

1 **Town of Richmond**  
2 **Meeting of Water and Sewer Commission**  
3 **Minutes of April 20, 2026**  
4

5 **Members Present:** Erin Farr, Greg Rabideau, David Sander, Morgan Wolaver  
6

7 **Members Absent:** Bard Hill, Erin Farr left at 6:56 PM  
8

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

12 **Others Present:** The meeting was recorded for MMCTV, Jon Olin, Micheal, Paul Hobbs  
13

14 **MMCTV Video:** [https://youtu.be/ra9utv9slUY?si=L\\_Ais10x8inVMrad](https://youtu.be/ra9utv9slUY?si=L_Ais10x8inVMrad)  
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:** None  
23

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

26 **Minutes:**  
27

28 *Rabideau moved to approve the minutes of April 6, 2026. Sander seconded.*

29 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Sander, Rabideau, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*  
30

31 **Purchase Orders:**  
32

33 *Rabideau moved to approve purchase order number 5379 to East Engineering for*  
34 *engineering services for the Tilden Ave., Bridge St., and Cochran Rd. Waterline*

35 *Replacement Project in the amount of \$180,000. Sander seconded.*

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

38 **Warrants:**  
39

40 *Farr moved to approve the Warrants as presented. Sander seconded.*

41 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Sander, Rabideau, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*  
42

43  
44 **Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**  
45  
46  
47

48 **Consideration of approving the Step II agreement with Hoyle Tanner for**  
49 **engineering for the 20 year study**

50 Timestamp: 0:04

51 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4a1_email_from_John_Olin_on_request_to_proceed_with_Step_II.pdf)  
52 [4/4a1\\_email\\_from\\_John\\_Olin\\_on\\_request\\_to\\_proceed\\_with\\_Step\\_II.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4a1_email_from_John_Olin_on_request_to_proceed_with_Step_II.pdf)

53

54 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4a2_EJCDC_Agreement_-_Richmond_WWTF_Upgrade_Step_II_-_2025-10-30__1_.pdf)  
55 [4/4a2\\_EJCDC\\_Agreement\\_-\\_Richmond\\_WWTF\\_Upgrade\\_Step\\_II\\_-\\_2025-10-](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4a2_EJCDC_Agreement_-_Richmond_WWTF_Upgrade_Step_II_-_2025-10-30__1_.pdf)  
56 [30\\_\\_1\\_.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4a2_EJCDC_Agreement_-_Richmond_WWTF_Upgrade_Step_II_-_2025-10-30__1_.pdf)

57

58 Olin & Hobbs reviewed how the SRF program categorizes things and what would be  
59 eligible for loan reimbursement. Engineering fees will need to be funded locally or from  
60 other funding sources. Olin reviewed other costs that were moved from the non-standard  
61 to standard category. Olin stated that a total of ~\$181,000 is considered non-eligible.  
62 Olin & Hobbs reviewed the components of the architectural scope of the building scan.  
63 A lot of it is the renovation work to the main habitable area of the building.

64

65 Farr stated that the building was built in the 1970s and there is a good chance that floor  
66 tiles throughout the building have asbestos. Olin stated that they are not doing heavy  
67 renovations but just replacing equipment. Olin stated they typically do it in the 30%  
68 design which is why they hold the bond vote until after the 30% design. Cote stated that  
69 the only tiles would be in the lab office as every floor below that is concrete. Wolaver  
70 confirmed that if they are cutting a hole in the floor then they need an asbestos  
71 abatement. Olin states that it will fit in with the contingency.

72

73 Olin stated that the estimated total fee for Step II is \$869,844 in the contract and the  
74 construction cost is \$10,000,000. Construction costs of Step I and Step II together is  
75 closer to \$17,000,000 with the contingency. Arneson and Olin reviewed that they have  
76 \$1.46 million in a Congressionally Directed Spending grant and the rest is through the  
77 CWSRF loan which will help pay for engineering and construction. They are also  
78 looking at a bond bank loan because that can be deferred. Olin stated they are also  
79 talking to USDA Rural Development which might be grant funding at 10%. Arneson  
80 stated that they are also chasing other grant opportunities.

81

82 *Rabideau moved to approve the Step II agreement for the Richmond wastewater*  
83 *treatment plant with engineering firm Hoyle Tanner for the 20-year study design fees and*  
84 *other itemized elements in the amount of \$869,844.00. Sander seconded.*

85

86 Arneson reviewed that this would ultimately be reimbursed through the State loan  
87 program. Olin stated that they would like to have the whole agreement signed and they  
88 will only expend up to \$50,000 before the SRF program loan is cleared. Olin confirmed  
89 that they could continue doing work as they have not expended the previously approved

90 cap of \$70,000. Olin stated that the 30% submission is bumped out to September 2026,  
91 60% submission is January 2027, and 90% submission is June 2027. They would be  
92 looking to bid for the Fall of 2027 and start construction in 2028.

93

94 Rabideau withdrew his motion.

95

96 *Rabideau moved to approve the Step II agreement with Hoyle Tanner for the engineering*  
97 *design of the Richmond wastewater treatment plant per the 20-year study in the amount*  
98 *of \$869,844 subject to an initial limit of \$70,000 pending agreement on the State*  
99 *Revolving Fund or other grants and aid as a source of these funds. Sander seconded.*

100 *Roll Call Vote: Farr, Sander, Rabideau, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*

101

102

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

105 Timestamp: 0:49

106 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b1_User_Rate_Alt_1_-_Base_Model.xlsx)  
107 [4/4b1\\_User\\_Rate\\_Alt\\_1\\_-\\_Base\\_Model.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b1_User_Rate_Alt_1_-_Base_Model.xlsx)

108

109 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b2_User_Rate_Alt_2_-_No_LOT.xlsx)  
110 [4/4b2\\_User\\_Rate\\_Alt\\_2\\_-\\_No\\_LOT.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b2_User_Rate_Alt_2_-_No_LOT.xlsx)

111

112 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b3_User_Rate_Alt_3_-_No_LOT_Add_Tax_Share.xlsx)  
113 [4/4b3\\_User\\_Rate\\_Alt\\_3\\_-\\_No\\_LOT\\_Add\\_Tax\\_Share.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b3_User_Rate_Alt_3_-_No_LOT_Add_Tax_Share.xlsx)

114

115 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b4_User_Rate_Alt_4_-_Add_Tax_Share.xlsx)  
116 [4/4b4\\_User\\_Rate\\_Alt\\_4\\_-\\_Add\\_Tax\\_Share.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b4_User_Rate_Alt_4_-_Add_Tax_Share.xlsx)

117

118 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b5_User_Rate_Alt_5_-_Add_Tax_Share_No_Loan_Suppression.xlsx)  
119 [4/4b5\\_User\\_Rate\\_Alt\\_5\\_-\\_Add\\_Tax\\_Share\\_No\\_Loan\\_Suppression.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4b5_User_Rate_Alt_5_-_Add_Tax_Share_No_Loan_Suppression.xlsx)

120

121 Farr asked if they spread out the cost to the other taxpayers in Town, would current users  
122 be excluded from the tax bill charge. Farr observed that the users would actually pay  
123 more per year in one of the higher scenarios than if they had a house appraised at  
124 \$500,000. Olin observed that taking a portion of the loan to the full tax base has to  
125 reduce down the total cost to the users, because more people are paying in. Olin stated  
126 that they should be comparing models of alternative one to alternative four for the  
127 taxpayer burden. Olin summarized the request to keep the taxpayer cost at \$20 per  
128 \$100,000. Olin reviewed the variables associated with different models explored in  
129 previous meetings.

130

131 Cote stated that the rate payers in Richmond get upset if we start banking money for

132 future projects. Olin stated that they are focused on the next 10 years and how to get a  
133 model of user rates and septage rates to finance the project. Cote observed that after an  
134 upgrade the repair bill will not be as huge as it is now. Arneson stated the facility repair  
135 budget is currently \$45,000 per year for water and wastewater. Wolaver observed that  
136 the argument is to avoid mountains and valleys and to keep rates down over the long run.  
137 Arneson compared the User Inputs and Results for alternative one and alternative four to  
138 observe the influence of adding a taxpayer burden. Olin stated that nobody should worry  
139 about FY50 and beyond as that is when new Commission members would be making  
140 decisions for their user rates. Every year, it is an adjustment. Rabideau stated that he  
141 struggles with the taxpayer burden as it is accelerating faster than the background rate of  
142 inflation. Olin summarized that they would help with public outreach with a website,  
143 public meetings, and hosting an event at the plant. Olin confirmed that if someone puts  
144 in a 10-unit (instead of the model's 2-unit growth) subdivision then it would help the  
145 payoff cause.

146  
147 Arneson reviewed the bond, the local option tax, and the tax burden sharing. Olin  
148 summarized that they have the ability to decide what is best for the users and the system  
149 on a year-to-year basis, so it is not really a 60-year plan. Farr stated that she does not  
150 think they should use both the local option tax and the taxpayer burden. Rabideau stated  
151 that he would prefer the extra \$100 a year on property taxes than paying 1% on  
152 everything he buys in Richmond. Cote observed that the local option tax also applies to  
153 online orders that get delivered in Richmond. Arneson and Farr debated voting on the  
154 local option tax in November versus March. Olin illustrated scenarios where the SRF  
155 saved \$200,000 over the 20-year loan in interest but less favorable than the bond bank  
156 scenario which cannot do loan suppression. The discussion will be continued and the  
157 Selectboard will eventually get involved.

158  
159

## 160 **Discuss pump station locations**

161 Timestamp: 1:34

162

163 Arneson reviewed the possible locations down the road from the current location or  
164 across the street from Gary Bressor's by the bridge or keeping it in its current place. The  
165 Commission wanted to move forward with test drilling at the Bridge St location.  
166 Arneson stated that they are scheduling it next week as soon as there is an agreement with  
167 Bressor to drill at those locations. Olin summarized that they relocated a couple of the  
168 probe locations to avoid the risk of any utility location. Cote stated that he does not have  
169 much paperwork on the current sewer line. Cote summarized that he is meeting with  
170 Bressor this week and he is going to mark out things as he has a more exact drawing. If  
171 the pump station were to be moved it would be ~3 ft above ground level where if it stays  
172 in its current location, it would ~ 8ft above ground.

173

174

175 **Consideration of setting a date for the Annual Meeting**

176 Timestamp: 1:48

177

178 Arneson reviewed that they typically hold the Annual meeting the Tuesday after the  
179 second regular Water/Sewer meeting in May. Arneson suggested that they wait to set the  
180 actual date at the next meeting to make sure they would have quorum.

181

182

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

185 Timestamp: 1:52

186

187 Arneson summarized that they have all the easements in hand and all the information for  
188 the PTTRs. Arneson stated that they are going to have a contract signing later this week  
189 or next, a pre-construction meeting in early May, and breaking ground in June.

190

191

192 **Superintendent's report**

193 Timestamp: 1:54

194

195 Cote stated that the estimate for the filter cloth is closer to \$10,000. Cote stated that the  
196 filter tank estimate is \$53,000 because they have to change both filter tank program  
197 setups for SCADA. He does not see spending that money right now, but it only gives  
198 them one filter that works. Cote illustrated that everything that is computerized in the  
199 plant is outdated as it is 20-years old. They do not make parts or pieces to replace the  
200 filters and control panel.

201

202 Cote stated that water has been rock solid and they are working on 20 Zenner meters still  
203 with trouble codes. There will be 4-5 days where they are good but then there will be a  
204 day when there's unavailable reading and then a lot of gallons in one hour the next day.  
205 There was one meter that was truncated right so Cote had to physically the meter for  
206 billing. Going forward, there should be flawless readings on the bill.

207

208

209 **Review of Consumer Confidence Report and PFAS data**

210 Timestamp: 2:04

211 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0  
212 4/4g1\\_CCR\\_2025\\_for\\_mailing.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4g1_CCR_2025_for_mailing.pdf)

213

214 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0  
215 4/4g2\\_PFAS\\_Data\\_2026\\_1.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4g2_PFAS_Data_2026_1.pdf)

216

217 Cote reviewed that the Consumer Confidence Report data is generated by the State and  
218 verified by the Water/Sewer staff. Every quarter they are required to test for PFAS, and  
219 the levels were going down again for the first quarter in this year. The EPA is looking  
220 for more data points nationwide, so they are testing every quarter at \$580 a test.

221

222 Arneson stated that the Consumer Confidence Report will get mailed out to every single  
223 account holder. It will also be posted on the website, Front Porch Forum, and in physical  
224 locations. Everything was within the acceptable zones.

225

226

## 227 **Review of draft FY27 Budget and Rates**

228 Timestamp: 2:08

229 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4h1_FY27_Water_Wastewater_budget_DRAFT_04-20-26.pdf)  
230 [4/4h1\\_FY27\\_Water\\_Wastewater\\_budget\\_DRAFT\\_04-20-26.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4h1_FY27_Water_Wastewater_budget_DRAFT_04-20-26.pdf)

231

232 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4h2_FY27_Water_Wastewater_budget_DRAFT_04-20-26.xlsx)  
233 [4/4h2\\_FY27\\_Water\\_Wastewater\\_budget\\_DRAFT\\_04-20-26.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4h2_FY27_Water_Wastewater_budget_DRAFT_04-20-26.xlsx)

234

235 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4h3_FY27_Water_and_Wastewater_rates_DRAFT_4-20-26.xlsx)  
236 [4/4h3\\_FY27\\_Water\\_and\\_Wastewater\\_rates\\_DRAFT\\_4-20-26.xlsx](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4h3_FY27_Water_and_Wastewater_rates_DRAFT_4-20-26.xlsx)

237

238 [https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water\\_Sewer\\_Commission/Meetings/2026/0](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4h4_WS_Rate_and_Budget_Charts_DRAFT_4-20-26.pdf)  
239 [4/4h4\\_WS\\_Rate\\_and\\_Budget\\_Charts\\_DRAFT\\_4-20-26.pdf](https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Water_Sewer_Commission/Meetings/2026/04/4h4_WS_Rate_and_Budget_Charts_DRAFT_4-20-26.pdf)

240

241 Arneson summarized that nothing changed on the Water or Wastewater budget since the  
242 last review. On the Wastewater budget, they added in 5 years for the Gateway loan so  
243 that it matured in FY31, but all the numbers stayed the same. The Water Restricted and  
244 Unrestricted funds stayed the same. The Wastewater Capital will be closer to \$9,000.  
245 Arneson highlighted that it still gives them \$193,000 over the 15% required. That could  
246 buy a control panel if they needed to be flood ready.

247

248 Arneson illustrated that the Water budget in FY26 was \$387,796 which increased to  
249 \$408,089 in FY27. Arneson summarized how the rates are set based on the total budget  
250 and the Non-Core User Groups. They are looking to raise \$352,000 from Core Users  
251 based on the usage in the last 12 months, April 1 of last year to end of March this year.  
252 In order to ensure that metered rates keep up with any conserved water they reduce that  
253 amount to 98% usage. They add in the total number of fixed fees and then adjust the  
254 water rates to offset fire protection allocation to the school. They always increase the  
255 School rate by 5% but allocate that reduction between Residential and Commercial based  
256 on their gallons used in the last 12 months. The Residential rates go down from 61.9% to  
257 58% and Commercial/Government from 31% to 30% and School increased from 6.1% to

258 11.1%. The School does not pay the property tax for fire protection. Arneson illustrated  
259 the formula that uses the percentages to raise \$352,000 from Core Users. Arneson stated  
260 that they want to cover a lot of their fixed costs with the Fixed Rate and Metered Usage.  
261 In Residential they skewed towards 70% Metered Usage and 30% Fixed Rate. In  
262 Commercial/Government it is 65% Metered Usage and 35% Fixed Rate. In School it is  
263 50%-50% split. Those percentages are the basis for the rates. Arneson highlighted the  
264 current Metered Usage and Fixed Rate for the Core User groups.

265  
266 Arneson illustrated the same process to calculate the Metered Usage and Fixed Rate for  
267 \$845,785 Sewer budget. Arneson asked if they wanted to keep those rates higher to put  
268 money back into the Reserve account to help pay down the future loan for the upgrades.  
269 Wolaver stated that they are going to need money, so it does not make sense to lower  
270 rates. Arneson reviewed the 10% rate increase projection over the next 3 years. Arneson  
271 stated that he can play with the rates for the next meeting.

#### 272 273 274 **Discussion of septage rate**

275 Timestamp: 2:27

276  
277 Cote stated that they are not the lowest septage rate, but they are low. Cote suggested  
278 increasing the rate by at least the cost of living. Cote stated that they have been  
279 averaging 30,000 gallons a day in April. Rabideau stated that Richmond's rate is  
280 \$0.08/gallon and the State average is \$0.089.

#### 281 282 283 **Update on Zenner customer online water usage accounts**

284 Timestamp: 2:32

285  
286 Arneson reviewed the issues he and Cote have experienced. The online accounts still  
287 seem to be off for the time of day. Cote stated the timing is accurate from his portal, so  
288 something is happening in the transfer. Sander suggested that there are two different  
289 software packages that do not interface with each other. Cote stated that it is getting  
290 better, but it is a very slow and painful process.

#### 291 292 293 **Discussion of engaging with MGT to examine the pay grid with a focus on** 294 **department heads**

295 Timestamp: 2:35

296  
297 Arneson stated that every year they increase the pay grade by the CPI. He noticed that  
298 the Department Heads are getting similar pay to the second in charge when overtime is  
299 factored in. Arneson reviewed that MGT would charge \$4,500 to look at comparable

300 Towns. Arneson stated he will present a similar request to the Selectboard next week.  
301 Rabideau stated that it is best management practice to make sure you know where you are  
302 in the labor market all the time.

303

304

305 **Adjournment**

306

307 *Rabideau moved to adjourn. Sander seconded.*

308 *Roll Call Vote: Sander, Rabideau, Wolaver in favor. Motion approved.*

309

310 **Meeting adjourned at: 7:39 PM**

311

312 **Chat file from Zoom:** None

313