved services. Water & Sewer also voted to move forward with simpleroute.

Furr: Yes, Water & Sewer already talked about it.

*Furr moved to go with simpleroute as our I.T. vendor. Heston seconded.
Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed*

Arneson: We should be making the transition in March.

Update on project by Vermont Electric Coop to relocate wires on Snipe Ireland Rd

Werneke: This is an awareness only item that requires no Selectboard action.

Wright Preston: This is a great upgrade. The current telephone and electric lines go through a swamp and woods which are not serviceable.

Werneke: Pete Gosselin has been working with VEC to ensure the work with coordinate with the storm water work. Work will begin later this year. Any questions? How much of the work is underground?

Preston: Approximately about a mile. Fourteen telephone poles will be removed. Most of the lines will be placed underground in the right of way or close to landowners adjoining property.

Werneke: Hopefully this helps reduce the amount of power outages.

Review and discussion of training offered by Abundant Sun

Werneke: Abundant Sun is a trainer and consultant who has also worked with Milton with their inclusion training. I believe June & Jay were also introduced to Abundant Sun at VLCT conferences. We want to start with training for the Selectboard. Under the DEI initiative we discussed this, and June reached out to Jude from capabilities. Can you share what you have learned and how we can schedule next steps for Town Staff and Selectboard training?

Heston: The diversity, equity, inclusion presentation by VLCT was very impressive. This came up at a Richmond Racial Equity Committee meeting, so I reached out to her. Her work is education and not training. It is important to start with Leadership and she has worked with a lot of Vermont Municipalities. Trainings are virtual with lots of references. Our staff, Selectboard and committee chair and community members to go through this program and learn how to work on our biases and recognize them

Werneke: What is the timing and commitment?

Heston: Due to Open Meeting laws, we would setup 3 same sessions. There would be no more than 2 Selectboard members per session. We would include Town Staff, Committee Chairs, and Richmond residents. There would be no more than 25 people per sessions. Each session is about 3-4 hours.

Furr: Other people would love to take this as well. Could we schedule other sessions after the first round?

Hill: I think training is appropriate but not sure it should be an open public meeting.

Heston: We are the first Selectboard to offer this to the entire Selectboard.

Werneke: If we engage in training then we would need to get some estimates for other trainings. Is there anyone else we can request to get a feel of a cost like Racial Equity. We want to ensure quality. I would love to include local business owners in some of our sessions.

Furr: Western Slopes is defunct so no longer a resource.

Werneke: Any further comments or thoughts on training? Next steps are to be compliant with procurement policy and going through it as necessary. It will help us identify deeper dives into the subject matter.

Heston: I want to get some more dates from her. We want to give time for the new Selectboard to meet before jumping into the training. The current dates we have are April 5, 6, 20. Each member would join one 4-hour session on either day.

Update from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee including recommendation regarding request to use a portion of the ARPA funds for broadband improvements

Furr: June & I are members of the ARPA Committee, and we want the survey to improve the readability of the survey (currently at 13 grade reading level). We do not need to allocate this money until FY24, the Committee would rather get it right than rush it. One proposal is for a match to improve broadband. We do not want to spend the money early and wait to use this money to see what works best. We are going to take our time and get it right.

Werneke: What is the timeline for getting the ideas?

Furr: Rebecca Starks is re-drafting the survey. We need to discuss forums in the summer or later spring. The ARPA Committee will make a recommendation to the Selectboard.

Discussion of considering when to re-implement an in-person meeting location

Werneke: This question came up from Water & Sewer as well. We should touch in periodically on these measures. I feel there are members of the public who want to show up. Hybrid meeting works best for everyone. What did Water & Sewer decide?

Sander: Water & Sewer will discuss this at our next meeting, March 7

Furr: We discussed how could we provide opportunity to open locations for virtual spaces. Josh is available to open meeting room. We can advertise for people to use the meeting room during meetings while still providing options for Selectboard members to participate virtually.

Werneke: I have a conflict with the Town Manager holding in-person meetings while elected Selectboard members stay at home. What is our mindset for the appropriate

measures and for how long? Data on vaccination rates is available for Richmond and we cannot make the decision based on day-to-day cases.

Furr: We were just discussing options and having Town Manager in meeting room was an option. I am happy to stay virtual but if others start going in piecemeal then I would probably join.

Bard: Consider that the State Committee meetings were generally virtual. Then they became all in-person, but some Legislatures were still virtual. This is the current model for elected officials and maybe we mirror that behavior.

Werneke: There is not an easy answer as we navigate this. The next meeting is listed as 100% Virtual. How will we decide and communicate these options? For the record, Mary Houle does not participate virtually but almost always participates in person. It bothers me that she is missing in the virtual environment.

Approval of Minutes Warrants and Purchase Orders:

Minutes

*Heston moved to approve the minutes of 2/7/22 as written. Hill Seconded
Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed*

*Sander moved to approve the minutes of 2/17/22 as written. Heston Seconded
Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed*

Purchase Orders

*Bard moved to approve Purchase Order 4162 to Mount Mansfield Unified School District. in the amount of \$1,795,855.33 for 3rd quarter education taxes. Sander seconded
Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed*

Warrants

Furr: On pg 45 of the General Invoices document, the net is \$9,700 but on the next page it is \$11,340 (Maheux - Installation of Baseboard Heating in Planning & Zoning)

Arneson: Yes, the larger number is the Purchase Order quote and the smaller number was the adjusted payment. We already approved the Purchase Order but will not pay the full amount.

*Furr moved to approve the warrants as presented. Hill seconded
Roll Call Vote: Heston, Hill, Furr, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed*

Next Agenda:

Werneke: The Feb 28th Public Meeting is an information session for Town Meeting. Can we add an agenda item to that? As the departing Chair, do we want to identify the new Chair before the March 7th meeting? Who will work with Josh to prepare the meeting and then lead the meeting? Could we propose an interim chair on Feb 28th?

Arneson: We cannot amend Feb 28th meeting as it was already warned and notified and posted. I was suggesting that we use the March 7th organizational meeting to appoint new leadership.

Hill: We should appoint a new chair with the new Selectboard members. If the previous Chair is not part of that group, then it would go to the Vice Chair in the interim.

Werneke: I would like to recommend June Heston as the new Chair.

Agenda for March 7th Selectboard Meeting:

- _Diversity Education Bids
- _Town Treasurer Job Description
- _Town Center Committee update
- _Route of Vermont will discuss this summer
- _Capital Plan hearing date
- _Town Meeting updates
- _Speed study on Huntington, Hinesburg, and Kenyon Rd
- _VTrans plans and email from Jon Kart regarding Rt 2 planning
- _Planing Commission & Zoning priorities related to Gateway expansion, wetlands, riparian buffers, river erosion, and flood plains.

Adjournment

Furr moved to adjourn. Heston seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Furr, Heston, Hill, Sander, Werneke in favor. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:11 pm

Chat file from Zoom:

01:29:26 MMCTV Erin: Can you zoom in?
01:30:07 MMCTV Erin: Thanks!
01:50:48 Patty Brushett: It might be helpful to ask our business owners.
02:05:06 Patty Brushett: I came tonight Undecided on this and what I have heard makes me feel we need to continue with the mask mandate. Keep taking the best care of each others dour health care workers
02:08:44 Patty Brushett: We'll know when the hospitals are not overwhelmed and the schools don't have a mask mandate
02:20:23 Rebecca Rouiller: THANK YOU!