

Town of Richmond
Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission
Minutes of December 18, 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, Carolyn Marshall, Denise Barnard, Dennis, Ian Bender, Lane Marshall, Michael Storrs, Tess Storrs, Virginia Clarke

MMCTV Video: <https://youtu.be/VmtlJKYLCfo?si=V4sN5ZEmBmmK3uPm>

Call to Order: 6:00 pm

Welcome: Wolaver

Public Comment: None

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:

Wolaver: The updates on flooding.

Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Minutes:

Furr moved to approve the Minutes of 12/4/23 meeting as presented. Sander seconded.

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

Warrants:

Furr moved to approve the 12/18/23 Warrants as presented. Sander seconded.

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

Purchase Orders: None

Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present:

Update on flooding

Arneson: The pipe that goes from the wastewater treatment facility out to the river became unusable is back filled with water because of the flooding. They have a sump pump that they use to pump the fluid directly out of the building. They've contacted the State to let them and they understand there's a report that they have to fill out when they have a discharge like that treated water. The water was getting up close to the pump

house, so the system was isolated from anything from the pump and from the well. The water storage tank is almost 100% full.

Hill: After the flood recedes, we should discuss changes to the well house or the pumping station to make infiltration of water less likely.

Follow on status of fluoride pump

Wolaver: We did get an email from the State that new pump is headed our way.

Arneson: We're hoping that it shows up tomorrow and we'll get right on putting that in assuming there's no full recovery tomorrow. Steve has made the State aware that we've had low numbers.

Review of November water data

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water Sewer Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4b Monthly Water Report for November 2023.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4b_Monthly_Water_Report_for_November_2023.pdf)

Arneson: You'll see a lot of yellow in the fluoride levels and that's due to the pump problems. The work around was to disconnect it overnight when we weren't continuously pumping water. We put a post on Front Porch Forum, and we've been in communication with the State.

Cote: We took the chlorine barrel, and we drained it and cleaned it out. We've started with a new batch of chlorine and it's now crystal clear and it should be better numbers going forward. Everything gets tested at the water house.

Arneson: The idea is it goes into at 0.8 mg/L and then it goes no lower than 0.1 mg/L as it goes through the system.

Cote: The plant has been maxed out most of the day at 1.5 million gallons, but we saw it at 3 million gallons. We're not seeing that thick grease or sludge layer that we had on top of the wet well. In the 20-year upgrade, the effluent discharge is going to have a pressurized pump system out of our plant then it probably would have a check valve and all those things wouldn't happen. The effluent discharge pipe is 12 inches in diameter where it leaves the plant. We should look at some sealed manholes and proofing systems like waterproofing the pump house, so we don't have that be on boil water from inundation. The water came up way faster than it did in July.

Discussion of next steps for Gateway expansion project

Wolaver: Last week, Josh, Bard and I had a telephone conversation with Joy Reap to find out they have set aside any expansions that would need water and sewer. They do want to look at it in the future and we did go through a list of what we can do that would not cost any significant amount of money to put the Town in a position to move forward. We resolved that the school district possibly needs to inspect the pipe again, I would advocate the Town paying for the inspection of about \$1,000.

Cote: I never talked to P&P or asked for footage because we were kind of at a stalemate.

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100 Hill: We might meet with our engineer about what it would take to get us to a green light
101 on this pipe and pass a pressure test and did the valves work.

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103 Wolaver: We could have a conversation with the school district about easements, where
104 their water and sewer lines are, and what would be the most appropriate point to connect
105 going down the hill over the Richmond Land Trust.

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

108 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4d_Water_and_Wastewater_Items_to_be_Repaired_or_Replaced_12-14-23.pdf)
109 [2/4d_Water_and_Wastewater_Items_to_be_Repaired_or_Replaced_12-14-23.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2023/12/4d_Water_and_Wastewater_Items_to_be_Repaired_or_Replaced_12-14-23.pdf)

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111 Cote: Our 17,000 gallons of water usage a day has been cut to 2,500 as there was a valve
112 that was not closing so that when the press was running, it was leaking all the time. The
113 usage this Saturday to Sunday was 500 gallons so I'm pretty confident that we've got the
114 problem going forward. We cleaned the digester out and unclogged the pipe going
115 underground. The septage receiving bays are filling up way faster because the aeration
116 system that's in there is not operating properly. We're making adjustments by hosing it
117 out with a fire hose until we can get down in there and get the diffusers fixed.

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119 **Discussion of improvements for flood resiliency**

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121 Cote: The sealed manholes have a gasket and actually bolt in place. The ones in the road
122 we would have to cut around, remove the hole and it's a completely new ring. I'll start to
123 look at prices and part of that is getting the engineering study back from Hoyle Tanner.
124 We can see if the infrastructure and the pipe are strong and worthy enough to withstand
125 the added pressure. We could raise them, the ones in Volunteers Green could be 5 feet
126 tall. Doing something with our pump station is going to be a priority in the future.

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128 **Update on water meters**

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130 Arneson: We are finalizing exactly how many we need, get the purchase order done, and
131 get the RFP with specifications out for installation.

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133 **Follow up on fee language, specifically Metered Sewer**

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135 Arneson: I reached out to other Town Managers in Chittenden County and it seems like
136 most of them do it the same way we do. You meter the water going into the building, no
137 one has a wastewater meter, and they bill sewer on the amount of water that goes into the
138 building. Colchester had the best way where they have something in their rates that says
139 the total amount of water consumption the user charge shall be determined by dividing
140 the system's variable costs by the total amount of water consumption. They're talking
141 about water consumption in the sewer ordinance. We could probably use some of that
142 language and add that to our rate sheets for the first bill of the year.

143

144 Hill: In Westford, they were talking about a sewage only wastewater system and they did
145 not intend to put meters there, they were just going to divide it by 50 users, everybody
146 pays the same rate. It's illustrative of the challenge of metering sewer.

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148 Arneson: I think that's how Bolton does it, it's a private but community system, it's
149 really just a shared fixed cost.
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151 Wolaver: Figuring out how many square feet of house you have is another way of doing
152 it.

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154 **Consideration of changing the date of the February 19, 2024 Commission meeting**
155 **due to the Presidents' Day holiday**

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157 *Furr moved to change the date of the second Water and Sewer Commission meeting in*
158 *February from Monday, February 19, 2024 to Tuesday, February 20, 2024 in recognition*
159 *of the Presidents' Day Holiday on February 19. Sander seconded.*

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

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162 **Discuss Items for Next Agenda:**

163 *Flood resiliency & follow up

164 *Fluoride pump

165 *Water meters

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167 **Adjournment**

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169 *Furr moved to adjourn. Sander seconded.*

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

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172 Meeting adjourned at: 6:53 PM

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174 **Chat file from Zoom:** None

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