

BOARD OF SELECTMEN / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Wednesday April 12, 2023 – 6:00 PM – Hybrid

PRESENT: Roger Manzolini, Chair; Al Hanson, Selectman; Neal Pilson, Selectman (via Zoom); Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator; Angela Garrity, Town Clerk/Accountant; Jay Phelps; Lauren Broussal.

Approval of Minutes: Deferred

Discussion of Potential Change in Work Schedule: Angela explained how she arrived at the idea to propose that the work hours of three of the Town employees be reorganized. The change would involve opening Monday thru Thursday a half hour early, at 8:00 AM and closing late on Wednesdays at 6:00 PM instead of 4:00 and closed on Fridays. The justification for this change was that Friday hours are very slow – very few people come to do business at the town hall and that closing every weekday at 4:00 poses a problem for people who work all week. The new schedule would be as follows:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, - Open 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Wednesday – Open 8:00 Am – 6:00 PM

Friday, – Closed

.After discussion, Neal moved to accept the potential work schedule change with a provision to revisit the issue in September. He was seconded by Al and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Discussion and Vote on Warrant and Explanations: The discussion began with the decision of what to review, taking into consideration the meeting with the Budget Advisory Committee that took place just prior to this meeting. It was decided to review only the Non-monetary Articles recommended for approval by the BAC:

Article 19 – Amend the Town’s General Bylaws to move the Annual Election Day to the day after the Town Meeting instead of three days after which always falls on a Saturday. The intent is to increase the number of people available to vote since it is a weekday. This change, if approved, would take effect next year.

Article 20 – Authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire Church Lane. Roger read out the entire text of the warrant item (see attached). This is the layout as described in the easement agreement with the church that was approved at last town meeting to settle the title to Town hall for potential sale.

Article 21 – Authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the legislature to provide legislation that would allow Steve Traver to continue to be employed as the Richmond Fire Chief until June 30, 2025. (See attached)

Article 22 – Initiate the process to aggregate electrical loads to enable Richmond to become part of the Municipal Aggregate Program as most surrounding towns have. This will allow favorable electric power rates for the townspeople. (See attached)

Article 23 – Citizen’s Petition to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire Perry’s Peak Road as a public way. (See attached)

Neal clarified some language in the Petition: He pointed out that the text reads, “to authorize the Selectboard...” “...on such terms and conditions as the selectboard may determine.” He wanted to be clear with the residents that this authorizes but does not require the Board to take the roadway by whatever means it feels are appropriate.

Roger moved that Articles 19, 20,21, 22 and 23 be included in the Town Warrant. Neal seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous consent.

TOWN CENTER DISCUSSION:

- 1. Invoices.** There was a monthly invoice in the amount of \$306,075.33 from the contractor, which was recommended for approval by the Building Cte. and signed by the Architect, Contractor and OPM

Roger moved to approve payment of the invoice. Neal seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

There were no change orders to deal with and Roger reported that in his frequent site visits he finds the work going smoothly and according to schedule.

Danielle noted that there will be a meeting tomorrow to discuss security cameras and possibly A.V. equipment. Danielle has reached out to National Grid regarding the status of the required Easement. Roger noted that the solar design is nearly complete, and the paperwork required to go out to bid is coming along.

Public Comment: Jay Phelps brought his concerns to the Board about information he had requested from the town under the Freedom of Information Act, that he had not received.

There was a discussion of what information he had been seeking and the process used that resulted in an agreement that in future Jay will communicate directly with the Town Clerk for such requests and that he will create a list of former requests and send it to Angela, Danielle, and Roger.

Roger then continued the discussion with Jay about the testing of town water hydrants. Neal noted that the Board would need some time to look into the claims Jay made and Roger asked that the status of Jay’s requests be placed on the next agenda.

Town Administrator Updates: Danielle reported that the last MVP Public Forum had a good turnout between Richmond and West Stockbridge. Comments and concerns heard at that time will be considered in moving forward with a plan on how to mitigate storm water issues.

Danielle reminded the Board that the Town Meeting will take place on Wednesday May 17th at 7:30 at the School and that elections will be held on Saturday, May 20th from 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Danielle asked if the Baby Town Meeting was required to be held on a Saturday. She explained that the meeting in the past has not had much of a turnout on a Saturday morning, after the Board discussion, it was decided that the Baby Town Meeting will be held on Monday May 1, 2023

Roger asked Danielle about the status of the Annual Town Report. Danielle said the proofs had just been delivered to her from the printer today and she will be disseminating them to the directors who wrote them for proofing.

Selectmen's Matters: Neal reported having been informed that a tentative date for mediation in the Perry's Peak Road matter has been set for Wednesday April 26, 2023 (since moved to May 9th). Danielle will confirm.

Roger brought up for discussion the matter of Richmond not having its own police force but being dependent on the State Police. He recalled that when the town had constables that had authority, they would provide a report on the activity that occurred in town within the past year. He wondered if Richmond should request a similar report from the State Police so that the Board would have a clearer idea of what happens in town all year. The members of the Board saw no objection to making that request of the State Police and felt it would be helpful to have a clear picture of the year's activities.

There was also a suggestion to return to the old format for the Annual Town Report that included more detailed information from the school, the town Police and the Emergency Management Director. Jay suggested including a list of the town's firefighters.

There being no further business before the Board, Roger moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM. The motion was seconded and carried by unanimous vote.

Signed:

Roger Manzolini, Chair