

1 **Town of Richmond**
2 **Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission**
3 **Minutes of April 15, 2024**
4

5 **Members Present:** Bard Hill, David Sander, Erin Farr, Jay Furr
6

7 **Members Absent:** Morgan Wolaver
8

9 **Staff Present:** Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Duncan Wardwell, Assistant to the Town
10 Manager; Steve Cote, Water Resources
11

12 **Others Present:** The meeting was recorded for MMCTV, Becky Vigneault, Donald
13 Crawford, Heidi Bormann, Jim Crawford, Jon Olin, Kirsten Worden
14

15 **MMCTV Video:** https://youtu.be/zd_4q9m-J0?si=jQG0Mux6EZmN4eZV
16

17 **Call to Order: 5:00 pm**
18

19 **Welcome:** Farr
20

21 **Public Comment:** None
22

23 **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:** None
24

25 **Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders**
26

27 **Minutes:**
28

29 *Sander moved to approve the Minutes of 4/1/24 meeting as presented. Hill seconded.*
30 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Hill, Sander in favor. Furr abstains. Motion approved.*
31

32 **Purchase Orders:** None
33

34 **Warrants:**
35

36 *Furr moved to approve the 4/15/24 Warrants as presented. Sander seconded.*
37 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*
38

39 **Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**
40

41 **Review of DRAFT FY25 Budget**

42 Timestamp: 0:02

43 https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4a1_FY25_Water_Wastewater_budget_Draft_4-12-24.pdf
44

45
46 https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4a2_FY25_Water_Wastewater_budget_Draft_4-12-24.xlsx
47
48

49 https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4a3_FY24_Water_and_Wastewater_Rates_DRAFT_4-12-24.pdf

50

51
52 https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4a4_FY24_Water_and_Wastewater_Rates_DRAFT_4-12-24.xlsx

53

54
55 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Arneson, Furr, Hill, Sander, Cote

56

57 Arneson reviewed the use of Restricted and Unrestricted Reserves and Capital Projects.
58 Arneson confirmed that he changed Metered Sewage to Sewer Usage on the rate sheet.
59 Arneson stated that he updated the rate sheet based on usage from the first quarter of
60 FY24. Arneson highlighted the graphs that show Residential and Commercial Fixed
61 Rates, the Residential and Commercial Metered/Usage rates, the Budgeted User Receipts,
62 and the Septage Budgeted and Actual.

63

64 Arneson discussed how to disperse the \$115,000 for water meters with Unrestricted
65 funds, a Reserve account, or a combination of both, and how to fund the two water and
66 sewer capital items. Arneson stated that 15% of the FY24 water budget is \$59,478 and
67 15% of the Sewer budget is \$131,984. Hill stated that they cannot bill for sewage
68 without a meter so wastewater should contribute. Furr suggested breaking it between a
69 30%-70% ratio but they would still have to figure out how to pay for the influent pump.
70 Farr suggested 50%-50% which would be ~\$55,000 from each account. Hill suggested
71 shifting ~\$29,000 from Short Term Capital or Collection System to keep it at 15% target.
72 Arneson summarized it would leave them \$120,000 over the 15% in Wastewater Capital.
73 Arneson stated that the \$15,000 for the cleaning of the aeration tank fits into the
74 overspending Unrestricted funds. Arneson stated that on the Water side, the new alarm
75 system, and the excavation is \$30,000 which leaves it a little tight in Unrestricted.

76

77 Furr summarized that they are dealing with unprecedented expenses. Farr asked if they
78 kept the water rates at what they were in FY24, could they avoid raising the sewer rates
79 as high. Arneson stated that they need to raise enough money to cover the water costs
80 with water, and to raise enough money on the sewer to cover the sewer costs. Arneson
81 reviewed that for staff time, it's 70% of wages for Wastewater and 30% in Water. Hill
82 stated that it's not only split between Water and Sewer, but it's proportional based on the
83 three different user groups. Farr suggested looking at 40% Fixed Rate - 60%
84 Metered/Usage on the Commercial. Arneson confirmed that would increase the fixed
85 rate by 45%. Cote stated that the new meters may change a lot for some people.

86

87 Hill confirmed that they were cautious about septage receipts which contributed to
88 revenues that were higher than anticipated. Hill stated that they don't want to
89 overestimate because of the impact on the budget. Cote estimated septage receipts
90 around \$480,000 instead of the \$550,000. Cote stated that they can take 75,000 gallons
91 every day but the most they have ever taken since the upgrade is 35,000. Arneson stated
92 that if septage is a little higher, having a little more cash flow in the Wastewater side
93 would be helpful for the Reimbursable Projects which will be paid back as a bond.

94

95 **Consideration of approval of final allocation for 112 East Main St.**

96 Timestamp: 0:35

97 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4b_Preliminary_Allocation_112_East_Main_St._10-2-23_-_final.pdf)
98 [4/4b Preliminary Allocation 112 East Main St. 10-2-23 - final.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4b_Preliminary_Allocation_112_East_Main_St._10-2-23_-_final.pdf)
99
100 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Arneson, Cote, Sander
101
102 Arneson reviewed this is to facilitate some construction at 112 East Main St. Arneson
103 stated that the applicant sent the check out in the mail, and he would recommend voting
104 for final allocation, pending receipt of a check. Cote stated that it's a subdivision and
105 needs a mailing address for the new allocation. Cote confirmed that it is a separate meter
106 and curb stop. Arneson suggested that they need to look at the allocation for that
107 property. Cote stated that there was a duplex on 112 East Main St, and they put a house
108 on the piece of land behind it. Josh stated that they need to know how much allocation
109 that lot has so it is an item for the next meeting.
110
111 **Consideration of approving agreements with Hoyle Tanner for 1) Funding**
112 **Assistance, Sewer Ordinance Review, and Public Outreach regarding the 20 Year**
113 **Study and 2) design and purchase of an influent pump**
114 Timestamp: 0:40
115 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4c1_Richmond_WWTF_Step_1_-_Amendment_1.pdf)
116 [4/4c1 Richmond WWTF Step 1 - Amendment 1.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4c1_Richmond_WWTF_Step_1_-_Amendment_1.pdf)
117
118 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4c2_Agreement_Richmond_WWTF-Influent_Pump_1_.pdf)
119 [4/4c2 Agreement Richmond WWTF-Influent Pump 1 .pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4c2_Agreement_Richmond_WWTF-Influent_Pump_1_.pdf)
120
121 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Olin, Arneson, Furr, Worden, Sander
122
123 Olin presented a quick summary of the influent pump contract agreement and the
124 planning of the scoping phase for the main plant upgrades. Olin confirmed that they are
125 looking to offset as much of the cost as possible. Olin stated that it is important to make
126 get out in front of frequently asked questions to help build towards a successful bond.
127 Furr reviewed that the entire Town will not be paying back the bond, but they are using
128 the Town as borrowing authority. Cote stated that the idea is to create a website where
129 questions can be asked, and information can be found. Olin confirmed that they can offer
130 plant tours and video recorded posts. Worden suggested tours with kids, so they will talk
131 about it at home. Farr stated that the 4th Grade does outreach through Project Citizen.
132 Olin confirmed that the amendment to the Step 1 agreement will need review through
133 CWSRF.
134
135 *Furr moved to approve the agreement with Hoyle Tanner for Funding Assistance, Sewer*
136 *Ordinance Review, and Public Outreach regarding the 20 Year Study at a cost not to*
137 *exceed \$81,000 and to name Town Manager Josh Arneson as the duly authorized*
138 *representative. Sander seconded.*
139 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*
140
141 *Furr moved to approve the agreement with Hoyle Tanner for design and purchase of an*
142 *influent pump in an amount not to exceed \$26,033 and to name Town Manager Josh*
143 *Arneson as the duly authorized representative. Sander seconded.*
144 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*
145

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

147 Timestamp: 0:54

148

149 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Crawford, Sander, Cote, Furr, Bormann,
150 Hill, Arneson

151

152 Crawford stated that he was from Mission Communications regarding the installation of
153 the alarm system. Crawford confirmed that this was a cell-phone-based system. Cote
154 confirmed they currently have one alarm for the pump station and the water house, so he
155 doesn't know which one unless he physically comes to the plant to look. Cote stated that
156 he proposed separating the Water from the SCADA system which is primarily a
157 Wastewater system. Crawford described the Mission system for the Water. Crawford
158 stated that if something goes wrong in the middle of the night, the system says word for
159 word what the actual alarm is.

160

161 Cote described the issues with the current SCADA system. Crawford stated that it is
162 \$15,000 to purchase/install and a recurring cellular fee of \$563 and then the technicians
163 install and do training. Cote stated that they can build upon the Mission system for pH,
164 chlorine, or fluoride.

165

166 Crawford stated that he will double check the actual warranty, but they service it within a
167 year. Crawford confirmed that they could physically control aspects of a treatment plan
168 with the software. Sander worried about possible tampering and being hacked. Crawford
169 confirmed the security side of things with its own servers, backups, two-step
170 authentication, and a secure site. Cote stated that they can also create a firewall for the
171 SCADA system. Hill stated that security of Wastewater, Water and other utility systems
172 is a big deal and he'd like to be more confident about the security. Crawford stated that
173 there are thousands of Mission systems across the United States and there's not been a
174 hack. Sander is concerned about being locked out of a system and you can't pull a plug
175 and the remote changing of chemicals. Cote illustrated that the Wastewater plant pretty
176 much has nothing and the worst hack in the business was a result of a former employee
177 having downloaded the SCADA system to his personal computer and changed stuff after
178 he was terminated. Farr clarified that they could just go with the monitoring system and
179 not the adjusting system to start. Crawford confirmed it and that they ensure that there's a
180 physical manual override on site. Crawford reviewed the tech support options and
181 responding to an emergency within one business day.

182

183 Farr stated that at the next meeting, they can talk about it more and vote on it. Arneson
184 reviewed that Mission might be a sole source situation.

185

186 **Update on water tank inspection**

187 Timestamp: 1:24

188

189 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Arneson

190

191 Arneson reviewed that Tyler Billingsley can review the report and video and come in
192 with some suggestions at the next meeting.

193

194 **Review of March 2024 water data**

195 Timestamp: 1:25

196 https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4f1_Monthly_Water_Report_for_March_2024.pdf

198

199 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Arneson, Cote

200

201 Cote confirmed they changed some things to make it better and they are on track.

202

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

204 Timestamp: 1:27

205

206 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Arneson

207

208 Arneson reviewed that it is actively under review by CWSRF, and the goal is to bid by the fall or early winter with plans for construction in the spring of this time next year.

209

210 **Superintendent's Report**

211 Timestamp: 1:28

212

213 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Cote, Sander, Furr, Arneson, Bormann

214

215 Cote stated that he brought in two samples to see what they actually produce. Cote stated that the biosolids upgrade is awesome and he is looking to see what the tonnage differences are. Farr reviewed that most of the items on the To Do list are now wrapped into the 20-year study.

216

217 Cote stated that they have no heat at the plant as the natural gas furnaces are down. Cote stated that the clarifier has issues as it was last serviced in 1983. Cote stated that he is trying to figure out an alternative. Cote reviewed that the only way to grease these bearings was to drain the clarifier. Cote suggested putting remotes for the grease fittings. Cote stated that they need to find a permanent fix to this and then drain the other one and address any issues that are in it.

218

219 **Discussion of details in Water and Sewer Commission minutes**

220 Timestamp: 1:43

221

222 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Arneson, Wardwell, Furr, Bormann

223

224 Arneson reviewed the history of the minutes and requested reducing the details in the Water/Sewer minutes to be similar to the Selectboard minutes. Wardwell stated that he is going above the statute of the minutes already. Wardwell reviewed that he uses A.I. software to create transcripts that he shares with other committees to help create the minute summaries.

225

226 **Update on Congressionally Directed Spending request**

227 Timestamp: 1:50

228

242
243 https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4j1_LOS_Richmond_Water_and_Sewer_Commission_CDS_FINAL_Sanders.pdf
244

245
246 https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4j2_LOS_Richmond_Water_and_Sewer_Commission_CDS_FINAL_Welch.pdf
247

248
249 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Arneson, Cote
250

251 Arneson stated the letter is shared in the packet. Arneson reviewed that he reached out to
252 septage haulers and State Representatives to have them sign a letter.
253

254 **Discussion of invitation for Water and Sewer Commissioners to attend the Vermont**
255 **Rural Water Annual Meeting and Trade Show scheduled for Thursday, May 8 & 9,**
256 **2024**

257 Timestamp: 1:52
258

259 https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/04/4k_VRWA_2024_Annual_Meeting.pdf
260

261
262 People who participated in discussion: Farr, Sander, Furr, Arneson
263

264 Cote stated that there are classes that give them training credits. Arneson reviewed that
265 the Annual Meeting is on Thursday the 9th but the trade show starts on the 8th.
266

267 **Discuss Items for Next Agenda:**
268

269 **Adjournment**

270 *East Main St Allocation

271 *Alarm

272 *Clarifier Bearings

273 *Budget
274

275 *Furr moved to adjourn. Sander seconded.*

276 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Furr, Hill, Sander in favor. Motion approved.*
277

278 Meeting adjourned at: 6:57 pm
279

280 **Chat file from Zoom:**

281 00:52:27 kworden: for some reason I can't unmute
282