

Town of Richmond
Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission
Minutes of December 4, 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, Jeremy Hoff, Peter, Virginia Clarke

MMCTV Video: https://youtu.be/UzjReNvolcY?si=yCff-q_PRTiEQf49

Call to Order: 6:00 pm

Welcome: Wolaver

Public Comment: None

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:

Hill: A short update statement about the Board of Abatement activities related to Water/Sewer.

Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Minutes:

Furr moved to approve the Minutes of 11/20/23 meeting as presented. Sander seconded. Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.

Purchase Orders:

Sander moved to approve PO# 4840 to VLCT Property & Casualty for Insurance for \$64,154.00 with a \$21,717.11 contribution for Water and Wastewater. Hill seconded. Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.

Warrants:

Furr moved to approve the 12/4/23 Warrants as presented. Sander seconded. Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.

Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

Board of Abatement Statement

49 Wolaver: There was a meeting last week to consider two individuals on Esplanade with
50 their charges for sewer during the flood in which they had some damage to their house.

51
52 Hill: There was a public session where they presented their case so that is public record.
53 The Board of Abatement, which considers the request, did not reach a decision that night.
54 We now have three documents that say the authority for abating water and/or sewer
55 charges belongs to the Board of the Civil Authority operating as the Board of Abatement.
56 The Water & Sewer Commission will know the decision along with the rest of the public.

57
58 **Review of list of water and wastewater items to be repaired or replaced**

59 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4a_Water_and_Wastewater_Items_to_be_Repaired_or_Replaced_11-28-23.pdf)
60 [2/4a Water and Wastewater Items to be Repaired or Replaced 11-28-23.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4a_Water_and_Wastewater_Items_to_be_Repaired_or_Replaced_11-28-23.pdf)

61
62 Cote: Last week we got the digester 90% clean. The plan next spring is to start on a
63 regular routine cleaning of the plant and completely finish and clean the digester all in
64 one day and get on a regular schedule once a year. The water tank mixers are both in and
65 working fine. There is still the fluoride problem dealing with the State who hasn't got us
66 a fluoride pump. We're having increasing trouble trying to maintain our fluoride levels.
67 It could take up to two months so we're looking at the first of the year, so I'm trying to
68 find a better solution.

69
70 Hill: It might be worth a heads up to customers on the system like through Front Porch
71 Forum.

72
73 Cote: Our clear well was overdosed twice. When the pump is running, it pumps really
74 well but when it shuts off, it continues to siphon through. The numbers are down into the
75 0.4 range not anywhere close to the 0.6-0.7 that we want. My supplier said we have one
76 in stock, and we can send it to you to be there in three days. The State took that as one
77 estimate, but they have to get three estimates. It's about \$4,500. I told the State that
78 you're going to save a few dollars and it's going to be two months. The Health
79 Department covers the fluoridation.

80
81 Hill: I'm thinking we should start with the Commissioner of Health and say we are
82 waiting two months on this fluoride problem, because you have a purchasing delay on a
83 \$4,500 piece of equipment.

84
85 Wolaver: I think we need to follow up with a letter to somebody.

86
87 Hill: For our citizen customers, this is a problem. They expect it and having partial
88 fluoridation is in some ways worse than having no fluoridation.

89
90 Cote: Roland, who assessed our pump problem says our samples should be taken from
91 the control house near the water tank, because that really is our fluoride source.

92
93 Hill: Email Roland and copy the Commissioner expressing our concern about the delay.

94
95 Cote: We've been on the side of caution of not over fluoridating. I am sharing a picture
96 of half of the rags that we removed from the digester. We're maintaining the press and
97 have disassembled the one side now. We know how to do it so now we can do the other

98 side. I was looking at the end of January for the parts to rebuild the press. The fire
99 extinguisher inspector came, and this is the first time he has had stairs.

100
101 **Gateway discussion: Follow up on next steps & clarification on letter proposing 30**
102 **foot pedestrian easement**

103 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water Sewer Commission/Meetings/2023/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4b1_Email_Regarding_Richmond_Land_Trust_Letter.pdf)
104 [2/4b1 Email Regarding Richmond Land Trust Letter.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4b1_Email_Regarding_Richmond_Land_Trust_Letter.pdf)

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106 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water Sewer Commission/Meetings/2023/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4b2_RLT_letter_to_RWSC_re_Willis_Hill_Easement_11-6-23.pdf)
107 [2/4b2 RLT letter to RWSC re Willis Hill Easement 11-6-23.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4b2_RLT_letter_to_RWSC_re_Willis_Hill_Easement_11-6-23.pdf)

108
109 Wolaver: This is a follow up and there's a couple parts to this. We got an email from one
110 of the residents down on the Gateway and put forth a couple things that they were not
111 happy about. One of them was about a 30-foot easement along the Gateway. To clarify
112 the record, the Water and Sewer Commission is not asking for a 30-foot easement along
113 the Gateway expansion. That was really something that was from the letter from the
114 Richmond Land Trust.

115
116 Hoff: I suspect there will need to be a subsurface easement for the water and sewer line.
117 Part of the rationale is that the surface above those lines could be utilized for some other
118 purpose. We're also thinking that the same strip could be within the zoning setback so it
119 wouldn't have any practical impact on people's use of their properties.

120
121 Hill: Any extension to Phase Two beyond the Reaps would be an additional easement in
122 a different conversation, including the Land Trust and others.

123
124 Wolaver: Maybe the first thing we should do is meet with the Reaps and discuss if we're
125 just going to stop at their property, what are the things that need to happen with the
126 easement. There's a number of things that have to be addressed and will have to fall in
127 place.

128
129 Hill: I understood that the Reaps are focusing on development at the rear part of the
130 property for storage units which don't require any substantial water/sewer. We're still at
131 least conceptually interested in housing in the front end so then how does Water & Sewer
132 change their plans to subsidize the line coming down to their property.

133
134 Wolaver: What happens with the school if that line fails, or doesn't meet the Town's
135 requirements? It's not going to happen in a couple of months, it's going to take months or
136 a year. We would create a bullet point list of the things that would need to happen in
137 order to get a line to a fire hydrant.

138
139 Hoff: We can help or if you have questions just reach out.

140
141 Farr: How do we properly respond to the email we received?

142
143 Wolaver: There are people that are property owners beyond them that would like water
144 and sewer. I guess we should consider a letter that says we are not looking at taking 30
145 feet of your land but maybe with the stipulation that there are individuals on the other
146 side that do want water and sewer.

Hill: We asked for input on a letter from Richmond Land Trust related to an easement. This is part of an input phase, so I don't think we need to claim anything. Some people want it, and some don't.

Review of fee language, specifically Metered Sewer

Furr: At our Board of Abatement meeting, there were some questions about being charged metered sewer or water that had not passed through the meter, because it was pumped out of the basement. We never have actually metered sewer that's just the way it reads on the bill. We've assumed that if you take 100 gallons in then 100 gallons goes out, otherwise we're paying for a very expensive sewer meter. To avoid that confusion in the future, we have a fixed rate, a fee that everybody pays regardless, and then there's non-fixed.

Arneson: It is based on water usage.

Farr: I feel like sewer capacity usage or sewer discharge usage.

Arneson: 1000 gallons for water is billed as 1000 gallons for sewer.

Wolaver: We're not a for-profit organization, we are charging users an amount of money to operate the facility.

Hill: We are not aware of any system that meters both water and sewer and that's related to the complexities and cost of metering sewer. It is cost prohibitive.

Arneson: We can reach out to other water systems, how do they describe metered sewer.

Sander: At a property in Jeffersonville, the bill comes as water use and sewer use as the same number.

Hill: A leak is only one of the circumstances leading to a discrepancy between water and sewer.

Update on water meters

Arneson: Once we get the agreement figured out, we'll send the RFP for installation over to the designer so they can help us out with technical specs.

Cote: Installation will occur maybe by late or even early spring. Installation of water meters in flooded buildings should be located above flood. The older meters seem to resist flooding and I don't know if our new meters would resist flooding. They might have to come in and be plumbed in a different spot. I have a whole list of things that I think we should talk about some time like sealed manhole covers in all flooded areas. In New Hampshire, anything that floods twice are required to have a sealed manhole cover. At the water house, I'd like to see waterproof doors.

195 Farr: At my work, I sit right next to one of the water meters and they're really noisy
196 when the water is going. We run our dishwasher and washing machine at night, if that
197 was under our kid's bedroom, that would be an issue.
198

199 Cote: Part of this also ties into our 20-year upgrade, where the engineers have done
200 depth measurements of all the manholes and everything in the collection system. It
201 looked like the lines were in really great shape in that area so they could withstand some
202 head pressure. Would the plant be able to handle what's coming in if we can limit the
203 flooding coming in.
204

205 **Discuss Items for Next Agenda:**

206 *Flood protection measures

207 *Gateway update

208 *Sewer meter language

209 *Fluoride pump update

210 *Water Tank update

211 *Review of repaired items
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213 **Adjournment**

214

215 *Furr moved to adjourn. Sander seconded.*

216 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*
217

218 Meeting adjourned at: 6:53 PM
219

220 **Chat file from Zoom:** None
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