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2 **Town of Richmond**
3 **Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission**
4 **Minutes of December 16, 2024**

5 **Members Present:** Lisa Miller, Jay Furr, Erin Farr (remote), Bard Hill, Morgan
6 Wolaver

7
8 **Members Absent:** None

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10 **Staff Present:** Superintendent Steve Cote; Town Manager Josh Arneson; Assistant to the
11 Town Manager Duncan Wardwell.

12
13 **Others Present:** The meeting was recorded for MMCTV Erin Wagg

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15 **MMCTV Video:** MMCTV Erin Wagg
16 <https://youtu.be/9btR3BWbt7g?si=5bfIjV9P7r5KPptX>

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18 **Call to Order: 6:00 pm**

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20 **Welcome:** Wolaver

21
22 **Public Comment:** Go Catamounts!

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

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26 **Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders**
27 Timestamp: 0:01

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29 **Minutes:**

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31 People who participated in discussion: Wolaver

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33 *Furr moved to approve the Minutes as written on 12/02/2024. Hill seconded.*
34 *Roll Call Vote: Wolaver, Hill, Furr, Miller, Farr in favor. Motion approved.*

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37 **Purchase Orders:** None

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39 **Warrants:**

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41 *Furr moved to approve the Warrants 22-467 as presented. Miller seconded.*
42 *Roll Call Vote: Wolaver, Hill, Furr, Miller, Farr in favor. Motion approved.*

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45 **Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**
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49 **Acknowledgement of Richmond Water Resources staff appearing in the media**
50 **regarding the Vermont Rural Water Apprenticeship Program**

51 Timestamp: 0:04

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53 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/12/4a_Employees_in_the_news.pdf)
54 [2/4a_Employees_in_the_news.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/12/4a_Employees_in_the_news.pdf)

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57 People who participated in discussion: Wolaver, Arneson, Cote, Miller, Furr

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59 Arneson wanted to give kudos to Brad Snow and Mike Coyle who have appeared in the
60 media recently. In VT Digger they spoke about Richmond’s apprenticeship program,
61 thanks for representing Richmond so well. Furr and Miller added that they thought
62 everyone was photogenic, clean and presentable. Miller surmised that Water and Sewer
63 was something everyone takes for granted until you “need it.” Arneson said it highlights
64 the challenges of hiring all levels from entry level to higher; when you hire someone at
65 entry level and take them through training and then it turns into a career for them it’s fun
66 to see. Cote said he is glad to get some acknowledgement, and he appreciates the
67 employees he has right now, and he feels very good about how everyone works together.
68 He added that another article will soon be published in “Treatment Plant Operator,” a
69 national magazine, where both Cote and Snow were interviewed regarding the awards the
70 plant got this summer. Doing things right is important to Cote and keeping Richmond’s
71 water clean.

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73

74 **Review of November 2024 water data**

75 Timestamp: 0:09

76

77 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/12/4b_Monthly_Water_Report_November_2024.pdf)
78 [2/4b_Monthly_Water_Report_November_2024.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2024/12/4b_Monthly_Water_Report_November_2024.pdf)

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81 People who participated in discussion: Wolaver, Cote, Hill, Miller, Furr

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83 Cote explained in October 2024 when Champlin was working on installing the mission
84 system, they had a problem with the totalizer for our gallons, and we contacted the State
85 as soon as there was an issue, and the State said to leave it blank. So, we left it blank for
86 the rest of the month of October. But we have a total for the water pumped out of the
87 well, but the numbers were not the exact amount of water that you may have put into the
88 system. That's the discrepancy, but at least we had a number, and we used that. On the
89 15th the new totalizer was in and we started at 0. The State had requested that a line be
90 placed on the water data sheet with an explanation. The State kicked the report back and
91 said “you can’t do that” – so we used 0 again for November (this explains the line on the
92 report). For December the new totalizer is working, and the report should be normal for
93 gallons produced.

94

95 The fluoride is rock solid, but our numbers differ from the State’s which are tested by
96 Endyne. As an example, on the 12th of November our number was one, but Endyne’s was
97 0.7, and that's the number that the State looks at. Cote found out that Endyne had an issue

98 with their testing machine, so there was a discrepancy. Now that the machine has been
99 repaired and recalibrated the numbers for fluoride are virtually the same, because the
100 numbers get rounded up or down. He can put actual numbers on the report instead of the
101 rounded values, because that's what the Board members would prefer. Wolaver asked
102 when a number on the test is 1.0 is the actual number is actually 0.97? To which Cote
103 said, "more like 0.96." The State's testing values are different from both Endyne and
104 Richmond's numbers, which Hill mentioned is disconcerting.
105 We are required to test 4 times per month because of our former problems with fluoride.
106 Cote feels it would be better to show actual numbers from his bench sheet rather than
107 rounded numbers. Miller is concerned that decisions are being made based off inaccurate
108 number readings and finds these inaccuracies concerning. Cote illustrated that values
109 accurate to 4 decimals would be 0.7025, which is right on the money for what the State
110 wants in terms of fluoride readings, but the rounded figures are showing as 0.9. Hill
111 suggested that Cote have a conversation with Endyne as well as the State regarding these
112 discrepancies. Cote continued that the Health Department has no issues with the numbers
113 he has been giving them, which they review out to four decimals. Wolaver wants to know
114 Endyne's accuracy. Furr said the reason we have this issue is from past high fluoride
115 readings, which Cote explained was because reports were previously not being sent to the
116 Health Department at all. The Health Department is happy with the accuracy we currently
117 have. Cote said moving forward he will present the numbers straight from the bench
118 sheet, with four decimals.

119
120 Cote elaborated that chlorine values continue to be a challenge. He reports our worst
121 number is still twice the amount that was previously measured, the State would like us to
122 be at 0.8. Furr injected that the State allows up to five times that, which is a big window.
123 Cote continued that some places have readings as high as 2.0 to 3.0 which is close to pool
124 water. Some cleaning, rebuilding check valves, and other reparations have improved the
125 chlorine numbers. Between 0.8 up to 1.0 is where Cote feels the most comfortable.
126 Before Cote and Snow took over it was common to have a chlorine reading that was 0.3
127 or even lower. The chlorine numbers are actually split into two: total and free numbers,
128 and those two reading are within 0.1 of each other. Hill wondered if chlorine dissipates
129 which Cote said yes, it dissipates over time.

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131

132 **Update on installation of water meters**

133 Timestamp: 0:30

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135 People who participated in discussion: Wolaver, Cote, Furr

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137 Cote said that by the end of the week he thinks they will have 180 meters installed and he
138 is scheduling into January and February. He would like to wrap up the water meter
139 installations by July 2025. Furr asked when the system will be up and running for
140 customers to be able to monitor their water usage and possibly catch water leaks, for
141 example when they are on vacation. Cote replied that the system is not yet set up for each
142 customer to view their respective usage, but he has been able to catch water leaks from
143 his end, because within minutes he can see any customer's history and have it broken
144 down into 24-hour periods. Wolaver asked how many total meters will be installed,
145 which Cote replied the total number is 350. Hill suggested running an alpha test including
146 security permission protocols using select people's accounts before Cote lets the system

147 go live. Cote said there will be a water meter app. He added that Zenner has recently had
148 a major software upgrade, which did not cause any disturbance to the system.

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151 **Superintendent's Report**

152 Timestamp: 0:37

153

154 People who participated in discussion: Wolaver, Cote, Furr, Miller

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156 Cote elaborated that since the new pressure regulator was installed the press has been
157 running fine.

158

159 Septage numbers have dropped considerably. Even the biggest hauler P&P septic has
160 dropped to next to nothing, only 10,000 today. Furr asked if we are metering everyone
161 yet. Cote answered no and described that twice a month he takes P&P trucks as they
162 come in and checks them. He has asked to have a septage unit with a meter on it when the
163 plant gets an upgrade. The septage unit does not have a programmable logic controller
164 (PLC) on it and because it was outdated, he couldn't get a new one, so Dan Pratt has had
165 to reprogram a comparable older one from scratch, which means a person must physically
166 be there to turn the machine on and run it through its cycles while they are unloading.

167

168 The effluent tank they cleaned is now full for winter. He anticipates draining it down in
169 the Spring and switching back over to it, then continuing switching over to the other tank
170 once a year. Arneson asked about the aerators, and Cote explained it was his decision to
171 wait and check the aerators in the Spring and replace the ones that need it in the Spring.

172

173 The clarifier that has a new shaft keeps tracking off and they can't yet figure out why that
174 keeps happening. Every time it runs about half a cycle the chain runs off. They have
175 looked at the chain closely, inspecting every link, but it keeps malfunctioning. Everything
176 is installed in concrete and things cannot be moved. But they have some ideas and will
177 look into this more.

178

179 Leaky pipes or pipes with duct tape have been replaced and should now be running more
180 efficiently. He sees progress in little things getting done around the plant.

181 Miller asked if they use any type of filter aid, to which Cote said they add sodium
182 aluminate to the plant and in the dewatering building they use a polymer.

183

184 Cote said there is a conference in Boston for NEA and Holt Tanner has offered to pay for
185 Snow and Cote to go down. There will be 2300 exhibitors. This is January 27 and 28,
186 2025. Furr, Hill and Arneson queried is there an issue in their Code of Ethics policy about
187 taking this kind of thing from a vendor? It's an educational opportunity, but it's worth
188 checking since Cote won't be benefiting personally per se. Wolaver said it's important to
189 make sure this doesn't look like a bribe. Arneson thought that the Town was paying for
190 their travel. Hill said in State government this is not allowed. Furr read aloud from the
191 Ethics policy and in Article One prohibited conduct, Section C it clearly states Cote
192 cannot accept this from Tanner. Furr suggested the Town should consider paying for it.
193 Wolaver said it's a worthwhile conference to attend.

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196 **Discuss Items for Next Agenda:**
197 Discussion on Fluoride
198 Dec water numbers
199 Update from the Water tank inspector
200 Arranging a go-live alpha test for the water meters

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203 **Adjournment**

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205 *Miller moved to adjourn. Hill seconded.*

206 *Roll Call Vote: Wolaver, Hill, Farr, Furr, Miller in favor. Motion approved.*

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208 **Meeting adjourned at: 6:53 pm**

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210 **Chat file from Zoom:** None

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