

Town of Richmond Selectboard Meeting Minutes of September 19, 2022

Members Present: Bard Hill, David Sander, Jay Furr, Jeff Forward, June Heston

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Duncan Wardwell, Assistant to the Town Manager; Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner; Kendall Chamberlin, Water Superintendent; Lisa Truchon, Lister; Benjamin Herrick, Interim Police Chief

Others Present: Meeting was recorded by MMCTV, Alexis Lathem, Allen Knowles, Ann Naumann, Brian Davis, Cara LaBounty, Cathleen Gent, Dayton Crites, Ian Stokes, Jon Kart, Keith Jennings, Lauck Parke, Lisa Kory, Martha Waterman, Mary Houle, MMCTV Erin, Stefani Hartsfield, Susan Wells

Call to Order: 7:00pm

Welcome by: Heston

Public Comment:

Houle: Wood For Good has been out at the brick house lot harvesting some wood. There is still a lot of wood left but they are working on the woodpile. Could you also provide more information on the workshops discussed at the last meeting?

Heston: The E.P.I.C. (Ethical Performance Improvement Campaign) or Welcoming and Engaging Communities are both geared toward a community that is welcoming in racial diversity and inclusion. This is a two-hour meeting every month for 6 months to work with other municipalities to build on ideas. We are trying to be proactive. It is being paid for by VLCT. This provides opportunities for grants.

Houle: Is Critical Race Theory part of that?

Heston: No.

Houle: If you can afford to live here, we welcome everyone.

Heston: Inclusion includes looking at affordable housing.

Additions or Deletions to Agenda: None

Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

Follow up on request to create a policy to include the Itemized Property Costs sheets for each property in the property file

Heston: Lisa Truchon, NEMRC Assessor, is here to share some information.

Arneson: Printing out the Itemized Property Costs sheets is probably doable but a lot of work. Putting it online is probably not doable. The Property Cards are currently online.

Truchon: The Town Clerk's Office has a file cabinet with all the Property Record Cards identified by Parcel ID. Some properties have old, itemized Cost sheets. Re-costing it is not a static report. It is very laborious to create a named .pdf and populate it. As we get toward the end of the re-appraisal, people will be able to see the new value and a copy of the report before the re-appraisal. If people have questions about the reappraisal, they can get those itemized record cards and we can email or call to provide personalized .pdfs. After the grievance and vetting process, the cards will be replaced and updated. Every folder will then have the old and new itemized Cost sheets as well as the Property Record Card. After all the hearings, the website will have the re-appraised Property Card.

Heston: Cara is asking for an itemized sheet for each file. It is information that is not as accessible.

Truchon: That is available on every individual file. After the re-appraisal everyone will have that in the file folder in the Town Clerk's Office.

LaBounty: Not all files have the information. The appeal process has to have comparables, so they need it for other properties. Once the grievance is done, they will put in the itemized values with the Property Cards. That is what I have been asking to be included in the file. The Itemized Card is where it lists specific values.

Heston: If it is in the file it doesn't need to be online.

Truchon: If you change your ownership in October then the Grand List will still show the old owner. The Grand List Value is based on ownership as of April 1 each year. These will be updated by the end of June after the grievance process. I update the working Grand List when there is a change in ownership but not part of the public or vault files.

Heston: Josh and I can have a conversation about how we update the physical files.

LaBounty: I have asked for the itemized cards, the updated property owner and the changes to non-permitted properties. The Assessors are finding changes to properties that were not permitted. Is there a system to report un-permitted changes to Town officials? You have the ability to request this information. Please schedule that conversation for a future meeting.

Consideration of approving a coin drop by the Richmond Fire Department on October 8, 2022 from 8am – 2 pm at the intersection of Bridge St. and Rt. 2

Heston: The Richmond Fire Department would like to hold a coin drop on Saturday, October 8, 2022 from 8am – 2pm. Per the coin drop policy, included in the packet, the Selectboard needs to approve the coin drop. We should work on this policy again as there is some confusion about the frequency and groups allowed to hold a coin drop.

Houle: In the past, one was for 4th of July and one was for the Fire Department.

Furr: At some point we should update this.

Forward moved to approve the Richmond Fire Department Coin Drop at the intersection of Bridge St. and Rt. 2 on October 8, 2022, from 8am – 2pm. Hill seconded.

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

Consideration of approving meeting dates for special Selectboard meetings for work on the FY24 budget

Heston: We are proposing working budget meetings for Tuesday October 18, Monday November 14, and Monday December 12.

Furr moved to hold special meetings of the Selectboard to review the FY24 budget on Tuesday, October 18, 2022; Monday, November 14, 2022; and Monday, December 12, 2022. Sander seconded.

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

Consideration of approving two road names

Heston: The first request is for Randall Farm Road which is a new road intersecting with East Hill Rd. just west of Fay's Corners. There is a map included in the packet. E911 has approved of this name.

Furr move to approve the name Randall Farm Road for the new road which will intersect with East Hill Rd. west of Fay's Corners. Sander seconded.

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

Heston: The second request is for Barred Owl Lane, which intersects with Dugway Rd. about 0.7 miles south of Cochran Rd.

Furr moved to approve the name Barred Owl Lane for the new road which will intersect with Dugway Rd. about seven tenths of a mile south of Cochran Rd. Sander seconded.

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

Consideration of approving the use of \$2,500 from the Community Well Being budget line for Youth Intern Funding on the All Together Now project

Hartsfield: This is for Community Well Being. You will see the name All Together Now and logo development based on a youth contest to make it meaningful. This request is to approve spending up to \$2500 of the \$5000 in the Community Wellbeing budget to pay youths for research, branding, outreach, and internships. A recent graduate from MMU will be a liaison.

Heston: It is great to get interns involved with this work.

Hartsfield: We really want this to be student-led with community adult support. We have representatives from the five MMUUSD Towns.

Furr: I am grateful for moving this forward for student mental health.

Forward: The materials in the packet were quite comprehensive.

Hill moved to approve the use of \$2,500 from the Community Well Being budget line for Youth Intern Funding on the All Together Now project. Furr seconded.

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

Presentation and consideration of acknowledgement of the Bike Walk Trails Plan

Venkataraman: We have Dayton Crites from DNK Architects and Brian Davis from CCRPC as well as members of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Steering Committee.

Crites: I am sharing the Richmond Bike Walk Trails Plan (https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/20220914_RichmondBikeWalkTrailsFINAL.pdf). I think this represents the community vision. There are two phases, phase 1 is north of the Winooski River and phase 2 is south of the Winooski River. This is a result of 5 public meetings and 200 comments online. There is a call for safer walking and biking around Town and along the Winooski River. We provide four different recommendations for Roadways, Trails, Intersection Projects, and Community Actions. We want to make it safer for everyone using the roadways. We do not specify where trails should go but suggest connections to support the vision. You can look at the tabular format for short- and long-term solutions. For instance, you will see on Cochran Rd some traffic calming measures for trails and roads. A full shared use path might also be a longer-term solution. You can also see suggestions for connecting the Village to the Park & Ride along the Rt. 2 corridor. The Community Actions are easier to implement with volunteers. The final chapter is our Implementation plan that provides infrastructure, timelines, probable cost, and funding sources.

Furr: Can you highlight more of the Project Prioritization?

Crites: We look at every project in terms of Equity, Safety, Bike/Pedestrian Comfort, Connectivity and Feasibility. Those categories are used in a spreadsheet to develop priority rankings. These are to help a Town make decisions but should not be considered a linear list.

Forward: Is there a proposal for a roundabout by River Rd., Rt. 2, and the interstate?

Crites: Currently, no roundabouts are listed. Page 48 illustrates a crossing improvement plan.

Houle: The roundabout was abandoned as the railroad is federal property and it would take too many years and regulations to figure it out.

Furr: The projected costs sheet on page 61 is very helpful to help find appropriate funding.

Forward: One of the recommendations is to eliminate the centerline on Hinesburg Rd. It would terrify me without a centerline. I realize if we approve this plan, it is not committing to any of these.

Crites: Local knowledge is more important than any consultant. The intention is that a little bit of driver comfort slows the traffic down. When a driver sees the double yellow and white lines then people drive faster on narrow roads. That is the cause of the concern.

Hill: Does the feasibility include the costs of the project?

Crites: Yes, most of the Shared Use Paths got lower feasibility scores based on the complex construction project. The cost itself is not part of that scoring. One of the top priorities is around \$7 million.

Waterman: I live on Cochran Rd and this study is validating of our concerns. The narrow nature of Cochran Rd makes it impossible for drivers, bikers, and walkers to exist even if every driver obeys speed limit and is paying attention. There are still many distracted and aggravated drivers.

Wells: This is a wonderful study and easy to understand. The Cochran Rd recommendations provide short- and long-term solutions. My question is what is the next step? If it is a low cost, then it should be a priority. This seems like perfect next steps.

Hill: I am wrestling with a state when we can afford a Shared Use Path. Maybe we should do some things that are affordable in the near term.

Forward: Our Traffic Calming Committee has a four-step process for developing this especially on Cochran Rd

Kart: Short term solutions are not always comprehensive and safe solutions. They reduce danger. The Transportation Committee is ready to start looking for funding if we can get some guidance.

Forward: Previously, cyclists reported that making the road wider only makes it more dangerous as people would drive faster.

Wells: Step 1 of the Traffic Calming Committee has taken forever on Cochran Rd. I would encourage you to move this forward in a faster way.

Forward moved to endorse the Richmond Bike, Walk, and Trails Plan in its entirety. Hill seconded.

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

Heston: I hope this plan will help us move forward a little quicker.

Hill: I think we need to describe a few goals.

Gent: The Transportation Committee is going to walk through some specific priorities.

Review of past and upcoming projects from the Transportation Committee

Venkataraman: I am going to share a slide deck from the Transportation Committee (https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/3g_Transportation_C)

ommittee_Presentation.pdf). You have heard about some of our progress through Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). We developed a town Transportation Implementation Plan with projects selected based on community input, feasibility studies and current cost estimates. The main goal is to strengthen the town's vehicle bicycle, and pedestrian network. There were three scoping reports presented back in June: Jericho Rd., Bridge St., and Huntington Rd. The Transportation put together an infographic for Project Pipeline 2022 to 2023. All these projects are supported by the CCRPC Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This represents the Town interests, purposes, and needs. We applied for sidewalk construction grants through VTrans. Our forthcoming tasks include Western Gateway Scoping Study, Rt 2 Targeted Scoping Study and an Official Map that can be integrated into Zoning. We will also be monitoring and evaluating Cochran Rd with the Traffic Calming Committee. The Transportation prioritizes the construction of sidewalks on the east side of Bridge St and pedestrian safety improvements.

Gent: The Village is a priority as it has many projects with funding for construction. The density of bicycles and pedestrians requires facilities to meet the needs of this area, local businesses, and municipal services. There are a number of projects outside of the Village but we are looking for Selectboard guidance.

Forward: I am impressed by the professionalism of our committees. I think a future Selectboard agenda item should address priorities around Cochran Rd.

Houle: We don't take care of the sidewalks we already have. Why do we spend money on studies when we need to solve Cochran Rd.

Gent: We have communicated with Highway about sidewalk maintenance. I think Mary's point is a good one. We need to make sure that sidewalks are part of the annual Highway workplan.

Hill: I like the workflow based on seasons. Maybe we need a more focused discussion on this agenda item.

Forward: This is related to our budget discussions.

Heston: There are concerns about crossing Bridge St. during the darker months. Sidewalks on both sides of Bridge St will create a safe path for everyone.

Furr: The sidewalks can get very crowded especially when there are strollers on the sidewalks or a crowd for creemees.

Discussion of placing radar speed feedback signs in more locations on Town Highways

Herrick: The Cochran Rd and Jericho Rd signs are some of the best options and cost around \$6,000. They have the same features of speed carts to track and show data.

Heston: Other recommendations for locations?

Herrick: There is talk about putting another one on Jericho Rd, so they exist above and below the schools. They are not portable like the trailer, but they are not mounted permanently. They can be moved around seasonally.

Sander: A strobing blue light is an effective tool to slow traffic down.

Herrick: Flashing signs are more effective than you can find in any other tool. The flashing strobes are a feature we can add on, and it is worth it.

Hill: We have vacancy savings from not having enough officers. I think we should get several of these. Many towns around New England seem to show they are popular and effective. I think we need them on both ends of Cochran Rd. Another concern area is coming up the hill on Rt. 2 west coming into Town.

Furr: I would like to get several and some with blue lights. Some people might not want blue flashing lights if it is close to resident's house. I also like Jericho Rd and Hinesburg Rd.

Heston: We are working on fixing the cart that was under warranty. We are not looking at purchasing more carts but more of a fixed fixture with some blue lights.

Waterman: I question the efficacy of these signs long-term compared to seeing a patrol car. The devices do not create a safe space for bicyclists or pedestrians.

Heston: We have an issue with staffing. We do have some evidence that the signs are effective. If they can be moved around seasonally then that changes the pattern.

Hill: The signs also document what the speeds are at different times of the day and week which will never be accomplished by a police officer.

Heston: The next meeting we can have an agenda action item to consider the purchase of these signs.

Furr: We can also try to find some links with relevant evidence of effectiveness.

Follow up on if the Town can pass an ordinance to limit bicyclists to single file

Arneson: I followed up with Attorney Robert Fletcher at Stitzel Page and Fletcher and he said the Town does not have the authority to limit bicyclists to single file. This is what we heard from VLCT previously. Bicyclists can be two abreast.

Hill: The Vermont statute states bicyclists can be two abreast unless they are impeding traffic.

Forward: There are examples of irresponsible bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists every day. Tractors are like bicyclists. We have to slow down behind them and look for a safe space to pass them. The cyclists are not the enemy as they have as much right to the road. A car will kill a cyclist not the other way around.

Naumann: Cyclists can move to the center of the lane if it is unsafe to pass or if there is an edge hazard.

Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Consideration of approving use of ARPA funds for purchase of a banner used for public outreach about ARPA funds

Heston: Selectboard Member and ARPA Committee Chair Jay Furr purchased a banner for the ARPA outreach meetings using his own money.

Forward move to approve the use of \$69.11 In ARPA funds for the purchase of a banner for the ARPA Public Feedback Sessions. Hill seconded

Roll Call Vote: Forward, Heston, Hill, Sander in favor. Furr abstains.

Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Purchase Orders

Forward moved to approve PO# 4500 to Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District for using last year's report due to the State non spending this year's report not to exceed \$1,781,538.32. Hill seconded.

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

Warrants

Heston: It says in one place the gross pay is \$56,000 but the two other listings only add up to \$52,000.

Arneson: This is based on employees who are in VMERS.

Heston: How about the \$61,839? I can go through this later.

Arneson: That might include some of the benefit payments.

Heston: It is off by \$4,033.31, I think.

Arneson: I think it has something to do with non-taxable wages and benefits.

Furr moved to approve the warrants as presented from 9/19/2022. Sander seconded.

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

Minutes

Sander moved to approve the Minutes of 9/6/22 as amended. Furr seconded.

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

Discuss Items for Next Agenda

- *Speed Signs purchasing
- *Police Governance update
- *I.D.E.A.L. Vermont update
- *Transportation Committee priorities
- *Permitting update from re-appraisals

Adjournment

Forward moved to adjourn. Hill seconded

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm

Chat file from Zoom:

00:21:51 MMCTV Erin: Jeff is hard to hear-can Bards mic be moved closer to jeff

00:37:37 MMCTV Erin: Can the mic between Jay and David be turned to be between them

01:21:17 Martha Waterman: Thank you for speaking, Susan. Well said. Select board, please let us know what to expect in terms of next steps for responding to the immediate need for increased safety on Cochran Rd.


01:22:06 Lisa Kory: Absolutely. It's essential to keep the momentum moving forward to increase the safety on Cochran Road.

01:22:10 Ann Naumann: The plan is very thorough and impressive. Thank you for all of the work that went into it.

01:34:04 Susan Wells: What in the world needs more evaluation on Cochran Road?

01:40:48 Ann Naumann: I second Jeff's sentiment about the professionalism and wonderful work of the transportation committee. Thank you!

01:51:32 jon.kart: Hopefully the blue strobe lights are highly directional, otherwise the people in the homes adjacent to the signs will be driven to shoot them.

01:55:48 Jay Furr: 

01:57:15 Martha Waterman: What is the quality of that data?

02:00:21 Duncan Wardwell: For the record, we enjoy the speed sign by our house on the east end of Cochran Rd (2944). A flashing blue light might be too intrusive but most effective?

02:03:43 Alexis Lathem: Thank you Jeff.

02:03:52 Allen Knowles: Thank you Jeff!

02:05:20 Alexis Lathem: thank you Anne.