

Town of Richmond
Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission
Minutes of December 15, 2025

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

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Town Manager Josh Arneson; Duncan Wardwell, Deputy Town Manager; Steve Cote, Water Resources Superintendent

Others Present: The meeting was recorded for MMCTV, 18023242719, Aiden Short, Jon Kart, Jon Olin (Hoyle Tanner), Katherine King, KJ O’Grady

MMCTV Video: <https://youtu.be/IUE6RbGnDYo?si=ok0cf3Yr7jNGYV0t>

Call to Order: 5:00 pm

Welcome: Wolaver

Public Comment: Sander observed that next Sunday is the Solstice and the days will soon be getting longer.

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Minutes:

Hill moved to approve the minutes of December 1, 2025. Sander seconded.

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

Purchase Orders:

Sander moved to approve Purchase Order number 5326 to Xylem Water Solutions USA Inc. for an influent pump and associated components in the amount of \$30,945.71. Hill seconded.

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

Warrants:

Hill moved to approve the Warrants as presented. Sander seconded.

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

Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

48 **Update on easement obtainment for the Tilden Ave., Bridge St., and Cochran Rd.**
49 **Waterline Replacement Project**

50 Timestamp: 0:08

51
52 Arneson stated that they are down to 3 easements needed out of the 22 total. Wolaver
53 suggested reformatting the easement so people can sign independently of each other.
54 Arneson reviewed that they can go out to bid without all the easements but need them in
55 place, recorded and ready for construction this spring. Once the easements are together,
56 the Selectboard accepts them and then they need to get the property transfer tax return
57 forms figured out for all the 22 easements. Arneson will ask the attorney about the best
58 way to deal with Social Security numbers. Wolaver suggested a letter from the attorney
59 addressing why this is critical to the community. Cote suggested a call from Arneson.
60 Hill stated that there is a risk of not going out to bid sooner. Arneson stated they do not
61 want the door to close on the 2026 construction season and to make sure they get
62 favorable pricing. Arneson will provide an update at the January 5th meeting and have
63 the engineer prepare the bid documents.

64
65
66 **Consideration of approval of requests for easement at 205 Jericho Rd.**

67 Timestamp: 0:20

68
69 Hill reviewed the reduced footprint back within the setback. Arneson stated that the
70 request is to have a new water and sewer line for 205 Jericho Road (road frontage on
71 Tilden Ave) and to cover the attorney's fees. It is estimated at \$5,500 with attorney fees
72 ~\$1,000. They might also consider including a meter vault. O'Grady confirmed the
73 request summary.

74
75 *Hill moved to approve the O'Grady's request of a water and sewer hookup for 205*
76 *Jericho Rd., a water meter and water meter vault in return for the easement for the*
77 *Tilden Ave. waterline on 205 Jericho Rd. Sander seconded.*
78 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Hill, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*
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80
81 **Review of November water data**

82 Timestamp: 0:24

83 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4c_Monthly_Water_Report_November_2025.pdf)
84 [2/4c_Monthly_Water_Report_November_2025.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4c_Monthly_Water_Report_November_2025.pdf)

85
86 Wolaver stated that nothing was highlighted so he is not sure they need to review it. Cote
87 reviewed that when he started this was a full-time job for one person to keep the water
88 properly fluoridated and chlorinated and now it is 45-minutes a day. It is a tremendous
89 help to have a system they can monitor remotely.

90
91
92 **Review of Fourth Quarter FY25 Financials**

93 Timestamp: 0:27

94 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/1](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4d1_FY25_QTR_4_Budget_Status_Water_Wastewater_excel.xlsx)
95 [2/4d1_FY25_QTR_4_Budget_Status_Water_Wastewater_excel.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4d1_FY25_QTR_4_Budget_Status_Water_Wastewater_excel.xlsx)

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4d2_FY25_QTR_4_Budget_Status_Water_Wastewater_pdf.pdf

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4d3_FY25_QTR_4_Water_Sewer_Septage_Financials.pdf

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4d4_FY25_QTR_4_Debt_Schedule.xlsx

Arneson reviewed the FY25 4th Quarter financials in the packet, which should be right around 100%.

For water, they were at 89% of revenue from water users and about 97.5% in total revenue. On the expenses side, they were under budget on salaries and associated benefits due to having 3 staff members for half the year when they are budgeted for 4. Overtime is up due to the flood of 2024. Waterline repairs are under budget. Overall they had about \$69,000 more in revenue than expenses.

For wastewater, they were over budget in revenue from users by 3% and for septage they were under budget by about \$66,000. They are under budget for payroll and benefits due to being short staffed. Biosolid chemicals are under budget which has a lot to do with process improvements. Facility treatment repair is above budget, based on the updates every couple of weeks that something is always breaking. Capital Reserve is over budget as they have been charging Hoyle Tanner invoices for the 20-year study as well as the purchase of a pickup truck. All of that will be reimbursed and put into the loan for the 20-year study along with the flood mitigation pump station engineering. They will have more revenue than expenses at the end of the year.

Review of First Quarter FY26 Financials

Timestamp: 0:39

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4e1_FY26_QTR_1_Budget_Status_Reports_excel.xlsx

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4e2_FY26_QTR_1_Budget_Status_Reports_pdf.pdf

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4e3_FY26_QTR_1_Water_Sewer_Septage_Financials.pdf

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4e4_FY26_QTR_1_Debt_Schedule.xlsx

Arneson reviewed the FY26 first quarter financials which ran July 1 to September 30, 2025 which would include the drought. In general, it should be about 25% of actual budget.

They are trending a bit behind on water at 22.53% user revenue. The Fire Protection

Services have not been billed yet but that will come online pretty quickly. They are under on salaries and benefits as they only had three staff for July and August. Admin Support from the Town has not been billed yet. Repairs and maintenance are at 11% of the budget so far.

For wastewater, they are a bit under on the user revenue. Septage is up at 30% where it is expected at 25%. Salaries and benefits are behind due to the same reasons as water. Admin Support has not been billed. Biosolid chemicals continue to trend low. Repairs and maintenance was at 42% as there is always something going wrong that they need to address.

Superintendent's Report

Timestamp: 0:44

Cote stated that the plant has been running really well with the pH problem figured out. They were putting too much air into the system with the new diffusers. They are going to replace the control panel sometime this winter. Next year they might install a chlorometer that would adjust and monitor itself. The new hire, Erin, passed the water three exam and Rural Water is asking the ANR for some exemptions due to her college studies. Cote and Mike Coyle are taking a class in January for a Distribution License. The Sanitary Survey prompted new seals around the clear well at the Waterhouse. It was recommended that they do an EPA cyber-security evaluation on December 22. They are working diligently to get the influent pump installed.

Discussion of options for re-location of the wastewater pump station

Timestamp: 0:52

Cote reviewed the discussion with John Kart to relocate the pump station. Arneson presented a map to show the current location and other proposed locations. There are some questions about sub-dividing the lot and some road upgrade potentials and a right-of-way. There is an application for the FEMA buyout program which would not allow a sub-division so they would have to choose either the buyout or the pump station location. Cote summarized that this site is above the 100-year flood plain and would not require much concrete sticking out of the ground.

Cote presented another location that he has not yet presented to the engineer. Arneson reviewed the location on the map and illustrated the area owned by Gary Bressor. Cote stated that Bressor told him that there was once a hand dug 35-foot stone-lined well that indicated there might not be as much ledge on that side of the road. Bressor would not want the control panel in his line of sight. Cote stated that they would not have to dig up the street for the line. They would have to have some sort of easement. Farr pointed out her family would be happy to talk about going down that road if they couldn't get easements.

Review of funding alternatives for the wastewater treatment facility 20 year upgrade

Timestamp: 1:03

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h1_Overview_of_Alternatives.pdf

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h2_Rate_Increases_for_Repayment_Alternatives.xlsx

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h3_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_A.xlsx

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h4_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_B.xlsx

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h5_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_C.xlsx

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h6_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_D1.xlsx

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h7_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_D2.xlsx

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h8_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_E1.xlsx

https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2025/12/4h9_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_E2.xlsx

Hill stated that many residents think there is a grant to pay for this. Olin confirmed there is not a magic pot of money, and it has gotten more competitive to find alternative sources of funding. There are some subsidies which go toward planning. Richmond did not qualify based on median household income. Olin reviewed that this is a sensitivity analysis to try to make some changes in the loan repayment strategies and for the Town to consider long-term solutions for the community.

Short reviewed the tool they used in earlier discussions. He highlighted alternative B, which was the best-case scenario of the seven different repayment options they presented.

The user variables they can control are:

- Sewer User Rate Increase

- Septage Rate Increase

- New Residential Sewer Users

- New Commercial & Government Sewer Users

Short stated the intent to divide this project into two different contracts:

- Septage receiving equipment with some of the flood protection elements

- Remainder of the treatment facility upgrade

Short illustrated how everything else is a display of the results for the different scenarios.

The intent here is to generate alternatives that would allow you to pay for the loan in the

short term, as well as generate additional reserves for any future capital projects.

Short illustrated the results from the 7 different scenarios. Scenarios D utilizes a 20% taxpayer burden share. Short stated that there are a couple of differences in the terms offered by the Bond Bank versus the Clean Water State Revolving Fund program.

Scenarios E look at loan suppression that is offered through the Vermont Bond Bank.

Short presented the alternatives of a 20-year loan term versus and 30-year loan term.

Short presented a chart that illustrated the Increases in Average Residential User Annual Bills for WWFT Loan Repayment under Various Repayment Scenarios, with Scenario B being the best case with a 30-year loan and increasing the amount of received septage.

Olin mentioned that none of the scenarios account for the Water Infrastructure Sponsorship program. King stated that the Water Infrastructure Sponsorship program is where municipalities can decide to support natural resource restoration and protection projects for up to 10% of the base loan for construction in return for a reduction in interest rates.

Hill observed that the septage revenue is more market driven so he wonders if the increase is plausible. Cote stated that he thinks he could entire people here because of the locale to the interstate but running trucks through a residential area might become an issue. Cote stated that the issue is not processing, it is getting a bite of the market. Cote suggested contracts for reduced rates or accepting septage 24-hours a day. Farr is not comfortable planning for 24-hour operation through a residential neighborhood.

Hill stated that it should be a Selectboard conversation if they want to talk about a Town contribution. Hill suggested considering a local option tax as opposed to a property tax increase. Farr stated that she has a hard time with a 30-year loan for something that is only going to last 20 years. Cote stated that in 2043 they have got another engineering assessment to be done. Olin reviewed that the intent using the Clean Water Act money was towns would then build up and plan for their own payment of replacement equipment. Olin confirmed that the design contract is with the State and once they get approval, they can execute the contract. Hill stated that people will start to ask if they vetted all the expenses and really need all these things.

Discuss Items for Next Agenda:

-Zenner updates

-Discuss different revenue streams

-Continue finance conversations

Adjournment

Farr moved to adjourn. Sander seconded.

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

Meeting adjourned at: 6:58 pm

Chat file from Zoom: None