

1 **Town of Richmond**  
2 **Selectboard Meeting**  
3 **Minutes of December 18, 2023**  
4

5 **Members Present:** Bard Hill, David Sander, Jay Furr, Jeff Forward, Lisa Miller  
6

7 **Absent:** None  
8

9 **Staff Present:** Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Duncan Wardwell, Assistant to the Town  
10 Manager; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Connie Bona, Finance Director; Keith Osborne,  
11 Town Planner; Tyler Machia, Zoning Administrator; Dennis Gile, Fire Chief  
12

13 **Others Present:** Meeting was recorded by MMCTV, Alan J, Andrew Bessette, Angela  
14 Cote, Anita Joy, Becky Vigneault, Brad Elliott, Cara LaBounty, Chuck Gilroy, Connie  
15 van Eeghen, Denise Barnard, Erin Wagg, Fran Thomas, Gary Bressor, Guy Roberts, Ian  
16 Bender, Janet Morris, Jay McCormack, Jeanne Adams, John Linn, Jon, Josi Kytile, Judy  
17 Rosovsky, Kate, Kendra Ziskie, Kristen, Lou Borie, Maria B, Martha Nye, Mary Ann  
18 Kittenger, Michael, Michael Storrs, Morgan Wolaver, Patty Brushett, Rachel's iPad,  
19 Robert Lowe, Sam Pratt, Suzanne Leavitt, Tess Storrs, Velma, Virginia Clarke  
20

21 **MMCTV Video:** <https://youtu.be/D6L7V4JOF3U?si=ortLIJkzl7DL0KDK>  
22

23 **Call to Order:** 7:00 pm  
24

25 **Welcome by:** Furr  
26

27 **Public Comment:**  
28

29 Forward observed the economic and emotional cost of the recent floods and reminded  
30 everyone about Vermont 211 as a resource. Sander reminded everyone to be kind as we  
31 do not know what other people are going through.  
32

33 **Additions or Deletions to Agenda:**  
34

35 Sander suggested a flood update.  
36

37 **Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present.**  
38

39 **Flood Update**

40 Timestamp: 0:03  
41

42 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Arneson, LaBounty  
43

44 Arneson reviewed that a lot of rain today combined with snow melt out is causing the  
45 Winooski River to come up quite quickly. Arneson summarized the road closures at the  
46 time of the meeting, Bridge St is closed at the bridge with water over the bridge and Rt 2  
47 is closed from the intersection of Bridge St to Jonesville. Arneson reminded people to be  
48 careful overnight, the water is expected to continue to rise until sometime after midnight.  
49 The wastewater pipe began backing up this morning and are pumping it out of the  
50 building rather than pumping it to the river and the State's been informed by the proper

51 reports. Arneson reviewed that the pump at the water house has been turned off, the  
52 system has been isolated. LaBounty asked if anyone had connected with Maple Wind  
53 Farms to make sure that the birds have been removed from the fields.

54  
55 **Update from the Volunteers' Green and Browns Court Project Committee including**  
56 **consideration of approval of structural engineer for renovations to the Volunteers'**  
57 **Green bandstand**

58 Timestamp: 0:07

59 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3a1\\_Architectural drawing 2023.12.13 Browns court rec field.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3a1_Architectural_drawing_2023.12.13_Browns_court_rec_field.pdf)

61  
62 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3a2\\_2023-11-13 proposal - engineering for band shell.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3a2_2023-11-13_proposal_-_engineering_for_band_shell.pdf)

64  
65 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Barnard, Thomas, Storrs, Bressor, Ziskie,  
66 Forward, LaBounty, Miller, Hill, Arneson, Wolaver, Nye, Brushett, Wagg

67  
68 Furr summarized the Selectboard asked for volunteers to investigate what can be done  
69 with ARPA money to consider Volunteers Green, Browns Court, and the Round Church  
70 lawn. Furr stated that the Selectboard is asked to approve some money for engineering on  
71 the rehabilitation of the bandshell. Bressor summarized that he was part of about 35  
72 volunteers who built the bandshell 47 years ago, so he knows the foundation and  
73 structure. Bressor reviewed what really needs work like the crossing beam, one of the  
74 posts that holds up the crossing, some rot on those beams, and some sagging on the  
75 crossing beam. Bressor summarized a proposal of \$5,000 for the design portion and then  
76 during construction be \$1,500 for oversight. Bressor stated that the concrete portion is  
77 tricky because of the way the foundation was designed, about eight feet down there's a  
78 footing ring, on top of that is structural ring, all the corners are 12-inch sonic tubes, and  
79 there's another two-foot ring. Bressor stated that now it's a negative pitch and it captures  
80 water. Bressor summarized that most structural engineers were too busy, or the job was  
81 too small. Ziskie shared the bid with the amounts and all the level of detail.

82  
83 *Forward moved to approve the use of \$5,000 in ARPA funds to pay for engineering for*  
84 *the rehabilitation of the bandshell. Sander seconded.*  
85 *Roll call vote follows discussion.*

86  
87 Furr stated the ADA access issue as there's really no way onto the stage for somebody  
88 who is mobility impaired. LaBounty requested that the ADA requirements be built into  
89 this scope of work. LaBounty stated that being able to do the other half of the roof might  
90 help it last longer and be utilized as a pavilion. Thomas stated that ADA accessible is  
91 another issue because it has to deal with what you can do in the floodway. LaBounty  
92 stated that the floodplain has a clause in it that you can expand 25% and the roof structure  
93 would not be part of that 25% and the ADA outweighs any floodplain regulation as the  
94 federal government, the State and the Town cannot prohibit access. Forward stated that if  
95 they want to add to the scope of this engineering, they'd have to get another quote but  
96 they should keep these other issues in mind as nothing precludes any of these other  
97 design ideas. Hill stated that he doesn't think it's possible to move this forward without a  
98 plan about ADA compliance.

99  
100

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

102

103 Linn presented a plan for Browns Court with a ballfield 200-foot fence from home plate,  
104 a field for 4 pickleball courts, a bocce court, and 20 parking spaces. Linn summarized  
105 that it is a conceptual drawing that has not been vetted. Linn summarized the next steps  
106 should be a site survey. Linn presented the details of the current design. Hill stated that  
107 the current location of the softball field was to reduce sun in the eyes of the first base  
108 person. Linn stated that he had a hard time fitting it on the site spun in that direction.  
109 Thomas stated that she does not see how they could have any housing and recreational up  
110 there. Barnard stated that the map does not show a possible horseshoe pit or the water  
111 fountain. Barnard summarized using a row of cedars to lessen some of the noise from  
112 pickleball. Hill stated that they asked Planning and Zoning about what could fit there and  
113 there is an alternative map in the next agenda item. Wolaver stated that if you live close  
114 to it, you feel like you are giving up a green space. Wolaver stated that he has heard a lot  
115 about the amount of noise pickleball can make once the Town has made that investment.  
116 Barnard observed that the Senior Center uses the softball field. Arneson reviewed the use  
117 almost daily use of softball field by Little League during the season and into the fall. Hill  
118 stated that depending on the group and size of the players it is recommended to have a  
119 softball field fence.

120

121 Hill asked about the consideration of tennis courts. Storrs reviewed the attempts to get  
122 estimates for the installation and maintenance of tennis courts. Storrs stated the estimate  
123 for pickleball courts was \$110-115,000 which includes the line marking and excavation.  
124 Storrs stated that if the Town wanted to do any of the ground moving and prep work that  
125 keeps the costs down a bit. Storrs stated that the cost of maintenance every 5-7 years was  
126 \$12-14,000 with maintenance occurring five to seven years. Storrs reviewed that the  
127 difference with pickleball courts is 6 feet tall fencing and tennis courts are 10-12 feet.  
128 Storrs stated that the blueprint has the potential of serving 16 people playing pickleball as  
129 opposed to 2-4 playing tennis. Storrs stated that one of the criteria for the grant is that it  
130 shows people out there exercising. Furr summarized that the ARPA decision making  
131 incorporated increasing public health. Bender asked if the bocce and pickleball will be  
132 available for residents and their guests or open to the public. Furr stated that he was not  
133 sure how they would enforce that. Thomas stated that every community has that issue.  
134 Barnard reviewed that the courts would be open dawn until dusk. Nye confirmed that the  
135 Senior Center co-ed softball group and the dog walkers share the space. Brushett asked  
136 about the number of pickleball courts being 4 and not 2. Barnard stated that she was  
137 looking at the dimensions as the same as one tennis court.

138

139 Storrs confirmed that she is following up with contractors for construction costs of bocce  
140 courts but understands volunteers could do it like building a big sandbox. Forward stated  
141 resources like Kirsten Santor on the Recreation Committee also works for Burlington  
142 Parks and Recreation and Phil Graff the facilities director at Mount Mansfield maintains  
143 the tennis courts in Jericho. Forward requested an annual maintenance cost estimate.  
144 Barnard asked the Town to get this parcel surveyed once and for all because they don't  
145 know what they are talking about until they know what they are talking about. Ziskie  
146 presented a summary of quotes for Browns Court survey that outline the company, the  
147 individual and Town location from \$4,960 to \$8,000. Barnard thanked the members of  
148 the Committee who have been working so hard. Hill reviewed that the top of the hill has  
149 slowly eroded in 30 years, probably 2-3 feet which illustrates the benefit of surveying.  
150 Wagg stated that T-ball is able to use the space with two fields at once. Thomas asked

151 about going ahead with this work and the kind of detail for proposals. Forward stated  
152 that he was in favor of going ahead as it pertains to the next item.

153

154 **Follow up on discussion of possibly using Browns Court for housing development**

155 Timestamp: 1:06

156 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3b\\_Housing](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3b_Housing)  
157 [Committee meeting minutes for 11.07.23.pdf](#)

158

159 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Osborne, Arneson, van Eeghen, Clarke,  
160 Sander, Forward, Miller, Hill, Barnard, Linn, Machia, LaBounty, Brushett, Gilroy,  
161 Wolaver, Thomas

162

163 Furr stated that the Selectboard would be if they were not keeping eyes open and ears to  
164 the ground regarding housing that does not have to necessary include Browns Court.

165 Osborne stated that housing is feasible but dependent upon recreation amenities as it can  
166 be engineered 2-3 stories. Osborne summarized a myriad of issues like access and survey.

167 Osborne confirmed collaborating with Linn on the optics. Osborne presented the sketch of  
168 a 6,500 square-foot footprint with 1,300 square-foot building two stories, 20 units.

169 Osborne stated that parking is inclusive of stormwater with the stormwater coming off of  
170 the structure would have to be engineered. Osborne stated that he is confident that this  
171 would be okay soil wise, but it is a rough and dirty draft. Clarke stated that the Planning  
172 Commission hasn't taken an actual position on this. van Eeghen stated that the Housing  
173 Committee has not taken a position on this.

174

175 Furr stated that there's a lot to be said for what the recreation group put together so he is  
176 inclined to say this is not the optimal site for housing but that doesn't mean that we need  
177 to stop looking. Sander stated that he needs some convincing to be persuaded that this  
178 would work well. Forward stated it looks like instead of pickleball, we have housing as  
179 it's about the same footprint. Miller stated that whatever the State has told us, that needs  
180 to be done is not enough for an actual plan. Miller asked about what other alternatives are  
181 there. Hill stated that housing is a pressing issue but is not sure if this is the right place.  
182 Hill suggested a "housing summit" across the Planning Commission, Housing  
183 Committee, Selectboard, and others. Furr summarized a question from the chat about  
184 parking for people who use the ballfield. Barnard stated that when Cathedral Square and  
185 Champlain Housing Trust do a project, they need to own the property, because that's how  
186 they get their federal funding. Barnard asked if they would own the whole ballfield or  
187 just the buildings and the parking lot locations. Forward summarized that Act 147  
188 requires zoning at five units per acre or 20 units. Forward agreed that they ought to get  
189 together and get on the same page to resolve this issue once and for all.

190

191 Linn observed that Browns Court is the only green space to accommodate these  
192 recreational spaces as Volunteers Green is in the floodplain. Machia stated that almost  
193 everything in the floodway is prohibited. Machia stated that they are allowed to do  
194 substantial improvements to existing structures with conditional use as part of a structure  
195 that is called a sports field. Machia summarized that it is somewhat circumventing the  
196 spirit as you don't want to put stuff in the floodplain because it is guaranteed to flood  
197 again, particularly in the floodway. Machia stated that if there wasn't pickleball courts  
198 down there before, it's going to be hard to permit new structures.

199

200 Miller suggested a poll of the business community to find out how many workers are they  
201 not employing, that they think could live locally. Gilroy stated that they would need to  
202 do a traffic impact study as the morning commute is already a bottleneck. Furr  
203 summarized that affordable housing is when the occupant is paying no more than 30% of  
204 gross income for housing costs, including utilities. Thomas stated that housing would  
205 really take away space on Browns Court, you could not really have a ballfield. Forward  
206 stated that he would rather have people who know how to do this say if this is a crazy  
207 idea. Thomas stated that is a six-month job. Hill suggested focusing on if there is  
208 anything actionable.

209

### 210 **Update on Radar Speed Feedback Signs**

211 Timestamp: 1:52

212 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3c\\_RadarSig](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3c_RadarSignSummary12-18-23.pdf)  
213 [nSummary12-18-23.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3c_RadarSignSummary12-18-23.pdf)

214

215 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Arneson, Wardwell, Forward, Sander,  
216 LaBounty, Bender, Miller

217

218 Furr summarized the new speed radar signs allow us to download data that would provide  
219 data to help with speed studies and justify whether a lower speed should be required.

220 Furr stated that the speed signs tend to go dark because of dead batteries of other  
221 problems. Wardwell confirmed that he met with a technician about the different speed  
222 signs. Wardwell stated that a lot of them had failed batteries that need to be replaced and  
223 one needs a new panel. Wardwell stated that the recommendation for the newer signs on  
224 Cochran Rd is to use a smart charger that helps deal with the solar panels not getting  
225 charged all the time. Wardwell confirmed that the technician thinks the signs are not  
226 getting enough sunlight. Furr stated that the one on Jonesville Bridge the solar panels  
227 were facing north, the wrong way. LaBounty stated that this should have been looked at  
228 from the very beginning and is wasted taxpayer dollars. LaBounty stated that there could  
229 be other solutions for slowing traffic. Arneson stated that Chief Cambridge has some  
230 history and experience and might be able to find an easy solution. Arneson stated that it  
231 makes sense to return the two that are not up yet because they're clearly not performing.  
232 Sander agreed that the ones still in the box should be returned. Furr stated that in the  
233 future, he wants to see a service contract for the purchase. Miller stated that they can't be  
234 that complicated, and it's a lot cheaper than having a police officer sitting out there to  
235 catch a speeder. Furr confirmed that if they're working that gives us valuable data for  
236 speed studies.

237

### 238 **Consideration of approval of two access permits**

239 Timestamp: 2:07

240 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3d1\\_Access](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3d1_AccessPermit_1330_Jericho_Rd..pdf)  
241 [Permit\\_1330\\_Jericho\\_Rd..pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3d1_AccessPermit_1330_Jericho_Rd..pdf)

242

243 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3d2\\_Access](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3d2_AccessPermit_854_Kenyon_Rd..pdf)  
244 [Permit\\_854\\_Kenyon\\_Rd..pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3d2_AccessPermit_854_Kenyon_Rd..pdf)

245

246 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Sander, Forward

247

248 *Sander moved to approve Access Permit 2023-04 for 1330 Jericho Rd. Forward*  
249 *seconded.*

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

251

252 *Sander moved to approve Access Permit number 2023-05 for 854 Kenyon Rd. Forward*  
253 *seconded.*

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

255

256 **Consideration of finalizing FY25 budget to be considered for approval by the voters**  
257 **at Town Meeting**

258 Timestamp: 2:08

259 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3e1\\_FY25\\_B](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3e1_FY25_Budget_Draft_12-15-23.pdf)  
260 [udget\\_Draft\\_12-15-23.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3e1_FY25_Budget_Draft_12-15-23.pdf)

261

262 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3e2\\_FY25\\_B](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3e2_FY25_Budget_Draft_12-15-23.xls)  
263 [udget\\_Draft\\_12-15-23.xls](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3e2_FY25_Budget_Draft_12-15-23.xls)

264

265 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Arneson, Sander, Forward, Miller, Bona,  
266 LaBounty, Bender, Sander

267

268 Furr summarized that they spent about \$464,000 for the July floods that might have been  
269 used to lower taxes. Furr stated that they will have enough funding from reimbursement  
270 by the State, reimbursement by FEMA, unusually high amounts of interest from bank  
271 accounts to keep the increase to no more than 5%. Arneson stated that by the time the  
272 Selectboard sets the tax rate in July, they could look and calculate that to see if they had  
273 some savings from the last fiscal year. Furr stated that his year they discussed four  
274 different models for how to estimate the salary costs in the Police department, and they  
275 decided to go with 4 full-time police officers but a contracted Chief.

276

277 Arneson presented the current version of the budget and highlighted items in yellow that  
278 changed based on the feedback from last meeting  
279 ([https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/Special Sele](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/Special_Selectboard_Minutes_12-11-23.pdf)  
280 [ctboard\\_Minutes\\_12-11-23.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/Special_Selectboard_Minutes_12-11-23.pdf)). Arneson reviewed the FY24 Projected Changes for  
281 Unassigned Funds with a balance of -\$52,520 and per policy a Restricted Funds 15% of  
282 Highway Budget at \$294,892. Arneson reviewed the Unassigned Funds for Projected  
283 Interest and Vacancy savings in Police Budget for \$286,000 that can be added to the  
284 \$922,673 or total of 1.2 million so that would leave about \$780,778 of Unassigned funds  
285 to spend. Arneson reviewed the Combined Unassigned and Restricted Funds Over/Under  
286 15% of total budget at \$433,366 which get to the tax rate of about 5.06% increase over  
287 the previous year. Furr summarized that there are very few discretionary increases. Furr  
288 stated that the potential 5% increase is because of the July flood. Furr stated that if they  
289 have a fully staffed Police department that's going to really change budgeting in the  
290 future because we won't have that vacancy money. Sander summarized that the money  
291 that was spent in the July storms was not a one-time expense due to today's flood.  
292 Arneson summarized that FEMA will reimburse 75% of materials and contracted labor  
293 for July flood with an extra 17.5% from the State plus straight labor for Highway  
294 Department road repairs. Arneson stated that they do not know when they will be  
295 reimbursed. Arneson stated that he assumes that any labor and materials that is spent on  
296 today's flooding is not going to be reimbursed.

297

298 Miller stated that if they can keep that percentage increase under 5% going into the vote,  
299 that will help. Bona summarized that 5% does not include the Conservation Commission

300 and the donations if they get approved. Forward stated that they have \$20,000 in  
301 overtime because they've been understaffed. Forward stated that overtime might not be  
302 needed this year. Arneson stated that if he put \$15,000 in for overtime then the tax rate  
303 increase would be 4.93%. Forward summarized that property tax is adjusted for income  
304 sensitivity. Forward reviewed that Williston Community Justice Center should be put  
305 under Social Services and taken out of the Police budget which does not change the  
306 bottom line. LaBounty stated that they have increased taxes every single year while  
307 building Unassigned funds, so they do not need to have a 5% tax increase. Furr stated  
308 that two years ago they lowered taxes. LaBounty asked that they consider using a little  
309 bit more of the Unassigned funds. Arneson presented the Chart for Unassigned Funds  
310 which projected at the end of FY25 a 15% of the previous year's budget which is the  
311 goal. Furr summarized that he thought the public relations money would be appropriate  
312 and supports lowering the overtime. Arneson confirmed lowering overtime to \$10,000  
313 and changed Public Relations to Community Relations for \$1,500. Bona stated that  
314 Police overtime was often above \$15,000 and wages are more now than when they had a  
315 full staff. Forward confirmed he was fine with \$15,000. Bona stated that Community  
316 Relations was for \$1,200. Arneson presented the 4.96% tax rate increase from last year.

317

318 *Forward moved the budget as it has been presented with modification for Town Meeting*  
319 *Day. Sander seconded.*

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

321

322 **Consideration of request by the Conservation Commission to amend the request to**  
323 **utilize \$150 from the Conservation Reserve Fund for work related to the Save Our**  
324 **Salamanders Network**

325 Timestamp: 3:05

326 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3f1\\_2023\\_R](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3f1_2023_R_SOSN_Road_Signs_Application_for_CRF_funds_11_Dec_2023.pdf)  
327 [SOSN Road Signs Application for CRF funds 11 Dec 2023.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3f1_2023_R_SOSN_Road_Signs_Application_for_CRF_funds_11_Dec_2023.pdf)

328

329 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3f2\\_Motion](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3f2_Motion_from_RCC_regarding_Save_Our_Salamanders_Network.pdf)  
330 [from RCC regarding Save Our Salamanders Network.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3f2_Motion_from_RCC_regarding_Save_Our_Salamanders_Network.pdf)

331

332 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Rosovsky, Forward, Sander

333

334 Furr summarized that they are proposing going from \$150 to \$200. Rosovsky reviewed  
335 that this is the same proposal but failed to include the third post.

336

337 *Forward moved to approve the use of up to \$200 from the Conservation Reserve Fund to*  
338 *cover the costs of safety vests, clickers and 3 metal signs and posts, as described in the*  
339 *Richmond Save Our Salamanders Network proposal dated Oct 10, 2023, and amended on*  
340 *December 1 2023 to account for the additional sign and post on Wes White Hill. This*  
341 *motion replaces the motion made on October 16, 2023. Sander seconded.*

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

343

344 **Discussion of Conservation Reserve Fund ballot item**

345 Timestamp: 3:08

346

347 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Arneson, Rosovsky, Forward, LaBounty,  
348 Sander, Forward

349

350 Arneson reviewed that the Conservation Reserve Fund has been voted on every year by  
351 Australian ballot at one cent to the tax rate to fund the Conservation Fund. Arneson  
352 stated that in the last 4-5 years, that's about \$45,000, since the Grand List went up it's  
353 closer to \$75,000. Arneson asked if it is appropriate to keep it at one cent or change that  
354 to a flat funding fee of X dollars. Rosovsky presented slides that point out the geographic  
355 location of multiple and diverse projects over 19 years. Rosovsky stated that for almost  
356 \$600,000 of Town investment, they generated over \$2 million. Rosovsky presented the  
357 CRF allocation due to Grand List Reappraisals as the fund loses value purchasing ability  
358 over time as they are level funded, except for when the Grand List is reassessed.  
359 Rosovsky presented the needs for the Andrews Community Forest, the Winooski River,  
360 trail repair of flood damage, and Vermont's 30x30 Legislation. Rosovsky stated that the  
361 Conservation Commission and the Richmond Land Trust have come to the same  
362 conclusion of staying the course. Rosovsky stated that the Selectboard could certainly  
363 use that fund if they wanted to as the Town policy is to put in the application. LaBounty  
364 requested the true percentage taxes are going up if people vote in favor of it.

365

366 *Forward moved to approve the Town Meeting warning article that asks the voters for a*  
367 *one cent (\$0.01) property tax assessment to go towards the Conservation Reserve Fund.*  
368 *Sander seconded.*

369 *Roll call vote follows discussion.*

370

371 Arneson stated that with the Conservation Fund the tax rate increase over prior year is at  
372 7.09%. Arneson reviewed that he adds that to the presentation along with the charitable  
373 appropriations. Arneson stated that it is based on the current Grand List but it will be set  
374 in July.

375

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

377

### 378 **Review of draft Town Meeting Warning**

379 Timestamp: 3:24

380 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3h\\_TOWN](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3h_TOWN)  
381 [REPORT 2023 WARNING DRAFT 12-15-24.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3h_TOWN)

382

383 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Arneson, Forward, Miller

384

385 Forward suggested tabling this topic with no objections.

386

### 387 **Review of Bond and Note options for borrowing to fund the renovation for the** 388 **Richmond Town Center and consideration of approving to proceed with a Bond or** 389 **a Note**

390 Timestamp: 3:25

391 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3i1\\_Tax\\_Rat](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3i1_Tax_Rat)  
392 [e for Bond and Note Options.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3i1_Tax_Rat)

393

394 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3i2\\_Bond\\_a](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3i2_Bond_a)  
395 [nd Note Payback Schedules.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2023/12/3i2_Bond_a)

396

397 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Forward, Arneson, Bona, Bender, LaBounty

398

399 Furr summarized that bonds have more interest paid up front and total payments decrease



400 over the life of the bond and a note has a flatter structure, paying the same way over the  
401 life of the note but tend to pay a little bit more. Forward presented the payback schedules  
402 for a 30-year bond, 30-year note, and 20-year note. Forward stated that a bond at \$9.8  
403 million, starts out at about \$750,000 in the first year and goes down to about \$340,000.  
404 Forward stated that a note is more like a mortgage, it is not as bad 20-years out. Arneson  
405 presented the Summary of Note and Bond Options for Town Center Renovation Bond.  
406 Bender stated that similar rated municipal bond rates as of today are about 3.9%.

407  
408 Forward stated that he was not sure which option he liked but the 20-year note is less  
409 interest. Arneson projected that the 30-year bond starts at about \$95 per \$100,000 in  
410 home value then decreases over the 30 years to about \$42. Arneson projected that the 20-  
411 year note stays at \$92 per \$100,000 home value over 20 years. Forward recommended  
412 the 20-year note. Forward reviewed this money will be spent over time so we could use  
413 some of our cash flow to do construction financing. Forward stated that he hoped we do  
414 not have to borrow up to \$9.8 million as there is some indication that construction prices  
415 might come down. Forward summarized the different potential grant sources. Forward  
416 stated that revenue from rent could be paying for bond payments, about \$120,000 a year.  
417 Forward reviewed that the Town Center Reserve fund for repairs will be less. Bona  
418 reviewed that the cash flow will be impacted by any situation where we pay out and seek  
419 reimbursement. Bona reviewed a Bond Anticipation Note for \$500,000 while working on  
420 the project for the next year and not paying interest on the whole loan during the  
421 construction phase. Forward stated that the voters are authorizing us to move forward  
422 with this project and if they vote no, then we don't have to do all this research. LaBounty  
423 stated that the financing of this \$9.8 million project should be understood more.  
424 Labounty asked if it should go 30 years out. LaBounty stated that because it's a long-  
425 term project, 30 years from now other people will help pay for it rather than existing  
426 taxpayers but really wants an expert to look at the finances. Forward stated that expert  
427 opinions came from the Vermont Bond Bank with nuances to those.

428  
429 *Forward moved a Town Warning Article that specifies a Note for \$9,841,603 for Town*  
430 *Center Renovation. Sander seconded.*

431 *Roll call vote follows discussion.*

432  
433 Bender asked if this bond fails then what is the plan. Forward stated that if this were to  
434 go down, he sees little momentum for the next plan. Miller stated that it might help  
435 voters to know the cut in costs for utilities and maintenance by renewing the building.

436  
437 *Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*

438  
439 **Discussion of payment for repair of baseball fields at Volunteers' Green that were**  
440 **damaged by the July flooding**

441 Timestamp: 3:46

442  
443 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Forward, Arneson, Miller  
444

445 Furr summarized that the baseball fields at Volunteers Green need a lot of flood  
446 maintenance. Forward suggested that it all could be different after today. Arneson  
447 confirmed that the Town hasn't put money into the field as it was mostly maintained by  
448 Little League. Arneson stated that since it's a Town field, in a Town owned land, the  
449 Town is still on the hook to maintain the fields so FEMA would cover the cost. Arneson

450 stated his conflict of interest as president of Little League and asked the Selectboard to  
451 agree to the cost knowing that it will be paid back by FEMA.

452

453 *Forward moved to proceed with repairs to the baseball fields at Volunteers' Green to*  
454 *repair damage caused by 2023 flooding. Miller seconded.*

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

456

457 **Consideration of changing the date of the February 19, 2024 Selectboard meeting**  
458 **due to the Presidents' Day holiday**

459 Timestamp: 3:48

460

461 People who participated in discussion: Furr, Sander, Miller

462

463 *Sander moved to change the date of the second Selectboard meeting in February from*  
464 *Monday, February 19, 2024 to Tuesday, February 20, 2024 in recognition of the*  
465 *Presidents' Day Holiday on February 19. Miller seconded.*

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

467

468 **Approval of Minutes, Purchase Orders, Warrants**

469 Timestamp: 3:49

470

471 **Minutes:**

472

473 *Sander moved to approve the Minutes of 12/4/23. Forward seconded.*

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

475

476 *Sander moved to approve the Minutes of 12/11/23. Forward seconded.*

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

478

479 **Purchase Orders:**

480

481 *Sander moved to amend PO# 4619 for a total of \$41,835.77 to Swenson Granite*  
482 *Company for East Main Sidewalks. Forward seconded.*

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

484

485 **Warrants:**

486

487 *Sander moved to approve the general warrants on 12/18/2023 as presented. Forward*  
488 *seconded.*

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

490

491 **Next Meeting Agenda**

492 \*Housing Summit Planning

493 \*Town Meeting Warning

494 \*Flood Update

495 \*Browns Court Recreation & Housing

496

497 **Executive Sessions: Update on negotiations with the Police Union.**

498 *Sander moved to find that premature public knowledge about negotiations with the Police*  
499 *Union would cause the Town or person to suffer a substantial disadvantage. Forward*  
500 *seconded.*  
501 *Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*  
502  
503 *Sander moved that we enter into executive session to discuss negotiations with the Police*  
504 *Union under the provisions of 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)(B) and to invite the Town Manager Josh*  
505 *Arneson into the executive session. Forward seconded.*  
506 *Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*  
507  
508 *Sander moved to exit executive session. Forward seconded.*  
509 *Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*  
510  
511 **Executive Sessions: Discussion of hiring police officers.**  
512  
513 *Forward moved to find that premature public knowledge about hiring of police officers*  
514 *would cause the Town or person to suffer a substantial disadvantage. Sander seconded.*  
515 *Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Sander in favor. Hill, Miller absent. Motion approved.*  
516 .  
517 *Forward moved that we enter into executive session to discuss hiring of police officers*  
518 *under the provisions of 1 VSA 313 (a)(3) and to invite the Town Manager Josh Arneson*  
519 *into the executive session. Sander seconded.*  
520 *Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Sander in favor. Hill, Miller absent. Motion approved.*  
521  
522 *Sander moved to exit executive session. Hill seconded.*  
523 *Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*  
524  
525 **Adjourn**  
526  
527 *Forward moved to adjourn. Sander seconded.*  
528 *Roll Call Vote: Forward, Furr, Hill, Miller, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*  
529  
530 **Meeting adjourned at: 11:30 pm**  
531  
532 **Chat file from Zoom:**  
533 00:51:10 Ian Bender: Will the bocce and pickle ball be available for residents and  
534 their guests or will it be open to the public?  
535 01:06:02 Patty Brushett: Thank you to this committee. You are doing a thorough  
536 job.  
537 01:06:37 Chuck Gilroy: Agree, very well prepared.  
538 01:07:28 JanetMo Vermont: Same here; thank you! Great, thorough work!  
539 01:23:42 Michael: Is the housing unit raised? Is parking for residents located  
540 under the housing structure? If not, where would people accessing the ball field park if  
541 the parking lot is full of resident parking?  
542 01:26:25 Chuck Gilroy: Very good question. When we met with the neighbors  
543 regarding ballfields parking, there one concern was roadside parking. The field is located  
544 on a odd little double twist in the road.  
545 01:27:36 Patty Brushett: Great idea  
546 01:28:21 Guy Roberts: Hard to understand how there can be any discussion of  
547 developing town green space until all other options have been brought forth. I'd agree

548 that we should take a comprehensive, not a piecemeal approach. What if in 20 years we  
549 are tasked with trying to increase green space?

550 01:43:56 Kristen: Reacted to "Hard to understand h..." with 👍

551 01:59:13 Guy Roberts: Reacted to "Hard to understand h..." with 👍

552 02:32:54 Angela Cote: How much of the 468k spent on July flood is going to be  
553 reimbursed?

554 02:35:45 Angela Cote: So does that mean FEMA will be paying 3 months of Town  
555 Highway budget for FY24?

556 02:36:35 connie Bona: Only for FEMA related work.

557 02:36:39 ian bender: You get about 2k in revenue for every new single family  
558 home. Do you know how many permits are open and under construction?

559 02:42:23 Andrew Bessette: I have never had a problem with the town budget as  
560 I feel I get my moneys worth from town services.

561 02:47:36 Angela Cote: What is the current balance in unassigned funds? What was  
562 the balance at the end of FY23?

563 02:49:29 ian bender: That's just the ed tax....right?

564 03:09:01 Patty Brushett:Helps increase trust with police.

565 03:10:51 Patty Brushett:This is what democracy looks like

566 03:25:08 ian bender: Could be a good source of funds for the town center if the  
567 bond fails.

568 03:26:25 Judy.Rosovsky: Hi Cara, there was an application for the riprap  
569 project, just to clarify that piece.

570 03:32:01 ian bender: What is our bond rating? Those rates look high.

571 03:39:09 Patty Brushett:Interest rates are going down

572 03:58:56 ian bender: Thanks for the work.

573

574