

BOARD OF SELECTMEN / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom and at Town Hall - 1529 State Road, Richmond, MA

Wednesday July 13, 2022 – 6:00 PM

PRESENT: Roger Manzolini, Chair; Neal Pilson, Selectman; Alan Hanson, Selectman; Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator; Austin White, Ambulance Director; Ron Veillette, Chair of the Con. Com.; Karen O'Donnell; Holly Stover; Dick Stover; Tom Grizey, Electrical Wiring Inspector; Peter Beckwith, Highway Super.

Roger called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Conservation Commission New Member Appointment: Roger noted that the Con. Com's Chair, Ron Veillette, had recommended the appointment of Karen O'Donnell to the Con. Com. Roger asked Ms. O'Donnell the usual questions to ascertain whether there was any conflict of interest in her appointment. As there were none, Roger moved to appoint Ms. O'Donnell to the open seat on the Con. Com. He was seconded by Alan. Neal remarked that he was aware that Ms. O'Donnell was an extremely well qualified candidate. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Approval of the Minutes of the June 22, 2022 Meeting: There being no question or concern about the minutes, Roger moved to approve the June 22, 2022 minutes as read. He was seconded by Neal and the motion adopted by unanimous vote.

Review and Vote on Inter-municipal Agreement for Shared Ambulance: Roger reported on some changes to the wording of the agreement as follows: Item #4 – the word “annually” will be replaced with “quarterly” referring to the billing of West Stockbridge. Similarly, in #6 the word “annually” will be deleted and in #8 the word “annually” will be replaced with “quarterly.”

Austin White, Fire Dept. Director agreed with the changes proposed. Roger moved to sign the agreement with the changes noted above. He was seconded by Alan.

Neal asked whether those changes will be agreed to by the West Stockbridge Board of Selectmen and he was assured that a copy of the Agreement containing those changes and the signatures of the Richmond Board will be available at the next meeting of the W. Stockbridge Board for their review, vote and signing.

Neal commended Austin and Chief Steve Traver for “leading the charge” to get this agreement completed.

Updates from the Town Administrator: Danielle reported that the end-of-year closeouts, grant reimbursements and carryovers are currently being worked on.

She has received an official letter from the Bond Rating Org. advising that the Sale will be held on July 20, 2022 and that awarding of the Bond will be July 27, 2022. On August 3, 2022, the closing will occur, which will put \$7.460 million in a bank account for the Town. Danielle also reported that she has received a letter from Deb Wagner, from the Division of Local Services at the State Dept. of Revenue, indicating that there would be no need for an additional Debt Exclusion vote.

Danielle reminded Roger that he had agreed to oversee the Town Hall offices during her vacation from tomorrow to the 25th of July. He agreed to take on that task.

Haider Special Event Permit for Wedding: The permit request was to have permission for a possible overflow of cars to be parked on Town Beach Road. They were anticipating between 40 and 50 guests. There was enough room on their private property to park about 15 cars and they were asking permission to allow some anticipated overflow to park on the Road.

Ron Veillette, Chair of the Con. Com. advised that there is restoration of wetlands being done in that area and he was concerned about foot traffic disturbing the repairs that have begun. As the wedding is being held on October 15th (and not during high-traffic summer hours) Ron would be satisfied to have the people park only on one side of the road and have the host provide some way to restrict access to sensitive areas, such as placing “keep out” ribbon barriers along those plots.

An intense discussion ensued with various suggestions and requests for keeping any traffic out of the sensitive area. The result of the discussion was that the Board determined that the ownership of Town Beach Road is unclear and that the Board, therefore, has no apparent authority to either grant or deny permission for parking on that road. Therefore, as there will be no loud music at the event, no caterer and the event will only be from 3:00 – 6:00 PM, and since the Town can neither permit or deny parking on a road it does not own, it was determined that there is no need for a Special Event Permit.

Danielle will send Roger all the details in an email so that he can advise the applicant of the decision reached at this meeting. Tom Grizey has volunteered to tape the sensitive areas with “keep out” signs to prevent people trampling the delicate vegetation.

Discussion of Town Beach Usage and Mowing of Beach Road: It was brought to the attention of the Board that people using the Town Beach have not been disposing of their garbage appropriately. There were several empty garbage cans with garbage strewn on the ground near them at the beach and the boat ramp. There was a discussion of the situation and suggestions as to how to solve the problem. The consensus was that more garbage cans will be added at strategic locations and clearly worded signs will be posted indicating the location of all disposal spots and cautioning that if the situation does not improve, the Town may close the Beach.

Roger suggested the Board consider next year hiring security personnel for the weekend leading up to and the weekend of the Fourth of July when the Beach historically has seen its heaviest use.

Mowing of Beach Road: The Con. Com. had asked Peter, Highway Super., not to mow along the edge of Beach Road any further than 2 feet in order to preserve local vegetation. Pete has been receiving numerous complaints from the residents of the area demanding that he mow.

There was a discussion of the issue that explored various attitudes on the subject. Ron noted that he will be discussing the issue at the next meeting of the Con. Com. and will let Peter know the outcome of that conversation.

Approval of First Payment for Building Project: Roger moved to approve the first payment of \$111,691.50. Neal seconded the motion which was adopted by unanimous vote.

Discussion of AV and Security for New Building: Danielle advised the Board that there is a law progressing through the Legislature at this time which, if it gets passed, will be adding language to the Open Meeting Law that will require all boards and committees of every town to offer hybrid meetings. In case it does pass, the Town will need to find ways to provide that capability. Some options were offered, but there is no money presently budgeted in the Town's annual budget or the Building Construction Budget.

Danielle said she has already contacted the current security systems used at Town Hall to discuss additional systems for the new building including a possible "panic button."

Summer Meeting Schedule: Continuing with the second and fourth Wednesday of the month, the next meetings will be: July 27th; August 10th; August 24th; September 14th; September 28th. Danielle reminded the selectmen that the July 27th meeting will have to have at least a quorum in order to approve the information for the award of the Bond.

Public Comment: Holly was referring to getting rid of Bittersweet and called it an invasive species, which she said was killing the trees. She said the Town can't get to them because there are dead trees that have been pushed along the roadsides and wants it all cleaned up.

Selectmen's Matters: Roger reported that Balderdash has some topsoil that needs to be screened to remove rocks and then used at the new building construction site. The cheaper way to accomplish that is to haul the topsoil to the screening place and then haul it back to the dig site.

There being no further business before the Board, Roger moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 PM. He was seconded by Neal and the motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

Signed:

Roger Manzolini, Chair