

Town of Richmond
Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission
Minutes of October 16, 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; Steve Cote, Water Resources

Others Present: The meeting was recorded for MMCTV, Denise Barnard

MMCTV Video: <https://archive.org/details/RichmondWaterSewer10162023>

Call to Order: 6:00 pm

Welcome: Wolaver

Public Comment: None

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Minutes:

Sander moved to approve the Minutes of 10/2/23 meeting as presented. Furr seconded. Roll Call Vote: Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Farr and Furr abstains. Motion approved.

Warrants:

Sander moved to approve the 10/16/23 Warrants as presented. Farr seconded. Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.

Purchase Orders: None

Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

Review of list of water and wastewater items to be repaired or replaced

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/10/4a1_Water_and_Wastewater_Items_to_be_Repaired_or_Replaced_10-12-23.pdf

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/10/4a2_Report_on_Fournier_Press.pdf

Cote: For about the last month and a half, it's been all about the press, we can't function without it and it is down to less than 50%. I have talked with Fournier today and they are

50 putting together an estimate. There is a report in the packet from Fournier and there's a
51 lot wrong. We are running it the best that it can run, it's just worn out. They will give us
52 the cost of a new one and the cost to fix it. The cost of the fixing is roughly \$120,000. If
53 we don't have a press, we can't take septage and we have to pay to get rid of our sludge.
54 The new one would cost in the ballpark of \$270,000. I am relying on engineers and the
55 engineers' 20-year study. There are other types of presses, a centrifuge press is a little
56 more money. I took 30,000 gallons of septage today, but it should have been 60,000.

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58 Hill: Is it accurate to state that the current condition and circumstances are at least
59 partially the result of inadequate maintenance in the past?

60
61 Cote: Yes, there was just too much that's been done away with

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63 Hill: Is there any potential benefit of using anything here for replacement parts.

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65 Cote: The press expert did not even know if they still made parts for this one as he
66 hadn't seen a press this old. Hoyle Tanner is aware of everything that we're dealing with
67 here. I spend just about all of my time making this thing work, I come back between 11
68 PM and 1 AM in the morning to get it working again. The old superintendent's 20-year
69 asset management capital reserve fund plan for Wastewater and for Water was updated in
70 2022 and I don't know where he was getting his numbers. It said 2015 for 10 years until
71 2025 the press was going to need some work done on it, for the parts, he roughly put in
72 \$20,000. That doesn't cover one screen and we have four.

73
74 Farr: If we go with a new press, will it be something that can be retrofitted to whatever
75 else we do with the other 20-year upgrade?

76
77 Cote: That's why I'm relying on engineers. The press tends to run pretty good during the
78 day. Hopefully, when Fournier sends us quotes, there will be a timeframe. There's only
79 two of these type presses in Vermont and Brattleboro's four channel presses are in
80 immaculate shape, they have been well cared for and taken care of, they change screens
81 every 18 months. The screens on our system have not been replaced. Brattleboro fills a
82 tractor trailer with cake out of the press every 19 hours and we did one in five days with
83 me coming back in at 1 AM and then coming back at 5 AM to make sure that the press
84 was running nonstop for 24 hours.

85
86 Farr: If they call you back tomorrow and say here's your reports and you need to make a
87 decision, will you call a meeting so we can vote on it?

88
89 Cote: The engineers are well aware that this is a problem because without getting rid of
90 our solids out of the system, we're in danger of violating our permit for discharge.

91
92 Arneson: We could have a special meeting to make a recommendation. If it's \$120,000
93 to repair it, we wouldn't need to do our procurement policy because it's one supplier. If
94 it's a replacement at \$200,000, we probably need to do an RFP which involves engineers
95 helping us write the technical specifications.

96
97 Furr: It doesn't sound like a good plan to spend \$120,000 and then in two months buy a
98 whole new one.

99 Cote: There's just so much that's been done to this press that I don't know if we can
100 really save it.

101
102 Farr: Could we just start the bid process? The worst-case scenario is we want to fix it
103 and just say thank you for your bid, we will keep you in mind when we do our 20-year
104 upgrade.

105
106 Arneson: Why don't we ask the engineers to start drawing up an RFP.

107
108 Wolaver: Breweries actually use centrifuges because they get every drop of water out,
109 they're incredibly efficient. Do we write two RFPs?

110
111 Cote: Most places have centrifuges now, they are expensive to purchase and run. The
112 mixer for the water tank is on its way. Once we have possession of it, we will get in
113 contact with the divers and have them come up to install it. They're going to do a
114 cleaning and video the inside of the tank.

115
116 Hill: The ongoing comments and discussions we've had about leakage, we'd like to
117 associate those on the outside with what we see on the inside.

118
119 Cote: The line from the digester to the dewatering building has been plugged most of the
120 summer. In order to run the presses winter, I have to get that line cleaned out. P&P will
121 come and vacuum out around the outlet, then they're going to run a snake and blast the
122 line back out. The wastewater plant is three times its water usage week, it was almost
123 three times its normal use in July and in September's reading, it was roughly half. I
124 haven't been able to figure out where it is. If we can't find a leak, the next thing that
125 we're going to do is install water meters in each of the buildings and try to find out where
126 it is. We're trying to go by a process of elimination.

127
128 Hill: Is it possible that there are inline valves leaking into the system?

129
130 Cote: Most of the valves on the press are stainless steel and are in really good shape.
131 When the press was not operational, you would see water flowing through it and we don't
132 see that. It might be in septage receiving because the grit screen uses a lot of water to
133 rinse. In the 20-year upgrade, we have asked them to see about including a reuse system.
134 It is standard on most water treatment plants to reuse the same water that's going to the
135 Winooski, it's crystal clear. What caught my attention was \$21,000 worth of water.

136
137 **Review of September 2023 water data**

138 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/10/4c_Monthly_Water_Report_for_September_2023.pdf)
139 [0/4c_Monthly_Water_Report_for_September_2023.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/10/4c_Monthly_Water_Report_for_September_2023.pdf)

140
141 Wolaver: There were two days of low level fluoride and one day the free chlorine was a
142 little low.

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144 Cote: On the 20th, we shut the system off, so it probably ran out of fluoride at that time.
145 We mixed it up on the 20th, we didn't use very much water. The chlorine level was lower
146 because the tank water tends to dissipate chlorine because it's sitting there all the time.

Arneson: The State is really looking at the entry point and that day chlorine was 1.09.

Cote: In the near future, we might not have to take the free chlorine out of the tap at the wastewater treatment plant.

Review of Wastewater Treatment Facility 20 Year Evaluation - 30% Submittal

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/10/4b_Richmond_WWTF_20_Year_Evaluation_-_30_Submittal_-_10-09-23_FINAL.pdf

Arneson: This is really comprehensive, a great exploration from start to finish of how the facility works. They documented that it is wearing out and will need to be repaired. They're going to have that study completely finalized by the end of December and this has been submitted to the State for 30% status report.

Cote: They've been in contact with me almost every day, wanting more information, more data. The chart recorder for effluent discharge had a limit. If we got 650 million gallons of discharge in a day, that was the max, so it would not go anymore. The engineers wanted it to be set at 1.5 million. They also wanted some data from our aeration tanks, BODs and TSSs. It's really moving forward now since we've got this. I really think it's an asset that Kristin did the original upgrade 20 years ago. We have located every manhole that we have, they have done an asset as part of the collection system. They've done the inspections and they're supposed to give us that in the near future. We have over 210 manholes now. There are a lot of them that were buried, which are no longer buried. Their GPS locator is pinpoint accurate. They do a great job with measurements, pipe inlet/outlet, everything.

Wolaver: I was noticing the design criteria versus current loads. There's a calculation that exceeds our design criteria. is and I'm like I don't understand the math. I don't have to but seems like that's

Cote: Some of the stuff it can handle more than it was designed for which is a good thing. If we had a creamery in Town, it would be devastating to a collection system and plant operation.

Update on staffing

Farr: You're interviewing people this week and you're making offers.

Cote: I hope so, we need to make some decisions. We have one candidate that does have some experience as a press operator, as a centrifugal press operator. I feel we've had a lot of candidates.

Arneson: I think the hard part is going to be figuring out where on the paygrade to put some of these folks.

Update on contracting for water meters

Arneson: We gave them a mark-up document and we asked them to accept what you can accept, leave everything else and then we'll talk. We're waiting for that.

Update on NBRC grant extension

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/10/4g_NBRC21GEDA04_MOR_NTP_Extension_Only_20231009_1.pdf

Wolaver: The NBRC grant extension has been approved.

Update on Gateway sewer expansion

Hill: The Reaps said that at this point, they are not interested. They are contemplating alternative development plans that do not require water-sewer. We have a water line that goes into the school property, I don't know what the easement says that would allow us to extend the water line down the hill. We don't have an easement for sewage line. The Land Trust is now moving forward with a proposal that would allow the Town both lines as a separate easement. If the Town were to end up owning lines through that, we'd have to have an easement at the Reap property to access and maintain any line. The Reaps expressed more interest in water than sewer which doesn't bode well for the NBRC grant. Who's going to put money other than NBRC towards this work? What would an easement say if and when we need it. If it bogs down or becomes costly, it's probably not worth investing time or money on. If the agreement says that we have the right to maintain a line for the use of the schools that has one level of authority. If it's an agreement to have access to the line to support use by the schools and other property owners downstream, it would have to say that.

Discuss Items for Next Agenda:

- *Press
- *Employment update
- *Meters
- *Richmond Land Trust proposed easement
- *Gateway
- *Water Service Line inventory

Adjournment

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

Meeting adjourned at: 6:57 PM

Chat file from Zoom:

00:20:42 MMCTV Erin Wagg: David can you pull mic closer to you?