

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Wednesday November 30, 2022 – 6:00 PM

Hybrid

**PRESENT:** Roger Manzolini, Chair (via Zoom); Neal Pilson, Selectman (via Zoom); Alan Hanson, Selectman; Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator; Steve Traver, Fire Chief; Gail Wojtkowiak, resident

Roger opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

**Burial Request for Daniel Scace:** Gail Wojtkowiak came before the Board to request the transfer of the title to her family's burial plot from her father to her brother, Daniel Scace. She had contacted Steve Parsons, the Cemetery Warden, and determined that there is space available. Roger moved to approve the transfer of ownership of the burial plot to Daniel Scace. The motion was seconded by Al and passed by unanimous vote.

**Appointment of a new Full-Time Firefighter/EMT:** Scott Muir comes highly recommended by the Richmond Fire Chief, Steve Traver and Austin White, Richmond EMT Director. He has been a member of the Stockbridge Fire Department for many years and served as Emergency Manager there. Scott plans to remain on a volunteer basis with the Stockbridge Dept. Neal asked how we would manage any possible conflict between Richmond's needs and Stockbridge. Scott assured him that he will be a full-time member of the Richmond Dept. and will be on duty from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Any volunteering he might do for Stockbridge would be only on his off-hours with service to Richmond as his first priority.

Roger moved to approve the hiring of Scott Muir as a full-time Firefighter/EMT employee. He was seconded by Neal and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

**Salary for EMT Director, Austin White:** Austin has been performing various functions for the Town without pay. He has prepared a proposal for the Board to pay him for those services at \$15,000.00 per year for eight hours of work per week. That would include the on-call stipend he currently receives when he responds to a call. Danielle noted that funds to cover this amount are available in Ambulance Receipts.

Roger noted that Austin has been a valuable member of the Richmond Fire Department and in fact was the catalyst behind getting Richmond to the point of having a full-time Firefighter/EMT force. Roger moved to approve the proposal. He was seconded by Al and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Appointment of Rebecca Lord to a Full-Time Member of the Conservation Commission:** Ms. Lord is currently an Associate Member of the Con. Com. and comes with the full support of the Chair to move to a full-time membership to replace Dan Scorpa, who has recently retired. Roger moved to appoint Ms. Lord as a full-time member of the Con. Com. He was seconded by Neal and the motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

**Approval of the Minutes of the November 2, 2022 Meeting of the Board:** Roger moved to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2022 meeting of the Board of Selectmen as amended. He was seconded by Neal and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Annual Alcohol License Renewal for Hilltop Orchard:** This is the yearly renewal for wines and malt at Hilltop. Al moved to grant the permit and was seconded by Neal. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

**Annual Alcohol Licenses Renewal for Berkshire Winery/Balderdash Cellars:** Roger moved to approve both licenses. Neal seconded the motion which passed by unanimous vote.

Danielle advised the Board that both licenses need to be combined into one and in order to do that the Board has to provide an estimate of the seasonal population of Richmond. She recommended 5,000. Neal moved to sign and adopt the estimated seasonal population of Richmond at 5,000. Roger seconded the motion, which was carried by unanimous consent.

**Burial Request for Dora Jean Harrington:** Ms. Harrington's daughter is asking the Board to approve the burial of her mother's cremated remains in the family plot. Steve Parsons was consulted and approved a cremation burial. Roger moved to approve the burial request. The motion was seconded by Neal and adopted by unanimous consent.

**Discussion and Vote of March Hare Rd. Judgement Payoff:** The Town currently owns the house due to non-payment of taxes. The owner has been dealing with the Tax Collector in an effort to buy it back, but the deadline for that has passed. The Board will need to vote to extend the timeframe for payment to December 31, 2022. If the owner pays the amount of \$43,602.73 by December 31, 2022, all current taxes will be paid in full. She will then receive bills for the third and fourth quarters, which will be going out in a few weeks.

Roger moved to accept that if the owner pays \$43,602.73 by December 31, 2022, current taxes will be paid in full and ownership of the house will revert to the family. Neal seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous vote.

**TOWN CENTER DISCUSSION:** Roger advised that there were no change orders to discuss. The next Building Cte. meeting will be held on December 6, 2022. The building is about a third done and a third of the money has been paid. There have been no issues with the contractors, or the work being done, and all is going as planned.

**Public Comment:** None

**Town Administrator's Updates:** Danielle noted that the next meetings of the board will be held on December 14<sup>th</sup> and December 28, 2022. At the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, there will be a Tax Classification Hearing and Bob Gniadek has asked that the Assessors do a complete write up of the consequences of creating a separate and higher tax rate for second homeowners and wealthy residents. That would be a very time-consuming project, which they are willing to do, but cannot fit into their current work schedule.

A discussion followed that resulted in consensus on the issue: Roger and Neal felt that the concept of having a separate tax rate for the second homeowners and high-end homes and a lower rate for the lower assessed properties of full-time residents is divisive and sets up an us-them situation. It was deemed unfair to burden the Assessors with that work when it is unlikely Richmond residents would vote for it. Neighboring towns have been discussing this same issue and it has caused considerable division and bad feelings and the issue was ultimately withdrawn. Roger also pointed out that the State has just recently put an additional tax on the wealthy as it is.

Danielle said she will not ask the Assessors to do that work now but will ask them later how much work it entails and advise the Selectboard of their response.

**Town Administrator's Updates:** Danielle reported that the Surveys for the Storm Water Grant were due today and she has received 60 responses, which is excellent. Those will be very helpful when they are tied into all the modeling of certain problem areas that will be done. The first Stakeholders meeting will be held on December 14, 2022 with the grant people to go over the first draft of the modelling.

Danielle has set up a schedule for interviews next week for the new Treasurer/Tax Collector applicants. She is hoping to have recommendations for the Board by the December 14, 2022 meeting.

Danielle advised that the Winter Parking Ban is now in place. It runs from November 1, 2022 to April 1, 2022 and is now in effect to permit adequate snow plowing.

**Selectmen's Matters:** Francis Malnati has recently passed away and the Board members felt he should be acknowledged. The Fire Department, of which he was a member for many years, has just done a ceremony for him which he was able to attend. That was deeply appreciated by his family. The funeral service will be held on Saturday at 10:00 AM followed by burial at the Richmond Cemetery with full military honors.

**Sewer Matters:** Danielle reported that Tom Grizey is still working on an order for the correct pumps, so they have not been ordered yet. Roger said if Tom needs additional money over what is available in his budget, the Board will be willing to discuss it.

Danielle reminded the Board members that we will be needing a Christmas Tree. Al and Roger will find one, cut it down and set it up. She suggested that in future a tree be planted outside the new building to avoid needing to get a new one every year.

As there was no further business before the Board, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 PM. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Signed:

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Roger Manzolini, Chair