

1 **Town of Richmond**  
2 **Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission**  
3 **Minutes of April 1, 2024**  
4

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

6  
7 **Members Absent:** Jay Furr

8  
9 **Staff Present:** Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Duncan Wardwell, Assistant to the Town  
10 Manager; Connie Bona, Finance Director; Steve Cote, Water Resources

11  
12 **Others Present:** The meeting was recorded for MMCTV, Peter iPhone, Peter Mumford

13  
14 **MMCTV Video:** <https://youtu.be/jGvtw-bzxPY?si=9SHcNyNYZM-RelhK>

15  
16 **Call to Order: 5:00 pm**

17  
18 **Welcome:** Wolaver

19  
20 **Public Comment:** None

21  
22 **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:**

23  
24 Farr: Can we talk about the tank and the divers at the next meeting?

25  
26 Wolaver: We'll add that to the next meeting agenda.

27  
28 **Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders**

29  
30 **Minutes:**

31  
32 *Sander moved to approve the Minutes of 3/18/24 meeting as presented. Hill seconded.*  
33 *Roll Call Vote follows discussion*

34  
35 Wolaver: On lines 88-89, check the numbers but nothing intentional was meant there.

36  
37 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*

38  
39 Farr: I like it better when we had the minutes broken down. I feel like sometimes there  
40 aren't as many details when going back to look at something.

41  
42 Arneson: His duties are growing as we have FEMA claims and whatnot but if the  
43 Commission would like to discuss it at the next meeting, we could look at it.

44  
45 Wardwell: There's a fine line between how much time you want to put into the details  
46 and the consistency across all our boards. The video is there so it's not like the details are  
47 missing.

49 Hill: We could have examples of the regular long minutes to the regular short minutes.

50

51 Wardwell: You can put it on Closed Captioning too. I try to boil it down to what would  
52 be digestible because the older version has a lot of stuff to read and type. I try to get it  
53 specific and efficient to the topic and not start recapping what was in previous minutes.  
54 The A.I. transcript is not readable, but I am happy to share.

55

56 Hill: The Selectboard had a variety of opinions as well.

57

58 Wardwell: The Water-Sewer is actually the older system but I'm trying to be more  
59 efficient. The Selectboard is the newer system where I summarize even more. The  
60 Water-Sewer minutes is where I quote actual people and in the Selectboard, I summarize  
61 "Arneson or Hill stated this." I think we should look at consistency across all our boards  
62 and committees on minutes for the official record. For every hour of meeting, it'll take  
63 me about 2 to 2.5 hours to compile the minutes.

64

#### 65 **Purchase Orders:**

66

67 *Sander moved to approve PO# 4866 to U.S. Bank for Jericho Rd and Fire Truck loan for*  
68 *not to exceed \$15,885.84. Hill seconded.*

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

70

71 *Sander moved to approve PO# 4868 to M&T Bank/Wilmington Trust for RF3-335 East*  
72 *Main St Loan for not to exceed \$25,139.95. Hill seconded.*

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

74

75 Sander: I just want to make a comment that the annual payment of this project is less  
76 than the maintenance on the old line.

77

78 Hill: We had 1-2 breaks every year.

79

80 *Sander moved to approve PO# 4867 to M&T Bank/Wilmington Trust for Millet St Loan*  
81 *for not to exceed \$21,138.80. Hill seconded.*

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

83

#### 84 **Warrants:**

85

86 *Sander moved to approve the 4/1/24 Warrants as presented. Hill seconded.*

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

88

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

90

#### 91 **Review of DRAFT FY25 Budget**

92 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4a1_FY25_Water_Wastewater_budget_Draft_1_03-27-24.pdf)  
93 [3/4a1\\_FY25\\_Water\\_Wastewater\\_budget\\_Draft\\_1\\_03-27-24.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4a1_FY25_Water_Wastewater_budget_Draft_1_03-27-24.pdf)

94

95 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4a2_FY25_Water_Wastewater_budget_Draft_1_03-27-24.xlsx)  
96 [3/4a2\\_FY25\\_Water\\_Wastewater\\_budget\\_Draft\\_1\\_03-27-24.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4a2_FY25_Water_Wastewater_budget_Draft_1_03-27-24.xlsx)

97 Arneson: We didn't make any changes to what we presented last meeting on the Water  
98 budget as well as the Sewer budget protections. We showed 15% of the budget, so it's a  
99 little easier to see Water Unrestricted, \$59,000, so we're underfunded a bit. For Sewer,  
100 the projected 15% of the budget is \$131,000 and we've got about \$170,000 more than  
101 15% of the budget.

102

103 In FY25, we expect to get reimbursed for the \$90,000 that we spent on final design for  
104 the Tilden, Bridge St, Thompson Rd, Cochran Rd waterline project.

105

106 We added a sheet here to look at Water and Wastewater upcoming capital projects. We  
107 have a new monitoring system, an alarm system that will provide real time data directly  
108 to the phones of the staff. There is excavation to locate the Borden St water main.

109

110 Cote: We spent probably three months looking for their water valve. If you know where  
111 Borden St comes off, there is a large Y-ish shape in the road and it's somewhere in that  
112 area. We felt that the best thing is to dig back into Borden St and follow it back. We  
113 have several blueprints for that whole thing and there is nothing where it says it should  
114 be. The best-case scenario is putting in a brand new one where we know where it is. We  
115 are locating every curb stop with a photo in relation to the permanent corners of the  
116 house/residence/business.

117

118 Hill: Asset management is not only where is the valve, but what is it, how long has it  
119 been there and what about replacement life cycles.

120

121 Cote: Of the 15 on Tilden Ave, 8 of them are inaccessible as you cannot physically get a  
122 wrench on the curb stop to turn it. There is one on Millet St that we have not been able to  
123 locate it. The Diamond Maps did GPS, but it is a 25-foot variance.

124

125 Wolaver: A surveyor can go out and do that, it's not just the GPS unit itself.

126

127 Cote: It's about \$3,800 for the GPS locator or we're hoping that Rural Water will get one  
128 and have a lending program. They say within three feet is what they would really like  
129 you to see.

130

131 Hill: Tilden Ave is an example where there aren't very many credible survey markers. I  
132 don't think the Department of Defense has a backup plan to the absence of GPS satellites.

133

134 Arneson: Do we want to add them to the budget, or do we want to take them out of a  
135 Reserve Fund? The same thing in Wastewater, you want to clean the second aeration  
136 tank.

137

138 Cote: The \$15,000 is to empty it, in anticipation of 10 years' worth of solids that we may  
139 have to remove.

140

141 Hill: The point of looking at these is to contemplate what we have in Reserves and what  
142 we are comfortable leaving or taking out. I feel really clear about the 15% if we were on  
143 track and up to speed with replacements. I'm just sort of cautious about liquidating assets  
144 and finding ourselves in a position of having to borrow money for an unexpected thing.

145

146 Arneson: The Reimbursable Projects need to have cash on hand because these are the  
147 times where we'll pay the engineer and the contractor and then submit reimbursement.  
148 We have the Tilden waterline replacement for the construction phase engineering at  
149 \$165,000 and then the Tilden waterline replacement for the construction is estimated to  
150 be about \$1.6 million. We could do a bond anticipation note on a line of credit which  
151 would come with some extra fees and interest paid. Do we want to put it in the budget,  
152 or do we want to pull out one of these Capital Funds and how much Unrestricted do we  
153 have? The \$203,881 is for water meter purchase and installation which puts us at a  
154 negative-\$20,000 for Unrestricted Funds. We do have \$96,000 projected in the Water  
155 Capital.

156

157 Bona: Getting reimbursed from those construction pieces of the projects is dependent on  
158 where the State is at with their staffing. The last one we waited a year.

159

160 Cote: I'm concerned about getting low in Capital Reserves in Water as the water meter  
161 installations bids came back at way above what I anticipated, one for \$98,000 and the  
162 other was \$134,000. We anticipate a six-to-nine-month timeframe of installation if we did  
163 them ourselves. We would like to hire one more person now. We have 100 Sensus  
164 meters in place and we should buy all Zenner meters now, or about 340 meters that need  
165 to be installed. Brad had installed close to 200 meters when he worked in Shelburne.  
166 You get much better reception from them being installed outside, but it is way cheaper to  
167 install them inside. We could do between three to five meters per two-person team per  
168 day. We already have readers on the outside of 89% of the houses and businesses here.  
169 Because the old ones have only two wires and the new readers are three wires, so we  
170 actually have to install a new wire. The worst-case scenario is you end up with a few  
171 readers that are inside. If we're doing it in house, then we just make the readers being  
172 outside mandatory to cut costs. Brad anticipated that it would take six to nine months  
173 with that as a priority.

174

175 Arneson: It looks like those are \$118 per meter or ~\$11,000 to buy 100 more. The  
176 fourth person is in the budget.

177

178 Cote: You can't find a licensed operator, the best you can do is find somebody who's  
179 willing to learn.

180

181 Hill: Presumably, we have some vacancy savings in Water-Sewer, although it's more  
182 obscure because of the contract.

183

184 Farr: It might make sense to start advertising for that as you might get some people that  
185 are graduating from tech school.

186

187 Arneson: If we get two qualified candidates then we can revisit the budget and ask if we  
188 want to add a fifth person.

189

190 Cote: The other thing that he included in the budget was the \$15,000 to put in the  
191 mission alarm system, monitoring our water system separate from the wastewater system.  
192 We can grow upon it if we want to add chlorine and fluoride monitoring.

193

194 Arneson: That's on his list of things to add either to the budget or to capital expenditure.

195

196

197 Cote: All the things that were causing my extra hours were the common alarm and the  
198 press which has pretty much cured itself and will get much better when we get the PLC  
199 and stuff installed.

200

201 Arneson: If we eliminated installation and purchased the additional 100 water meters, we  
202 would be at \$115,681. The Unrestricted keeps us at \$68,000 with 15% being \$59,000  
203 and the Water Capital Restricted at \$96,000. I don't think that this is tied into a specific  
204 project. In Wastewater we need every penny we've got. We've already budgeted for 4  
205 staff members.

206

207 Cote: Connie wants a little more assurance on how this system is going to work with  
208 NEMRC and she does not want to be installing water meters in July.

209

210 Bona: They can put the new meters in as long as we can enter them as we usually do.  
211 The first two weeks in July are when we crank out water bills for the April through June  
212 usage. We don't even have a billing policy but there's a lot of little things that we have to  
213 decide if we will still be able to do those things. I know nothing about the software, or if  
214 we're even going to be able to do those things anymore.

215

216 Cote: The system is completely automated as each customer will have a portal where  
217 they can monitor their own water usage daily.

218

219 *Sander moved that we replace all the Sensus meters with the 100 new Zenner meters for*  
220 *an estimated total of \$11,800. Hill seconded.*

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

222

223 Sander: Have we gotten the breakdown of the last fiscal year for residential, commercial,  
224 and municipal usage of the budget.

225

226 Arneson: We should have that by the next meeting. They just finished reading meters.  
227 This budget isn't crazy complicated, there's not a lot of changes so we could probably  
228 look at these down the road.

229

### 230 **Discussion of Water Meter installation**

231 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4b1_Bid_Tab.pdf)  
232 [3/4b1\\_Bid\\_Tab.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4b1_Bid_Tab.pdf)

233

234 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4b2_New_England_Backflow.pdf)  
235 [3/4b2\\_New\\_England\\_Backflow.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4b2_New_England_Backflow.pdf)

236

237 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4b3_Vanguard.pdf)  
238 [3/4b3\\_Vanguard.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4b3_Vanguard.pdf)

239

240 Arneson: We decided we're not going to do contracted installation at this point, see  
241 previous agenda item.

242

243 **Discussion of installing a new alarm system for the water system**

244

245 Cote: Most Water and Wastewater systems are going to a mission-based alarm system  
246 because it is instantaneous, and everybody has their cell phone to monitor and change  
247 things. We need to separate out the water system from the wastewater system. I'm  
248 asking for the waterside right now. It's currently a common alarm where I first come  
249 down and go to the water system or go to the pump station and find out what it is. I am  
250 not asking for something where we are adding the chlorine, that's something that we've  
251 got under control. I'm looking for the ability to have the pH, the chlorine, and the  
252 fluoride and know what the numbers are. This system is module based so you can build  
253 upon it. I will bring in the Rep and let him talk. To get a couple of bids we are going to  
254 have to reach out of State.

255

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

257 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4d_Water_and_Wastewater_Items_to_be_Repaired_or_Replaced_3-15-24.pdf)  
258 [3/4d Water and Wastewater Items to be Repaired or Replaced 3-15-24.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4d_Water_and_Wastewater_Items_to_be_Repaired_or_Replaced_3-15-24.pdf)

259

260 Cote: The press is the big thing that's working great, the two channels went in. The stuff  
261 coming out of the press is so dry. The replacement parts slipped right on. The  
262 flocculator now leaks terribly because we're running an increased pressure in the  
263 channels. The two channels are now stainless steel and they're supposed to wear a little  
264 better and they've redesigned how they make the screens inside. In 10 years, you might  
265 have to change the screens to keep the efficiency the way it is.

266

267 I can continue taking septage, we had a couple of days of 60,000 gallons a day and our  
268 septic tanks didn't even get full. It is 3,000-5,000 gallons on a truck. I'm pretty sure that  
269 we could handle 75,000 gallons a day without any problems. We talked about a metering  
270 septage system in the 20-year upgrade. I routinely pick a couple of different trucks and  
271 monitor how much they bring in from different haulers and we're pretty much dead on.  
272 Milton had a two-week period where they were down, and a lot of the haulers came right  
273 back to Richmond. We asked Hoyle Tanner to break out what it costs us to process  
274 septage. In the 20-year upgrade, we've asked them to install its own water line so we can  
275 monitor the water and look into separating out the electricity used in the dewatering  
276 building. There is a definite need for Richmond's septage receiving that \$4.5 million as  
277 part of the upgrade. Hoyle Tanner asked for Congressional monies for that.

278

279 Hill: The consensus is we ask Josh to write a letter on behalf of the Town and the Water  
280 Sewer Commission.

281

282 Arneson: It says we could solicit letters of support.

283

284 Cote: We would reach out to our haulers.

285

286 Wolaver: A canned letter can be used so they can modify it.

287

288 **Update on Gateway project**

289

290 Wolaver: We met on the phone with John Alberghini and he seemed very open to  
291 determining what that easement is and then writing up and giving us an easement. They

292 did some additional work in inspecting it after that one failed. He was also very open to  
293 figuring out where to extend the easement to the Richmond Land Trust property, so it  
294 was all positive. There is an agreement to repair the line but there is no easement, so  
295 you'd have to call up to have permission.

296  
297 Cote: What has been upgraded to Town standards, the Town at that point was supposed  
298 to get an easement and take it over essentially. That last step never got done and I think  
299 we need to finish that while we're figuring out the sewer end of it. Is the sewer line up to  
300 our standards? Phil was going to get in contact with P&P to see if they could scope from  
301 the pump station behind Camels Hump and go up the line to see if we could get a more  
302 definitive thing. They have no records or any concrete information. We might proceed  
303 with a pressure test or some exploratory digging. They dug up towards where the  
304 Richmond Elementary line comes in.

305  
306 Sander: It's only a 50-year-old line.

307  
308 Cote: It's a line that's had repairs and it failed the pressure test.

309  
310 **Review of information sheet related to sewer meters**  
311 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4f_Statement_on_Sewer_Meters_3-19-24.pdf)  
312 [3/4f\\_Statement\\_on\\_Sewer\\_Meters\\_3-19-24.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4f_Statement_on_Sewer_Meters_3-19-24.pdf)

313  
314 Arneson: I added a few things based on what your Commission asked for.

315  
316 Hill: I've read this, I think this is good. Do we want to add the fact that there are systems  
317 that charge everyone the same. The only people that want that are high user types. The  
318 other option is there's no meters at all and just charge everyone the same.

319  
320 Arneson: I will post it on Front Porch Forum and on our website.

321  
322 Hill: It came because of the flood disruption and if anybody Googled sewage meter,  
323 you'd quickly be dissuaded from pursuing as they range from \$500 to \$2,000 apiece.

324  
325 **Update on status of Tilden Ave. Bridge St. and Cochran Rd. waterline replacement**  
326 **project**

327  
328 Arneson: The State has basically acknowledged that they've received the application and  
329 Tyler Billingsley will gather a couple other financial forms. The goal is to get this done  
330 in the next couple of months so we can get out to bid in the fall and next year we are  
331 constructing.

332  
333 Cote: Pete has got some scheduled digging up on Tilden people will immediately think it  
334 is us. It's going to be an exploratory dig so Tyler can engineer around the sewer mains  
335 that are there.

336  
337 **Discussion of invitation for Water and Sewer Commissioners to attend the Vermont**  
338 **Rural Water Annual Meeting and Trade Show scheduled for Thursday, May 9,**  
339 **2024**

340 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4h\\_Vermont\\_Rural\\_Water\\_Association\\_Annual\\_Meeting.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/03/4h_Vermont_Rural_Water_Association_Annual_Meeting.pdf)

342

343 Arneson: If any Commissioner wanted to go to the trade show or the annual membership  
344 meeting, you're all invited but just pre-register. May 9<sup>th</sup> is the annual meeting. We've got  
345 time to register.

346

347 **Discuss Items for Next Agenda:**

348 \*Minutes review

349 \*Water Tank Inspection

350 \*Budget

351 \*Alarm Rep

352 \*Congressional Spending letter

353 \*Rural Water annual meeting

354

355 **Adjournment**

356

357 *Farr moved to adjourn. Sander seconded.*

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

359

360 Meeting adjourned at: 6:57 pm

361

362 **Chat file from Zoom:**

363 00:04:13 Richmond Town Host: okay

364