

**Town of Richmond
Selectboard Meeting
Minutes of March 20, 2023**

Members Present: Bard Hill, David Sander, Jay Furr, Jeff Forward, Lisa Miller

Absent: None

Staff Present: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Duncan Wardwell, Assistant to the Town Manager; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Allen Carpenter, Interim Water Resources Superintendent; Benjamin Herrick, Interim Police Chief

Others Present: Meeting was recorded by MMCTV, Andy Bessette, Angela Cote, Ann Naumann, Ben Feinson, Bridget McElroy, Brodie O'Brien, Cara LaBounty, Clarkbe210, Connie Van Eeghen, Cristina, Dan Mullen, Diane Collins, Elizabeth Palchah, Erin Farr, Francis Churchill, Gretchen Paulsen, Hillary Holmes, Ian Bender, Jared Katz, Jay Labare, Jeff Price, Jess M, Jim Feinson, John Linn, John Rankin, Jude Smith Rachele, June Heston, Karin Ward, Karl Goetze, Katie Jewett, Kenny Komala, Kim Souza, Kimberly Lord, Laurie Dana, LiLing Young, Lisa Kory, Maiab, Martha Marciel, Marshall Paulsen, Martha Nye, Mary Houle, Matthew Parisi, Michele Morris, MNC Coach, Morgan Perlman, Nick Ponzio, Patty Brushett, Pennie Rand, Phillippa Owens, Rachel Rudder, Rebecca Wojtecki, Roth Bernstein, Sammy, Sarah Reeves, Seth, Steve Bower, Strix, Susan Wells, Theresa Logan, WCAX

Call to Order: 7:00pm

Welcome by: Furr

Public Comment:

Ponzio: My name is Nicolas Ponzio. I'd like the Selectboard to consider a motion to adopt a non-binding resolution regarding safe sharing of the roadways.

Furr: I think we can probably fit that in. There's a logical place for it to go.

Consideration of approval of the Chittenden Solid Waste District FY24 Budget

Furr: We have Sarah Reeves from the CSWD. The floor is yours, let us know what you need us to do about the budget.

Reeves: I am the Executive Director of CSWD. I appreciate the opportunity to present our scope for budget
(https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/03/3a2_CSWD_Proposed_FY_24_Budget_Packet_3.15.2023.pdf).

We are a municipality who was formed for the purpose of managing the waste that is generated in Chittenden County by residents and institutions. You'll see that the bulk of our revenue does come from our user fees, or tip fees. The remaining come from material sales, or product sales and solid waste management. We're looking at revenue of just at \$15,400,000. Our expenses are looking to come in at about \$14,400,000. The

remaining income from operations, nearly \$900,000 then gets flowed into our various reserves. We have a priority list of our reserve accounts. The bulk does tend to go into our capital reserve fund. We have an operating reserve, we have biosolids reserve. Compared to the current budget, we're looking at under 10% increase in our revenue, and a 9% increase in our expenses.

The administrative costs are increasing due to moving into a new administrative office building. Materials management also increases. Our operations programs (drop off centers, the recycling facility, the environmental depot rover and the compost facility) need to be as self-sufficient as possible. Our charter does say that once we have solid waste facilities, they need to be generating revenue other than through a town assessment.

The solid waste management fee is \$27 per ton. That is charged to haulers when they deliver trash to be disposed in the Coventry landfill. We are not increasing that fee this year. There is a mechanism for a series of slow, steady increases to cover certain things.

Our materials recycling facility is looking to increase activity from \$80 per ton to \$85 per ton. That is in direct relation to a significant increase in the cost of the contract that we have with Casella, to operate that facility on our behalf. We are budgeting the revenue from the sale of recycling at just about the same as we had for this current fiscal year.

Our compost facility is also increasing their tip fee from \$65 a ton to \$70 a ton. In our Dropbox centers, they've been experiencing for the past five or so years heavy subsidies by the solid waste management fee. We are raising bag fees, effective July 1, to \$3 for a small bag, \$8 for a medium bag, and \$11 for a large bag.

We're also experiencing some difficulty in hiring some folks. We are proposing in this budget a 7% cost of living adjustment (COLA). We also had an increase in healthcare benefits to the tune of about 10 or 12%. To offset those costs, we moved to a lower cost health care plan as of January. As of July, we will be requiring employees who opt into a health care plan to contribute 3.5% of their salary towards the premiums up from 3.25%.

We are still in the midst of a very robust capital plan. The one reserve that is struggling is the post-closure reserves for the landfills in Williston. When you close the landfill, you have 30 years or care and then you can apply to the State for custodial care. We need to do to make sure that we can enter into custodial care within about the next five or seven years.

For our charter, we are required to go to our member towns and ask to approve our budget.

Miller: I'd like to know what's your percentage increase for the drop off center fees for individuals.

Reeves: The current small bag price is \$2 and we're bumping that up to \$3. It really depends on how each household wants to manage how many trips they want to make. It's hard to say how much might impact on an individual.

Hill moved to approve the Chittenden Solid Waste District FY24 Budget as presented. Sander seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Miller not in favor. Forward, Furr, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.

Update on Welcoming and Engaging Communities

Furr: Many members of the public have been probably following that the Town of Richmond has been engaging with a number of State and local programs on the subject of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Former Selectboard Chair, June Heston, and Josh Arneson have been participating with the VLCT Welcoming and Engaging Communities Cohort, which is a partnership with the consultant Abundant Sun, whose director is here tonight.

Heston: Jude Smith Rachele is here and she has been guiding us through this program since last fall. The Town did pass a Declaration of Inclusion, but we've kind of been fumbling trying to figure out what to do after that. We applied for this program, got accepted, and it was of no cost to the Town. Part of this program has been to do a survey of Town staff and community volunteers.

Smith Rachele: It's lovely to be here, my first time in Richmond. Thank you for enabling Richmond to go through the first cohort of Welcoming and Engaging Communities. It's been an honor to have you as one of the eight towns and cities that's been part of this work.

Abundant Sun has been in Vermont since 2015. The cohort is about welcoming and engaging communities, that's the objective. Diversity, equity, and inclusion has something to do with it and it doesn't have everything to do with it. We really look at health and well-being of everybody inside of the community. We can make sure that inside of Richmond and the other municipalities, that we're doing the very best that we can. If we are going to be welcoming and engaging, it is really important to make sure that everybody who is serving this Town and serving the community feels welcome to engage. It is illogical to expect people to make others who are not yet here feel welcome to engage. We work very hard to stay away from political debate. My job as a social scientist, is to do social science.

As Jay says, we are a cultural transformation agency. We've lived through three years of unprecedented change and transformation. That was a good thing because we learned that we could actually do things we never thought were possible. That is what diversity and inclusion is all about, the capacity to innovate. The capacity that we have to concentrate on people who are less advantaged or underrepresented. We want everybody to begin to think more creatively about the world and the possible without feeling that the transformations are going to take things away from people. The kind of work we've been engaged in is to help the leadership with critical thinking, decision making, and ethics leadership. Diversity and inclusion mean nothing if we don't have great governance, if you don't have an ethical climate, and if we don't have solid engaged leadership.

When I go through the data, I can give you a little bit of an insight into what we've been doing with the Welcoming and Engaging Communities Cohort. We started in October,

we came together physically. Then we had six remote roundtables between then and today. Today, we all got together again, physically, in the town offices of Middlebury. In December 2022, we've put together a report of all of the data that we aggregated across the nine cities and towns.

We had the survey open from the first to the 21st of November of last year. We received 519 completed responses; we scrub the data to make sure that everything's valid. We came up with 510 validated responses. I'm going to give you an abridged version of the data from all eight of the cities and towns that participated. Then at the end, I'll show you Richmond data so you can compare and contrast. We had Brandon, Hartford, Hinesburg, Jericho, Middlebury, Putney, Richmond, and Williston. You can see by numbers, you're the second largest on the list, you had 89 people inside of Richmond, who completed the survey. We've looked at employed staff, we've looked at elected roles, appointed positions, volunteers or interns and people who might have more than one role with inside the towns. There are five items that we measured for:

- My SUPERVISOR relationships
- My COLLEAGUE relationships
- All are treated with RESPECT
- My satisfaction with CULTURE
- Commitment to DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

There's a sixth item, which is an employment promoter score. We also wanted to see if it relevant to everybody.

The good news is that people who completed the survey, 510 valid responses, we had a large percentage of people who self-identified. Nobody's forced to do anything. We have a big narrative around how white Vermont is and this summary shows around 486 people. Diversity isn't just about race and ethnicity. Are we all the same gender? The same socio-economic background? None of us has mental illness? Age is diversity, all sorts of things like disability, health, physical, mental, sexual orientation. But let's get into the meat of the matter. We're talking making our communities more welcoming and more engaging. We wanted to know, of our 510 valid responses, to what extent are people advocating for their towns and cities? To what extent are people saying this is a great place to live, this is a great place to work. Most diversity equity inclusion initiatives inside of municipal world have been focused on what we do for the community. How do we get them in the room? We're not thinking about our people in any other organization. Your staff are your greatest asset. They've been ignored in the context of diversity and inclusion. You want advocates inside.

We've got a nice little odometer here. We aggregated this in all the towns. When we put together all of the towns' scores, we got a 77. That doesn't mean 77%. This is mostly on a five-point scale. You can either strongly disagree, disagree, I don't know/neutral, you can agree, or you can strongly agree. If it's 75 or above, we're in good shape, that means most people are saying they either agree or strongly agree with that item. You can see the distribution on those items. Light Green is Strong Agree, Dark Green is Agree, Yellow is Not Sure, Orange is Disagree, Red is Strongly Disagree. The Organizational Advocacy, there's a lot of red. And there's a lot of yellow in the middle. In the middle stuff are people who aren't engaged. You need people engaged in order to get to top performance. There current global median score is not so bad overall, because it's a 77.1. You can see for Vermont, the eight municipalities are actually in the upper middle, when it comes to people's Relationships with Supervisors. You'll see we drop into lower

middle with Treated with Respect, Satisfied with Culture, Organizational Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion, and Organizational Advocacy.

The next step with all of this data is going back and asking why. What was behind people's thinking when they answered the questions the way that we did? Where is there room for improvement as we go? The Net Promoter Score means to say that we have more people who are promoters of their municipalities, then there are detractors: 37% Promoters, 24.7% Detractors. We broke down the Employment Net Promoter scores by role. We found people who are elected in our eight municipalities are great at plus 39. Appointed and volunteers are actually in the middle. Then look at our employed staff, absolute zero. They're really not that engaged.

We did see some differences between our towns that were in Chittenden County (+25) and outside of Chittenden County (-3) with Net Promoter Scores. We have a non-binary model that helps us to look at identity overall. What came out around inclusion and belonging is that you're going to be in a better position if you are working in Chittenden County, 7.7 points higher. If you've been in your municipality for more than 11 years, you're going to add five points to that. If you're employed, we're going to take 5.9 points off of that. If you're not straight, we're going to take another 6 points. We can predict how you will be experiencing your town or city.

It also tells a qualitative story. We ask people what are some of the things that you want to see more of. You want to see more housing that's affordable as well as outreach to low income and diverse communities. The narrative around socioeconomics is massive. We have such enormous economic disparity that we don't deal with. We don't have social justice as strongly as we think we do, or we shouldn't do, because we are too poor when it comes to dealing with poverty. These are some of our challenges and strengths. There are good response rates, lots of demographic disclosure, strong working relationships with supervisors and colleagues. There are our challenges, the cohort is overall in the bottom half of small to medium enterprises. Nearly a quarter of the cohort were detractors. We know many of those are staff. Respondents outside of Chittenden County are scoring lower into the minus Net Promoter Score. There's a visual where you could see on the economic index, the four towns that were part of our cohort were much lower on the economic index and the towns inside of Chittenden County.

For Richmond, how do you make sure that people who are here are coming into acceptance because inclusion 100. In the VLCT cohort, you were a little bit lower with People's Relationships to their Supervisors and Co-workers. Your Advocacy was just a little bit below at 76.7. Folks who are employed make it statistically less than the other roles inside a municipality. You can't just be externalizing these conversations about being welcoming and engaging. We know that there's something that we can work on. In Length of Service everything's pretty solid, we can see that people who are here for three to five years are just under 75 but nothing to be alarmed about. Males and Females, nothing's statistically different just a little bit lower people identify as female. Disability, it's not statistically significant. But there's a difference, you can see that we have 10 people who identified as having some kind of disability or ill health, and what is so interesting, they have a better score. You do have a statistical significance under the Sexual Orientation category, where people who identify as non-straight are scoring 70.8. When it comes to the category being treated with Respect, 12 people were identified in that category. We know categorically we need to pay attention to LGBT issues.

Forward: Jay and I are going through the Ideal program, which is related, but different. How do you see the differences between you know what Ideal is compared to this? And how do you see the difference?

Smith Rachele: Our work is so much around organizational development. Our work is around leadership. What I think is the big difference between the track that Ideal takes and the track that we're taking is with abundance. We really want to help with critical thinking, with leadership skills, with diplomacy. I'm not saying that Ideal doesn't do that. We don't have a particular focus on racial equity. Our work is much more in the house and how do we even support them.

Forward: The Ideal program is more open ended. In fact, it's undetermined. We took a similar survey. We're going through that process of individual interviews with Xusana Davis who is leading our program. We're going through individual interviews with her to refine our responses and understand our responses as individuals as well as the cohort.

Hill: How would we know if these initiatives and activities are effective or successful?

Smith Rachele: We are very data driven. We know that there are areas that need to be improved and strengthened. Get the staff engagement up, elevate it, and then the date you do the data, it will tell you in one-year or two-year or three-years, if you're in any better position. I get sometimes quite concerned about the volunteerism of the work because it is hard work. It should be treated like any other business activity with the same rigor and with the same discipline and the same accountability.

Heston: We asked that today at our program because like any other training that VLCT provides, someone leaves that with a skill. One of the things we talked about is having a roadmap so that each town isn't reinventing the wheel, but there is no map. We talked about how we continue to come together since we're the first cohort. It's about engaging leaders and community advocates to change the system.

Smith Rachele: We need to ensure that our systems are more flexible. The change doesn't come in blowing everything up.

Heston: For Richmond, so many people who responded were over 60. We need to figure out how to get younger people involved.

Houle: Thank you very much for your presentation. What do you see is the greatest elevator to assist lower socio-economic folks from lower to higher? Can you identify one or two things that might help to elevate that community to bring them up?

Smith Rachele: That's a very important question. I think the first thing is in the human value and human element. What kind of education are we talking about? Not everybody's going to be the same. I talked about innovation, but this is about how do we help people reach their potential? How do we have the sense of well-being, the sense of value, the sense of place that everybody deserves? I think there's a lot to break down the stigma around poverty. That's going to come through education as well.

Furr: I do want this discussion to continue. There are a number of avenues available to people here in Richmond. The Richmond Racial Equity group, which is not an official Town committee but has been meeting for three years. If people here in the Town are interested in having more discussions about this, meetings can be held to give everybody a chance to weigh in.

An article relevant to this topic is included in the packet.

Consideration of prohibiting group sporting activities on Cochran Rd. for 2023

Furr: I am going to share my screen from strava.com. I walk on Cochran Road a lot as I walked 409 miles here in Richmond last year. I am extremely sympathetic toward the pedestrians, runners, rollerbladers, snowmobilers, skiers, everybody who likes to get out into cars and out of their houses. That's not really the question before us tonight. Mr. Bessette is asking us to consider Rt 2 construction this season therefore people will be diverted on to Cochran Rd. Do we really want organized events that will shut down Cochran Rd for certain amounts of time? Mr. Bessette will be able to speak to it.

Hill: That work on Rt. 2 is both repaving and the replacement of the bridge over the highway. Those will be significantly disruptive to traffic for an extended period of time. It's been 8-10 years that this Selectboard has dealt with this. I have gotten more phone calls and emails about the impact of recreational activity most conspicuously on Cochran Rd. than any other topic.

Sander: Jay is walking the only two east-west routes through Richmond. Rt. 2 will be under construction. The default route becomes Cochran Rd.

Bessette: It is just an idea that I had that I wanted to bring to the board. With the increased traffic on Cochran Rd., it might be a good idea to cancel all organized sporting events where they take up the whole road or part of the road. That said, I apologize for stirring up the hornet's nest but it's not the first time evidently. If there's an emergency, then you need to go down on Cochran Rd. and you've got thousands of joggers. We need to share the road, I agree. It is the bikers and the joggers that do not share the road. They are coming right down your lane. They do not get over.

Hill: It's inevitable that we would have this kind of discussion. There's a long story of concerns of parking and traffic and multiple use. How do we manage this under this particularly trying circumstances when Rt. 2 is significantly disrupted? I go to Overocker frequently and I probably see on a weekday afternoon. 40-50 cars going back and forth.

Wardwell: As a personal residence on 2944 Cochran Rd, I do not want to prohibit recreational activities on Cochran Rd. I don't think we need to do a motion to prohibit activities for 2023. I respect Andy's suggestion, but it should be more case by case.

Parent: I live here in Richmond and the only comment I have about Cochran Rd., is that it's great people can get out there and exercise and ride their bikes and do their jogging. But those signs do say share the road. It has happened coming at me two bicycles in this lane, two runners in this lane and nobody was giving an inch. I was the one that had to share the road. A driver has to completely stop until those four people go past. It's dangerous. Not even saying it's inconvenient. It's very dangerous because I didn't dare

even try to move ahead at all. I came to a complete stop and that was right over there by the horse farm.

Wells: I live on Cochran Rd. and this was brought up to the Transportation Committee meeting last week. We talked about this as maybe limiting the events to Sundays when there's nobody on construction crews.

Holmes: I'm a resident of Essex Junction and I'm the race director for the Round Church Women's Run which right now is scheduled for a Saturday. I appreciate Mr. Bessette's concerns for all of the people who are using Cochran Rd. We can work to be amenable if that means we shift our race to a Sunday. I'm already planning on trying to run it earlier in the morning than we ordinarily do, because it's getting hotter. Richmond is a treasure for everybody in Chittenden County and I want us to be good neighbors and have good relationships with you.

Arneson: The work for Rt. 2 in the center of the Village is scheduled to be nightly. It will be open during the day but reduced to one lane at times.

LaBounty: If they're going to continue from Snipe Ireland Rd. of tearing up route Rt. 2 all the way to where they're going to be building the bridge, then it does go down to one lane traffic. It does reroute all truck traffic through Cochran Rd. I strongly recommend if Richmond doesn't want to put a moratorium on closing Cochran Rd during other days of the week, at least put it to move everything to Sundays. It's about public safety.

Arneson: Currently we have:

- Midwives Move Mountains 5K Fun Run & Walk, usually a Saturday in early October, about 35-40 competitors, organizers do not ask for road closure.
- Richard's Ride, Saturday, May 20, 2023, Adult bike rides departing Cochran Ski Area with no requested road closures, asking for Cochran Rd. to be closed from 9am – 1pm for the Children's Bike Ride
- Round Church Women's Run, usually the last Saturday in July, typical road closure requests as Farr Rd east/west and Thompson Rd north/south starting at 8:25am, Cochran Rd eastbound only, where the race is occurring, also starting at 8:25am, all roads will re-open at 9:15am, although some participants may still be on the course
- The Rooted Vermont Ride has been held at Cochran's and in Richmond for the past two summers. This is event is not happening in 2023

Churchill: I live on Cochran Rd in Richmond. I want to talk about safety. We've already heard that the bigger issue is the two and three and one people who don't share the road. We would look at how do we increase the time that a driver has or that a pedestrian has to see the see the pending collision. That would be reducing the speed limit. We could look at putting energy into increasing the culture of sharing the road. Those kinds of things are our culture initiatives we can try. I am the Director of Environmental Health and Safety at the University of Vermont but I'm not speaking on behalf of the University.

Rand: I live at 19 Church Street just across from the Town Hall. I concur with Francis that I don't think this is about safety. I think we're a Town that wants to encourage our people in our community to be healthy. Rt. 2 is much less safe. There are not a lot of options because the roads in our community are very narrow. Cochran Rd is relatively

flat, it's easy. For the most part, cars can see pedestrians on the road. It represents the culture of our community to see people recreating.

Naumann: I live on the corner of Baker and Tilden Avenue. I am an avid cyclist and walker on Cochran Rd. I'm going to read Vermont Statute Title 23, Chapter 13, Subchapter 003 Use of the Roadway section number 1035.

(a) A vehicle shall not be driven to the left side of the center of the roadway in overtaking and passing another vehicle or a vulnerable user proceeding in the same direction unless authorized by the provisions of this chapter and unless the left side is clearly visible and free of oncoming traffic and vulnerable users for a sufficient distance ahead to permit overtaking and passing to be completed without interfering with the operation of any vehicle or with any vulnerable user approaching from the opposite direction, or with the operation of any vehicle or with any vulnerable user overtaken. In every event, the overtaking vehicle shall return to an authorized lane of travel as soon as practicable and, if the passing movement involves the use of a lane authorized for vehicles approaching from the opposite direction, before coming within 200 feet of any approaching vehicle or a vulnerable user (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/23/013/01035>)

My experience has been that many cars don't seem to understand what the law requires of them to share the road but that means the cyclists and the walkers get out of the way. I have a mirror so I can see people coming and I never ride two abreast. When you're passing a vulnerable user, that means walkers, horses, cyclists, you are required to leave extra room to a minimum of four feet. There is not room to follow the law and have vulnerable users on the road.

Furr: The item on the agenda is a request from a resident. No actual action on the part of Selectboard is required this time. Is there any member of the Selectboard who wishes to make a motion on this topic?

Hill: I think the Transportation Committee discussed this. We tend to be receptive to the recommendations of committees. If they suggested we divert people to Sundays, because that's a better day then I think we should entertain that as a practice. I'm not sure we need a motion ordinance or decision about prohibiting activities.

Miller: Can we lower the speed limit? Can we provide police presence during major busy times?

Furr: In the interests that the Selectboard does not wish to act on Mr. Bessette's motion, I would like to move on to the next agenda point. This is probably not the last time this will come up.

Consideration of approval of Richard Tom Foundation bicycle event

Furr: The next item on our agenda is a request of approval by the Richard Tom Foundation bicycle event to close Cochran Rd. from 11 am to 1 pm on Saturday, May 20.

Ward: My name is Karen Ward and I live on Stage Rd. I use Cochran Rd. often for both driving, biking, and running. I'm also part of the Richard Tom Foundation Board of Directors.

Wright: My name is Tom Wright and I live in Hinesburg. I'm here representing the Richard Tom Foundation as well.

Ward: We've done this before; the police have been really supportive and helpful and invested. We only want two hours, 11 to 1 as that's when the vulnerable users are usually below the age of 10. The main push is to close it for just those two hours with the police presence to keep the children safe.

Wright: Residents are allowed through and we hire Richmond police. They inform them there's an event going on. We put signage on both ends of the road and we put notices in local papers. We also a letter to every resident and every side-road resident, a month ahead of the event.

Ward: Our event is on the 20th of May.

Hill: We are significantly understaffed in our Police Department like very significantly understaffed. Should we ask people having these events to provide their own sheriffs or police for traffic control?

Forward: I'd like to understand a little bit more about what the Richard Tom Foundation is and what this event is for.

Wright: The Richard Tom Foundation was founded and this is our eighth ride that we've done out of Richmond. Our goal is to promote healthy lifestyles and safe roads. Richard was an individual that was killed by a motorist in Hinesburg nine years ago. This is one fundraiser of the year. We have programs where we provide bikes to people who otherwise wouldn't be able to get them. We have programs where we provide scholarships for kids to go to mountain bike camps at Catamount outdoors center. We provide leadership skills for young women. We do a week of safety training with young kids in elementary school so they learn to ride safely. We've scheduled this thing a year ago. We have vendors, caterers, local businesses, Stone Corral, all lined up for Saturday, the 20th. All of our participants have this date on their calendar. It's a big graduation weekend and the vendors are very busy.

Ward: It is not a race at all. It's a ride. The groups that are adults on the bikes don't take over the road and they're staggered. It's just the two hours where there's some kids out there that were most concerned about.

Furr: Laurie Dana has asked why can they schedule without approval from the Town before they promote?

Wright: It's never been an issue. You need to schedule these things in advance for the vendors and everything else. If you request next year for us to come six months in advance, we'll do that. But this is how we've done it for eight years.

Wells: I think it would be important to know when construction is starting, because all the cars were coming down Cochran Rd.

Hill: I don't think we want to find ourselves in a position where Rt. 2 and Cochran Rd is closed at the same time.

Furr: One lane will be kept open. There will be times when there will be flaggers out closing in both directions to move dump trucks in earthmovers.

Hill: There are only so many places that Police, Rescue and Fire can go.

Wright: Richmond Rescue is actually at our event because they use it to promote CPR to everyone.

Furr: There were quite a few times last year when Rt. 2 was literally closed for 20 minutes. We can't guarantee that that won't happen this time.

Houle: Perhaps it's early enough to recommend to VTrans that they not do anything on Rt. 2 that day. VTrans could be a little more flexible.

Miller: How many bikers are there?

Wright: We had 226 bikers last year. For the period of the road closure, there was 46 people above the age of 17 and 30 under the age of 17.

Miller: How long does it take?

Ward: It's about an hour at the most. We close it a little ahead of time and a little afterwards for the stragglers that are coming and going. We start around 10 o'clock. In the past, we've had Police right at the intersection of Dugway Rd. and then right at the intersection of Cochran Rd.

Wright: We like to use the Richmond Police Department. If that's not possible, we'll hire somebody else.

Sander moved to approve the Richard Tom Foundation bicycle event and the closure of Cochran Rd. from 11:00am – 1:00pm on Saturday, May 20, 2023, with the provision that the Richard Tom Foundation will provide adequate law enforcement and traffic control. Forward seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Sander in favor. Hill, Miller abstain. Motion approved.

Forward: Would you consider doing Sunday next year?

Ward: Yes, with a year in advance notice we can.

Proposed Resolution by Cochran Rd. Resident for Safe Sharing of Richmond Roads

Ponzio: My name is Nick Ponzio and I live on Cochran Rd. I drive and recreate on the road literally every day. For the most part, motorists are very respectful of people on the roadway. I share the concerns of my neighbors about increased traffic due to the construction project on Rt. 2 this year and the public safety risks this presents. I understand the Town is working on traffic calming measures. Vermont law does provide for coexistence of vehicles and people on the roadways. The operator of a motor vehicle approaching or passing a vulnerable user shall reduce speed and increase clearance to a recommended distance of at least four feet and shall cross the center of the highway as

provided in Section 1035. A vehicle shall not cross the centerline in overtaking and passing another vehicle or vulnerable user unless the left side is clearly visible and free of oncoming traffic. Clearance of four feet between a car and a person is grossly insufficient to convey the sense of safety. This effectively means crossing entirely into the other lane, or coming to a stop when oncoming vehicles make it unsafe to pass a vulnerable user. I proposed the Selectboard adopt a non-binding resolution to the effect that Richmond encourages drivers to

- yield to vulnerable users with a minimum of eight feet of clearance
- crossing a double yellow line is permitted in the presence of a vulnerable user provided the other side of the road is not occupied by a vulnerable user or oncoming vehicle
- the only way to safely pass both a vulnerable user and an oncoming car or a vulnerable user in the oncoming lane is to come to a stop until one of the parties are passed
- the duty to yield rests entirely with the operator of the motor vehicle.

Vulnerable users have an equal right to use public roads, but do not pose a hazard to other users in the way that motor vehicles do. The responsibility is not on the vulnerable user to remove themselves from the road in the presence of a motor vehicle. It is the duty of the operator of the motor vehicle to yield to the vulnerable user. Thank you for your consideration and service to our community.

Furr: I would make a proposal that we add this to the next agenda.

Hill: This was not warned in advance of the meeting.

Miller: People really shouldn't walk three abreast or four abreast and neither should bikes.

Hill: I recognize it's a minority of bicyclists or cyclists but that behavior sort of impugns the appreciation of many of the drivers. Some of the other behavior is two or three abreast where they don't separate and people popping into the road from the trails.

Sander: The vast majority of the people they see are very respectful. I've seen people hear me coming and they ride two or three abreast just to make a point.

Furr: I'd like to give this the adequate amount of time it deserves.

Consideration of setting a date to hold a special meeting to vote on moving Town Meeting Day to the First Tuesday in March

Furr: At our last meeting a week ago, there were some technical questions about the petition. I would like to leave the floor to Marshall Paulsen and Linda Parent to give us an update.

Paulsen: Linda and I have worked to get clarification on the process for the request that the petition embodies. Linda is prepared to present a request for the Selectboard to consider as a motion.

Parent: The petition was signed by 189 people that we wish to have the business meeting at Town Meeting revert to the Tuesday morning. We have talked to the Secretary of State's office and Vermont League of Cities and Towns. They suggested that we present for you to approve an official warning for this meeting. If we do it tonight, the vote has

to be taken between 30 and 40 days, meaning between April 20 and May 1. We have reserved the Community Room at the Library. The people that are in person may vote by voice vote. We're asking that you approve and sign the official warning that I sent to you.

Paulsen: We have made steps to make a space available in the Library next door on the morning of April 29, which is a Saturday.

Furr: I've had people email me thinking that it was in regard to moving the vote on the budget from voice vote to Australian ballot. This is not what they're requesting. For those of you listening at home, we had approximately 130 actual voters who voted on the budget out of 3377 registered voters. Do we also want to take up at that meeting the question of moving the budget vote to Australian ballot and can we legally do that? Or our next opportunity to consider moving the budgets to Australian ballot would be at the following Town Meeting,

Arneson: Or you could call a Special Meeting.

Forward: Would school vacation affect turnout or not?

Parent: We don't think that would make a difference in how many people come to the meeting. It's just that we could not physically use the school building that day.

Paulsen: It was difficult for us to find that magic day of which we might anticipate a larger number of voters.

Furr: Voters must be present in person to vote, they cannot vote via zoom. Do we wish to state that in a warning?

Parent: It states "the following business from the floor." We plan on advertising this and on Front Porch Forum. It has to be via voice vote.

Furr: Erin Farr said in the chat that judging from the turnout at Town Meeting, I don't think the school vacation will be a problem at this meeting. It didn't seem like there were many young families involved.

*Sander moved to call a special meeting on April 29 to consider moving Town Meeting Day to the First Tuesday in March. Miller seconded.
Roll Call Vote follows discussion.*

Marciel: It might be a good idea to offer the meeting on a non-school vacation weekend. I know it definitely impacted me and it'd be a meeting I would go to. I really appreciated having the evening Town Meeting. I hope that maybe another year or two of attempting it and doing more outreach and advertising might bring in some younger voters and residents. I would just like to see it tried more than just once and also have this meeting not when many younger families are out of town.

Furr: Do we wish to entertain the possibility of moving it out one week?

Parent: This day is what is within the timeline. There was approximately 130 people that voted on that Town Budget of over \$4 million. Having it two nights meant to early morning to late night for the Justice of Peace and me. It was very difficult to get people to work both times.

LaBounty: Town Meeting time period is also during school vacation on that Monday night. I think you might get the same kind of turnout on April vacation as you might have in February vacation.

Furr: We have a motion made by David Sander and a second from Lisa Miller. Please state your name and your vote.

Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.

Forward: Do you need a quorum for the Selectboard?

Paulsen: I don't know for sure but this is a meeting that requires a moderator, either our moderator or if a moderator is not available a Selectboard member, or in the event if Selectboard is not available that Selectboard person can appoint a moderator for that day. To my understanding, that is the only requirement of this special meeting.

Furr: We will check with our attorneys to be sure.

Arneson: I think this would fall into the meeting of the people not of the Selectboard.

Houle: I would ask that Marshall consult the State authority rather than paying money to the attorney.

Consideration of using Town Center funds for Library Repairs

Dana: We're asking for the Selectboard to approve an expenditure from the Town Center fund for some work that we are able to get done on the Library building this summer. We have a contractor and this would be the work that we will apply for a division of historic preservation grant. The work is on the slate and woodworking on the two towers, the lower part of the spire and the square bell tower. We have a total cost for the project of \$54,700. Plus, we think we should add a 15% contingency fee. We would add \$3,000 to manage this project. The total cost is \$65,905 minus that \$14,801 grant. The final costs that come out of the Town Center fund would be \$51,104.

Forward moved to approve the Library Building Exterior Repair work as presented in an amount not to exceed \$65,905 to be paid for with funds from the Town Center Reserve Fund and \$14,801 from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation Grant. Hill seconded.

Roll Call Vote follows discussion

Forward: One of the reasons for being on the Town Center Committee is to look at deferred maintenance on the library as well as this building. We've had a great deal of difficulty trying to find contractors for this particular type of work. We've been able to get him lined up for this summer. The Town Center Committee believes that this project is worthy to move forward this summer.

LaBounty: I have a question on the \$3,000 management fee. What was that for?

Dana: The Town has been working with an owner's rep, Jay Labare. He has been providing the management and supervision of the projects.

Labare: I'm an LLC and I have a full complement of general liability and professional liability insurance for this specific type of work.

Forward: We don't really have a facilities division or department within the Town and our buildings have suffered some deferred maintenance. We've been working with Jay now for several years, on various different projects for both buildings and have been very satisfied with his work.

Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.

Consideration of applying for the Bruhn Grant

Furr: Our next business is also related to the Library. It has to do with a grant called the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant. The application deadline is March 31 and applicants will be notified by May 1 whether they received a grant. The Town of Richmond is the grant applicant. Laurie Dana, Chair of the Library Trustees and member of the Town Building Committee is writing the grant and will work with Josh to submit. They are hoping to get \$100,000 toward the deferred maintenance in the building which includes repair restoration of wood siding and wood detail, restoring the five historic windows and door and paint the entire Library building. They have a contractor's estimate of \$429,600 for the entire scope of work. Funds must be used before December 31. The grant does not require any match, but having one strengthens the application. The Library Trustees have requested funding from the Town ARPA Committee to defray the cost of the project. This would be the community match. I'm assuming that would be \$100,000 for the grant, \$100,000 from ARPA and that would leave \$229,600 to be paid for from the Town Center fund.

Dana: There is also \$26.4 million set aside through the Vermont Department of Libraries for grants coming up in the next two years. We have to do a needs assessment before we can even apply. That's also due on the 31st of March.

Forward moved to apply for the Bruhn Grant to help fund repairs to the exterior of the Library. Hill seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.

Consideration of formation of Gardening Committee

Furr: We received ARPA suggestions that had to do with Town beautification and Town gardens. There is an existing Town Community Garden that is on the Bressor property on the corner of Thompson and Cochran Roads. The other item people are interested in talking about is Town plantings and maintaining the Town Welcome Signs, Volunteers Green and around the Post Office entrance. Those two topics would be the remit of a hypothetical gardening committee. I've heard people indicating that they would be interested in being part of a Town Gardening Committee. We're not looking to appoint them to the committee because the committee does not exist. The proposal put before us

is that we create this committee. We ask people to submit letters of interest then we would appoint some of the members to 2-year and 3-year terms. They could choose from among themselves, the Chair and Vice Chair. They could put together a budget request.

*Sander moved to form the Gardening Committee and to ask for applications to fill two, three-year terms and three, two-year terms. Hill seconded.
Roll Call Vote follows discussion.*

Houle: I would suggest not limiting the number of participants, but if you're going to set up a Chair and a Vice Chair then have a couple of ad hoc members.

Hill: My one suggestion is to define a purpose or scope.

Furr: I sent to the proposed members today, a two-fold charter for planting and maintaining decorative and ornamental plants at Volunteers Green, Town Center, Welcome to Richmond signs and so on. The other is essentially the town beautification project.

Forward: I think their first order of business is to come up with a chart and present their charges so we could understand it.

Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.

Furr: We will have Duncan include this in the mailings listing Committee Members.

Consideration of setting a hearing date for amendments to Zoning Regulations for Village Residential/Commercial District and Gateway Residential/Commercial District and associated amendments

Furr: There are dates in the memo when the Library is available:

- Tuesday 18-Apr
- Monday 24-Apr
- Tuesday 25-Apr
- Tuesday 2-May
- Monday 8-May
- Tuesday 9-May

Hill: I'd recommend May 8th or 9th.

Parisi: I would propose have one kind of ASAP. If this is going to pass this year, sooner is better from a construction standpoint. I have a growing family and it would benefit me to be able to build a house on an existing plot of land we already own.

Miller: The sooner we can do it, the better.

Furr: I personally would be inclined toward holding it sooner rather than later.

LaBounty: I agree sooner rather than later is definitely better for most people. Are you deciding at the public hearing if the Selectboard is going to take a vote?

Furr: All that is required for this to become an ordinance is for the Selectboard to approve it. The purpose is to make sure that we make an informed decision.

LaBounty: The Selectboard has the ability to amend at the public hearing.

Houle: How far ahead do you have to publish it?

Arneson: That has to be in the paper two weeks in advance.

Furr: My preference would be the 18th of April because there may be multiple meetings.

Hill moved to set a hearing date of Tuesday, April 18 at 7pm at the Richmond Free Library for a public hearing on amendments to Zoning Regulations for Village Residential/Commercial District and Gateway Residential/Commercial District and associated amendments. Sander seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.

Report on Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment station

Furr: I will turn the floor over to Steve Bower, who did a lot of work on that report (https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/03/3j_Richmond_EV_Charging_Station_-_Annual_Report_to_SB__March-2023.pdf).

Bower: The charging station down in the parking lot went in a couple of years ago. It was put in with a grant from the State which paid for I think 90% of it. It has two charging heads and the Town charges 19 cents per kilowatt hour, which covers the cost of electricity and the 10% fee that's paid by the vendor ChargePoint. It's revenue neutral. The number of charging sessions did go up in year 2 to 67% higher than in year 1. In terms of gasoline saved, that's about 539 gallons. The fuel cost savings to the users was about \$1,364. There are significant greenhouse gas savings for using electric vehicles in Vermont. They get an equivalent of about 100 miles per gallon. The number of charging sessions has continued to trend up. It may have leveled off at this point, but we'll be able to see that next year. We could add one or two more parking spaces and charging heads. You can get a level 2 charger that is more powerful, so it charges up more quickly. I want to point out that there were about 90 days when both chargers were in use at some point during the day. There's no way to know how many people maybe arrived and were disappointed to see they were both busy. There were about 72 days when neither the chargers were used, so about 20% of the year. I don't think it would be worth putting in a third charger at this point. A level 2 for my house was about \$600 with a \$300 rebate. Green Mountain Power may actually install it.

Furr: If we did have a level 2 charger and it did charge faster, that might convince 10 more people in Richmond to buy an electric car.

Forward: After four hours, it charges \$1 an hour in addition to the electricity rate. The Tesla should have a special account, it should be the Town account and should not be charged a dwelling fee. There are times it could be plugged in and charged overnight. If we were to put in additional charging stations like a Tesla charging station, it could be a separate homeowner model than a commercial model.

LaBounty: I think we're going to need more of these in the future.

Bower: In terms of the number of dwelling hours, in 2021 there were about 119 dwelling hours (\$119). This year, there were about 89 dwelling hours. That money just goes to the Town as revenue.

LaBounty: I'd like to ask if we would consider increasing the rate to actually make a little money on this to put strictly into a reserve for future purchases of charging stations.

Bower: The grant actually restricts us from charging above the cost of electricity. I don't think we can go higher than that for the five-year period that the grant agreement includes. It went in at the end of 2020.

Update on delayed start for temporary traffic calming study on Cochran Rd.

Furr: The temporary traffic calming study for Cochran Rd. cannot start until April or May due the workload of the contractor. This means the study will not wrap up until about September.

Arneson: Cathleen Gent, the Transportation Committee Chair, and I confirmed that CCRPC is going to give us some of the data so that we'll have that by the spring. We can have guidance to install the speed humps by at least this coming summer.

Review of draft of Local Emergency Operations Plan

Furr: Emergency Operations has a particular interest of mine, but right now, not the time. We're pleased to go into that. It's about nine pages long. And this is something that we're required to submit to the State.

Arneson: I did a very brief read through updating names and phone numbers. You have to categorize each piece of emergency equipment. On their guidance page it seems like a lot of lines are missing. I reached out to see CCRPC for more guidance on how to clarify what we had last year. I want to reach out to Police and Fire to help categorize type of vehicles and the numbers that we have. We have a couple of meetings to look at this.

Forward: On pg 5 Camels Hump Middles School lists a capacity of 50. The building was built for 500 students and there's about 350 now. There is no cooling in that building other than the administrative office. It wouldn't be a cooling shelter. It says no pets. In high type of rain where it flooded the entire Town there would be people who might want to think about their pets.

Furr: On pg 2 halfway down you left out the "e" in Simpleroute. We should have a sandbag filling machine. You can get one that's under \$100. It's just mechanical. It's my phone number for emergency contact if for some reason Josh or Dennis cannot be found.

Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Minutes

*Hill moved to approve the Minutes of 2/21/23 as presented. Sander seconded.
Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

Purchase Orders: None

Warrants

*Sander moved to approve the general warrants as presented from 3/20/2023. Hill seconded.
Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

Discuss Items for Next Agenda

- *Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety
- *Calendar Review & Strategic Planning
- *Sidewalks, Cemetery and Transportation Committee

Executive Session

*Forward moved to find that premature public knowledge about a personnel issue would cause the Town or person to suffer a substantial disadvantage. Hill seconded.
Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

*Forward moved that we enter into executive session to discuss a personnel issue under the provisions of 1 VSA 313(a)(3) and to invite Town Manager Josh Arneson into the executive session. Sander seconded.
Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

*Forward moved to exit executive session. Hill seconded.
Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

Adjourn

*Sander moved to adjourn. Hill seconded.
Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

Meeting adjourned at: 11:01 pm

Chat file from Zoom:

00:16:41 matthew parisi: Hi This does not have to be answered right away, but I thought that there was already a discussion about setting the public meeting for the “Consideration of setting a hearing date for amendments to Zoning Regulations for Village Residential/Commercial District and Gateway Residential/Commercial District and associated amendments* (5 min)” I was under impression the selectboard was agreed on April 10...

00:17:11 Jay Furr: bullet point I

00:17:25 Jay Furr: we did not settle on April 10 because we did not know if a room would be available then

00:18:21 matthew parisi: I thought the town manager had a week to find one?

00:18:43 Richmond Town Host: The Library and CHMS were both not available.

00:18:52 matthew parisi: I would ask that this become higher up on the agenda if possible as every week does count during construction season

00:18:59 matthew parisi: Ok thanks

00:25:28 Patty Brushett: Zoom participants are hearing fine. No worries

01:06:28 rebeccawojtecki: Young people can't afford to live in Richmond

01:07:31 strix: Reacted to "Young people can't a..." with ❤️

01:08:00 rebeccawojtecki: I'm not particularly young. But I work with a bunch of young people who are renters and would love nothing more than to stay in Richmond and raise their families. But they can't afford to buy homes.

01:08:42 rebeccawojtecki: I'd love to see a way for them, especially as individuals who are already fully invested in this community, to be able to stay on as the future leaders.

01:18:46 Ian Bender: How about no new events?

01:19:22 MMCTV Erin Wagg: Please move mic closer to Lisa so she and Jeff share

01:19:35 MMCTV Erin Wagg: Thanks

01:21:53 Jim Feinson: I'd like to know how many organized events there are on Cochran Road each year, and what days of the week and times of day they are typically held. Will construction be seven days a week? (Jim Feinson, Richmond).

01:29:26 Jared Katz: I actually appreciate Mr Bessette raising this issue, even though I disagree with some of what he says. Notwithstanding the hyperbolic numbers cited, there are certainly conflicts between vulnerable users and motor vehicles. And, certainly, vulnerable users do take liberties with their rights to the road. As well, motorists struggle to comport with the law, and to have patience in many situations when patience might resolve the conflict. Drivers are seemingly willing to be patient behind a honey hauler, or a school bus, and less so behind a cyclist or two. There are events during the spring and summer and into the fall. The largest event a gravel race called Rooted, will not take place this year, and it put the most vulnerable users on the roadway at 800. There have never been 1000 runners on Cochran Road.

01:31:39 rebeccawojtecki: Agree wholeheartedly. Thanks Mr. Churchill!

01:32:18 Marciel: Reacted to "Agree wholeheartedly..." with 👍

01:33:58 Patty Brushett: Thank you Jared

01:35:05 iPhone: Erin Farr here, It sounds like Richard's Ride is May 20th, will the construction have started by then?

01:35:47 Laurie Dana: There is a sign that construction will start on April 3 out by Conant's farm.

01:36:09 iPhone: Thanks Laurie

01:43:43 Ann Naumann:
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/fullchapter/23/001>

01:45:36 Ann Naumann:
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/23/013/01033#:~:text=The%20operator%20of%20a%20motor,cross%20the%20center%20of%20the>

01:46:44 Jared Katz: That is from a presentation to the VT Police Academy I co-presented with Local Motion for a few years.

01:47:32 Ann Naumann:
[https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/23/013/01139#:~:text=\(b\)%20Persons%20riding%20bicycles%20upon,case%20the%20Commissioner%20shall%20be](https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/23/013/01139#:~:text=(b)%20Persons%20riding%20bicycles%20upon,case%20the%20Commissioner%20shall%20be)
01:48:57 Laurie Dana: Just a question, not that I'm against this, but why can they schedule without approval from the town before they promote this?
01:54:00 iPhone: Could the childrens portion be moved to earlier in the day? It seems that traffic is usually quite light before 9am. All the folks with Richard's Ride have been very respectful in past years and it would be nice to continue supporting their mission
02:04:47 Ann Naumann: there are jerky people who drive, walk, bicycle. No one has the corner on this. I can tell you a lot of stories about cars who have purposely come inches from my, shouted out me and thrown things.
02:07:17 Erin Farr: Was there a significant decrease or increase in attendance at Town Meeting?
02:08:07 Jay Furr: 130 voters, not counting boy scouts and town officials who don't live in Richmond
02:09:26 Erin Farr: Josh the 29th is the end of School Vacation
02:12:27 Erin Farr: Judging from the turn out at Town Meeting I don't think the school vacation will be a problem for this meeting. Unfortunately it didn't seem like there were many young families involved in Town Meeting.
03:02:35 Patty Brushett: People generally charge at home.