

1 **Town of Richmond**  
2 **Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission**  
3 **Minutes of March 16, 2026**  
4

5 **Members Present:** Erin Farr, Bard Hill, Greg Rabideau, David Sander (arrived ~5:40  
6 PM), Morgan Wolaver  
7

8 **Members Absent:** David Sander  
9

10 **Staff Present:** Town Manager Josh Arneson; Duncan Wardwell, Deputy Town Manager;  
11 Steve Cote, Water Resources Superintendent; Brad Snow, Water Resources  
12

13 **Others Present:** The meeting was recorded for MMCTV, Michael  
14

15 **MMCTV Video:** <https://youtu.be/9nvflU6odzk?si=yry3ScXQYfCGFuJZ>  
16

17 **Call to Order:** 5:34 PM  
18

19 **Welcome:** Wolaver  
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 *Hill moved to approve the minutes of March 2, 2026. Rabideau seconded.*

30 *Roll Call Vote:*

31 *Hill, Rabideau, Wolaver in favor. Farr abstains. Sander absent. Motion approved.*  
32

33 **Purchase Orders:**  
34

35 *Farr moved to approve purchase order number 5329 to Alliance Group Services LLC.*

36 *For the electrical work related to the control panels for the press in the amount of*  
37 *\$20,516.72 with funds to come from the Wastewater Capital Reserve Fund. Rabideau*  
38 *seconded.*

39 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Hill, Rabideau, Wolaver in favor. Sander absent. Motion approved.*  
40

41 **Warrants:**  
42

43 *Farr moved to approve the Warrants as presented. Hill seconded.*

44 *Roll Call Vote:*

45 *Farr, Hill, Rabideau, Wolaver in favor. Sander absent. Motion approved.*  
46  
47

48 **Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**

49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97

**Consideration of holding a special meeting on Monday, March 30, 2026 to review the draft FY27 budget**

Timestamp: 0:01

Arneson summarized that he, Cote, and Bona were working on the budget this and next week. The Commission could take an hour to review the budget and provide some feedback. The meeting will begin at 6 PM.

**Consideration of reimbursing the Wastewater Capital Reserve Account for expenses related to the 20-year study**

Timestamp: 0:04

Arneson reviewed that the 20-year study has been taking all the expenses out of the Capital Reserve and then reimbursements have been going into the General Fund.

*Hill moved to transfer \$193,042.00 from Unrestricted Funds to the Wastewater Capital Reserve Account to reimburse the Wastewater Capital Reserve Account for expenses that were paid from the account of the 20 year study. Farr seconded.*

*Roll Call Vote:*

*Farr, Hill, Rabideau, Sander, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*

**Superintendent's Report**

Timestamp: 0:09

Cote stated that it is not very good right now. He is going to be sitting there all night as the influent pumps are not working. They have been struggling for four hours to figure it out and get somebody to come check it out. It is a control panel thing. There was also a breakdown in the dewatering incline screw. Cote is struggling as it is 24 hours a day, non-stop watching the plant. At 3 AM on Saturday morning, the controls for the new pump were not working so he had to come in and manually switch stuff around to get the other pump pumping. The plant wears everyone out. Cote reviewed that it is a control panel issue as stuff has been so cobbled together that it takes somebody hours to figure it out as they cannot look at the blueprints. They found that the new pump had a stuck check valve and worked for three days but then developed issues with the controls again. Today they had to go back to the old reliable pump, and he cannot get that to do anything, so it is not a warranty issue. Cote reviewed that he had a call into Tom Allen as he is the control guy he trusts the most.

Cote reviewed how the pumps work on a fill and draw systems with the pumps. The pump shuts off when the well gets to 5 feet. When the pump shuts off, the wet well fills up to 8 feet. Currently, when the wet well gets to 5.2 feet, the pumps ramp down and shut off. There is something in the controls that they cannot figure out. It takes about 20 minutes for the wet well to go from 5 to 8 feet. There are a lot of things that can get messed up once someone gets into the control panel. Cote summarized that they have cleaned everything that might be an issue, pulled the pump, made sure it wasn't ragged up, cleaned the check valves, cleaned the gate valves, cleaned the wet well, and nothing

98 seems to make a difference. Cote confirmed that they cannot do a sump pump bypass as  
99 it requires someone to get into the SCADA and control panel system.  
100  
101 Cote stated that their Contract Operator is probably going to give them a 3-day notice  
102 because he is stretched too thin. Cote contacted Vermont Utility Management Services  
103 (VTUMS) but their Grade 5 operator passed away, and they have not been able to  
104 location another one. Cote summarized that the pumps are able to physically pump but  
105 the controls tell them they do not need to pump. Cote stated that he did not think it was a  
106 software virus as it is a closed system and nothing else is affected, it responds just the  
107 way they want. Snow suggested using P&P pump it out all night, but Cote did not know  
108 where they would take it. Arneson reviewed how Cote troubleshoots really well and  
109 Tom Allen is tough to schedule. Rabideau suggested having a mechanical engineer who  
110 would provide more technical oversight and testing tools for checking voltage. Cote  
111 reviewed that he does not think it is a problem with the voltage because they didn't touch  
112 anything with the old pump. He is pretty sure it has something to do with the controls.  
113 Cote stated that SCADA is a specialized system, each one is adapted to the plant because  
114 they react to the flows that come in and go out. Cote summarized that the other pump  
115 worked great from Saturday until today. If it was electrical then the old pump would not  
116 have worked over the weekend. Cote summarized the risk of rebooting SCADA as they  
117 have had issues with that in the past. The new SCADA system needs to be designed  
118 hand-in-hand with the upgrade, or it would be spending \$30,000 on a system that would  
119 be obsolete in a year. Cote illustrated that he does not have faith in using Champlin as  
120 they have a bad reputation of making a mess once inside a SCADA system.  
121  
122 Cote stated that he is working on some of the Zenner water meter issues with the utility  
123 reader, leak detection, and trouble codes. They have several accounts that show leaks on  
124 the utility reader, one of them is the Town Center (~5-7 gallons of water usage every  
125 hour for 24 hours. There are also issues with some of the meters getting codes indicating  
126 that the batteries needed to be changed.  
127  
128 Cote reviewed that if Snow passes his Level 5 test on Friday, then they do not need a  
129 Contract Operator.  
130  
131  
132 **Discussion of purchases related to Project Work Safe audit**  
133 Timestamp: 1:06  
134  
135 Cote summarized that they fixed a bunch of things that they were faulted on. The brand-  
136 new control panel does not have to be opened anymore to make things work. The air  
137 compressor is new and has all the guards. The electricians changed the outlets. They do  
138 not like chains across doorways, so 2x4s and brackets were installed in dewatering. Cote  
139 stated that the ladders are not in compliance. All the extension ladders are going to have  
140 to be replaced. The extension cords also need to be replaced. There needs to be a self-  
141 closing gate (~\$500-\$600) to the lift that goes down into the influent pump well. The  
142 overhead lift needs an inspection (~\$2,500). Cote explained how they should have a gas  
143 meter when they go down into the wet well (~\$1,500-\$1,800). Arneson confirmed that  
144 there should be enough money in the Unrestricted funds to cover those expenses. Cote  
145 confirmed the contract operator gave them a number of somebody who would inspect the  
146 overhead crane.

147  
148  
149  
150  
151  
152  
153  
154  
155  
156  
157  
158  
159  
160  
161  
162  
163  
164  
165  
166  
167  
168  
169  
170  
171  
172  
173  
174  
175  
176  
177  
178  
179  
180  
181  
182  
183  
184  
185  
186  
187  
188  
189  
190  
191  
192  
193  
194  
195

**TABLED - Follow up on funding alternatives for the wastewater treatment facility  
20-year upgrade**

Timestamp: 1:15

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e01\\_Rate\\_Increases\\_for\\_Repayment\\_Alternatives.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e01_Rate_Increases_for_Repayment_Alternatives.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e02\\_Rate\\_Increases\\_for\\_Repayment\\_Alternatives\\_including\\_Commercial\\_Rates.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e02_Rate_Increases_for_Repayment_Alternatives_including_Commercial_Rates.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e03\\_User\\_Rate\\_Analysis\\_-\\_V5\\_-\\_Alt\\_A.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e03_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_A.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e04\\_User\\_Rate\\_Analysis\\_-\\_V5\\_-\\_Alt\\_B.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e04_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_B.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e05\\_User\\_Rate\\_Analysis\\_-\\_V5\\_-\\_Alt\\_C.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e05_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_C.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e06\\_User\\_Rate\\_Analysis\\_-\\_V5\\_-\\_Alt\\_D1.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e06_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_D1.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e07\\_User\\_Rate\\_Analysis\\_-\\_V5\\_-\\_Alt\\_D2.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e07_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_D2.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e08\\_User\\_Rate\\_Analysis\\_-\\_V5\\_-\\_Alt\\_E1.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e08_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_E1.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e09\\_User\\_Rate\\_Analysis\\_-\\_V5\\_-\\_Alt\\_E2.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e09_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V5_-_Alt_E2.xlsx)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e10\\_Notes\\_on\\_1\\_Option\\_Tax\\_Alternative.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e10_Notes_on_1_Option_Tax_Alternative.pdf)

[https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e11\\_User\\_Rate\\_Analysis\\_-\\_V6\\_1\\_Option\\_Tax.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4e11_User_Rate_Analysis_-_V6_1_Option_Tax.xlsx)

**Update on Zenner customer online water usage accounts**

Timestamp: 1:15

Arneson stated that he hasn't seen any changes to the online system. He will check back this week for a better update. Zenner was in the process of upgrading the system that reads everything from the water meters and thought that something isn't communication well with the modern online systems. Farr requested that Arneson ask if the batteries are designed for sub-zero temperatures.

196 **Update on easement obtainment for the Tilden Ave., Bridge St., and Cochran Rd.**  
197 **Waterline Replacement Project**  
198 Timestamp: 1:18  
199  
200 Arneson summarized that Wardwell sent out hard copy letters to obtain the information  
201 for the Property Transfer Tax Return. There is a bid opening on Wednesday to see if they  
202 fit with the bond vote.  
203  
204  
205 **Review of February water data**  
206 Timestamp: 1:20  
207 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4h_Monthly_Water_Report_February_2026.pdf)  
208 [3/4h\\_Monthly\\_Water\\_Report\\_February\\_2026.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/03/4h_Monthly_Water_Report_February_2026.pdf)  
209  
210 Farr stated that the graphs are great. Arneson stated that the staff is doing a great job  
211 keeping the numbers within the right range.  
212  
213  
214 **Discuss Items for Next Agenda:**  
215 -Budget meeting on March 30<sup>th</sup>  
216 -Next regular meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup>  
217 -Funding alternatives for 20-year upgrade  
218 -Housing Committee update  
219  
220  
221 **Adjournment**  
222  
223 *Farr moved to adjourn. Hill seconded.*  
224 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Hill, Sander, Rabideau, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*  
225  
226 **Meeting adjourned at: 6:59 PM**  
227  
228 **Chat file from Zoom: None**  
229  
230  
231