MEMORANDUM

Date: **June 16, 2023**

To: **Water and Sewer Commission**

From: **Josh Arneson, Town Manager**

RE: **Water Meter Request for Proposal**

We received bids from four companies for water meters. Allen Carpenter, Brad Snow, Steve Cote and I reviewed the bids, held follow up conversations with the companies, and created a spreadsheet to analyze the bids.

The system is essentially a two-part system consisting of the water meter and the transmitter. The companies quoted their brand of meter as well as their transmitter. The system currenty has a total of 99 Sensus meters installed on the system. These are more modern meters and all of the companies can install their transmitter on the existing Sensus meters, which reduces the number of new meters we would have to buy. We will need to buy new meters to replace all the older meters in the system.

The Town of Shelburne has offered Richmond 70 Sensus meters which are the same as the 99 that we have installed. These are between 5-8 years old and have a 20-year total life. These would be compatible with any of the systems we choose to move forward with and would reduce the amount of new meters we would need to purchase, lowering the initial setup costs.

Shelburne also has 500 of the transmitters which are compatible with the EJP iPERL system which they are willing to sell to Richmond for $25 per transmitter. These are about 3-5 years old and have a 20 year total life. The equipment from Shelburne is available because they are switching to Neptune meters.

A reminder that these bids do not include installation of the meters. We reached out for one quote on installation and this came in at about $110,000. But this will need to be sent out to bid once we finalize moving forward with the purchase of new meters and meter reading system. A professional company can get these installed in one to two months. Using Water and Sewer Staff to install the meters would take a few years.

The spreadsheet analysis includes:

- The cost of each system with using the existing 99 Sensus meters
- The cost of each system with using the existing 99 Sensus meters and 70 used Sensus meters from Shelburne
- The cost of the EJP iPERL system using the existing 99 Sensus meters, the 70 used Sensus meters from Shelburne, and the transmitters from Shelburne

- We did not run the numbers for DJP accuSTREAM or EJP SRII with the Shelburne meters because staff advised they were not interested in using either meter.

The systems are bid as “Drive By” and “Non-Drive By”.

- A Drive By system is read only when a staff member drives by each meter with a handheld device in a vehicle. This would occur every three months to read the meters for quarterly billing.
- A Non-Drive by system uploads data continuously without the need to drive by with a handheld device.

Note that Zenner only bid a non-drive by system.

After reviewing the cost of each system, talking with representatives from the companies, and checking references it is our recommendation to move forward with the non-drive by system from Zenner and include the 70 meters from Shelburne.

- Zenner is a global company and supplier of these types of meters and systems but is relatively new to the United States.
- We checked with two Vermont systems which use Zenner and received glowing reports about the product and their customer service.
- We also had great conversations with their customer service representative Noah Dew.
- Zenner provided the lowest cost of all the non-drive by systems
- Zenner provides a customer portal for an additional charge which is the lowest set up cost for a customer portal of all systems.
    - The customer portal allows customers to check on their water usage in real time.
    - The one feature that Zenner does not offer that other companies do offer is the ability for a customer to set usage at zero and be alerted immediately if any water goes through their meter. This would be helpful if a customer were on vacation and could allow for leaks to be detected very quickly. We mentioned this feature to Zenner and they said it is something they could look into in the future.
- Zenner will be able to notify staff of leaks within 24 hours. Zenner provides a daily report to staff and in this report it would note if a meter detected flow during every hour for the past 24 hours, which would indicate a leak.
- The Zenner transmitter and meter both have replaceable batteries which allow for only the batteries to be replaced at the end of the 20-year life expectancy rather than replacing the whole meter or transmitter.