

**Town of Richmond**  
**Special Water and Sewer Commission Meeting**  
**Minutes of March 13, 2023**

**Members Present:** Bard Hill, David Sander, Erin Farr, Jay Furr, Morgan Wolaver

**Members 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; Stephen Cote, Water Resources

**Others Present:** The meeting was recorded for MMCTV, Derick Read, Heidi Bormann, June Heston, Lisa Miller, Marshall Paulsen

**Call to Order:** 5:00 pm

**Welcome by:**

Sander: Good evening and welcome to the March 13 Water and Sewer Commission. Before we began, quick shout out to the 4% of Richmond voters that showed up on Town Meeting.

**Public Comment:** None

**Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:** None

**Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**

**Attorney client communication regarding possible extension of the water and sewer system, possible executive session**

*Furr moved to find that premature public knowledge about attorney client communication regarding possible extension of the water and sewer system would cause the Town or person to suffer a substantial disadvantage. Farr seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander in favor. Wolaver absent. Motion passed.*

*Furr moved that we enter into executive session to discuss attorney client communication regarding possible extension of the water and sewer system under the provisions of 1 VSA 313 (a) (1) (F) and to invite Town Manager Josh Arneson, Interim Water and Wastewater Superintendent Allen Carpenter, and Attorney Dave Rugh into the executive session. Hill seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion passed.*

*Furr moved to exit executive session. Wolaver seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion passed.*

## **Consideration of request to increase water and wastewater allocation at 22 Depot St.**

Read: Our client is proposing to add on to the west side of the building. They want to put in two commercial spaces on the lower level and four additional two-bedroom dwellings. We are looking for the additional Water and Sewer allocation for 960 gallons per day. We will be looking to extend a new water line for fire protection and domestic flows.

Hill: We have unused capacity for Water and Sewer. There have been conversations about parking in this part of town, so that's another sort of set of permitting.

Read: The project is proposing 12 parking spaces in the in the rear of the building.

*Wolaver moved to approve the preliminary allocation for an addition of 960 gallons per day for wastewater and 960 gallons per day of water at 22 Depot St. Hill seconded. Roll call vote follows discussion.*

Cote: If you look at the current building there's an orange pipe or green pipe on the outside, that's tied directly to the sewer system in the basement. That means your roof drains are running into the current system.

Sander: That's certainly something we want to follow up.

*Hill amended the motion to approve the preliminary allocation for an addition of 960 gallons per day for wastewater and 960 gallons per day of water at 22 Depot St. that will be contingent on any stormwater being decoupled from the wastewater system. Wolaver seconded. Roll call vote follows discussion.*

Read: The architect does have a plan to disconnect that.

Sander: The allocation would be contingent on disconnecting the roof stormwater overflow from the septic wastewater.

*Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion passed.*

## **Review request for proposal for electronic water meters**

Arneson: This comes after much discussion about electronic water meters. We could drive around to collect the data and not have to stop at each individual meter to read the meter. The handheld device would collect that data and then automatically download and upload into our network for more automated billing. We also talked about options such as a notification of water sewer staff, and also the customer if there's high flow detected. I put together an RFP to review. I am seeking feedback on the RFP.

Furr: I am glad you included the bit about getting a price for the notification capabilities, as that's important.

## **Update on 20-year wastewater treatment facility study**

Arneson: The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation requires State Water Investment Division (WID) format for preliminary engineering studies for the 20 Year Evaluation of the wastewater treatment facility. Part of the study will assess each process element at the wastewater treatment facility, identify the anticipated remaining useful life, identify needs, and provide alternatives and recommendations. They require this goes into the State planning document given to the Town. We're waiting to hear back from the State, and we'll bring that back to the Board for consideration of approval. The cost is likely to be about \$150,000. We can apply for a CWSRF loan which would provide a 50% subsidy. The remaining funds can come from the Wastewater Capital Reserve which has a balance at the end of FY22 of \$458,056.

Hill: Will this include scope to the Equipment Inventory? I think it would be appropriate to include the age, the sort of asset inventory within the plant, separate from lines and valves and the Equipment Inventory. If that piece of equipment failed, and you didn't have replacement on site, you're potentially down four months for that piece of equipment.

Cote: We have nothing in inventory. The plant is in terrible shape. We have no parts, no pieces that we can use. Most of the stuff is 20 to 30 years old, outdated. The influent pumps, the mechanic that worked on those five years ago told Kendall upfront, they needed to replace them then. The problem now is we're out of redundancy we're down to just barely scraping by.

Hill: You need a better inventory replacement system on these core components.

Furr: We've got this 20-year thing coming, but it sounds like it's going to take a while to get done. We have some things we need to address yesterday.

Arneson: The new fuel pump is on there as far as something we're working on addressing. We are getting the specs from an engineering firm to let us know exactly we need to put into the RFP to go out to bid. It takes time to do that, we're trying to move as quickly as we can. There are other issues at the treatment plant, Alan and I are working on making sure we have replacement parts.

Cote: If the one that we currently have fails, it's estimated that it's about \$20,000 a month to rent something to do the job.

Arneson: Phil Laramie of Laramie Water recommends that we don't put a \$20,000 pump in without putting some way to screen the stuff beforehand. We need a grit screen included in the engineering. Phil has offered to walk through with the engineer.

Hill: This sort of thing with our rate structure that you include your infrastructure costs. When we calculate septic rates and revenues, we should calculate not just staff time and chemicals, but allocation of infrastructure.

Cote: There are no maintenance logs whatsoever that I can find. The maintenance logs ended in the 1990s.

Hill: Water and Sewer was supposed to be at the cutting edge of our asset inventory, which I understood was going to include not just lines and valves, but infrastructure within the Water and Wastewater.

Cote: I was told there was no computer capable of accessing it at the Town. That was what the superintendent told me.

Furr: We need to do due diligence and make sure that we have maintenance procedure logs. We need to make sure we have the software to track this stuff. That's a big asset that was allowed to decay. We need process documentation.

Cote: There are a few things that had been neglected along the way. I'm not up to speed on everything that needs to be done.

LaBounty: I want to thank Stephen for coming forward and bringing this to light. I am disappointed that we are down to one pump and don't have a replacement pump. If we're eight weeks out on one pump, then it should be a priority.

Bormann: Stephen, I do appreciate you coming forward. If we can figure out the top priorities, we've got unreserved funds. If that plant goes down, we're all in trouble.

Sander: We've lost our redundancy.

Cote: I will offer to give any of you a tour of the plant and show you the issues.

Sander: I will connect with you to get over this week.

Arneson: We've been in communication with the engineer. I got an email back today from the engineer about what type of specs to meet on both pumps. We are working on the pump station across the street. I can give you a list of my priorities that I've been working on. I don't have prices on every one of them.

Cote: That pump station is in desperate need of upgrade. It was built for the Korean War and it's been in since the 70s but now the parts for it are not available. It still has mercury switches in it. You can't buy them anymore.

Furr: I would appreciate if we could get routine regular reports on this.

Hill: This is not a rescue, but it's preventing a rescue. I think we have to throw some money at this after delayed maintenance for some unknown number of years.

Cote: I know what's the problem right now like the influence pumps, the filter pump, we're down to one. Phil could walk through and make a list.

LaBounty: Is anybody still in contact with Kendall?

Cote: There's almost daily communications with Kendall from the Department.

LaBounty: We had a Superintendent that was using a pH tester from a pool who wasn't doing maintenance and we're on daily communication with a Superintendent who doesn't work for us anymore? Does anybody find that odd?

Arneson: I knew that Allen had been calling Kendall and I advised him to contact other industry professionals that will certainly help you out. You can also reach out to Rural Water.

Farr: It sounds like the plant was in enough disrepair and that's probably why he's being used as a resource. It is even more pertinent in my mind that we get the Laramie guy in here so that we can 100% sever that tie.

Sander: We were previously told that everything was covered under the Asset Management grant and things wouldn't just break at three o'clock in the morning and leave us short-handed. This was all a surprise to me as well as others. In the interest of time, I'd like to move e and f to next week.

### **Review of monthly water data – Tabled**

### **Update on Chittenden Solid Waste District biosolids agreement - Tabled**

### **Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders**

#### **Minutes**

Furr: On the 2/21 minutes at the bottom of pg. 8 change “subpage” to “septage.”

Farr: On pg. 6, “sixth” should be changed to “septage.”

*Furr moved to approve the Minutes of 2/21/23 as amended. Farr seconded.  
Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion passed.*

#### **Warrants**

*Furr moved to approve the warrants of 3/13/23 as presented. Hill seconded.  
Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion passed.*

#### **Purchase Orders**

*Furr moved to approve PO# 4393 to Town of Richmond for the Administrative Services provided by Town Staff not to exceed \$30,000.00. Farr seconded.  
Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion passed.*

*Wolaver moved to approve PO# 4517 to M&T Bank/Wilmington Trust for the Revolving Loan East Main St. Planning not to exceed \$12,021.12. Furr seconded.  
Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion passed.*

### **Discuss Items for Next Agenda**

- \*Review of monthly water data
- \*Update on Chittenden Solid Waste District biosolids agreement
- \*Funding for overdue maintenance

### **Adjournment**

*Wolaver moved to adjourn. Furr seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion passed.*

Meeting adjourned at: 6:58 pm

### **Chat file from Zoom:**

00:22:40 Duncan Wardwell - Richmond: Water and Sewer is in Executive  
Session until ~6 pm