

Board of Selectmen's / Sewer Commissioners Virtual Meeting

Wednesday April 22, 2020 – 6:090 PM – via Zoom

PRESENT: Roger Manzolini, Chair; Neal Pilson, Selectman; Alan Hanson, Selectman; Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator; Angela Garrity, Town Accountant/Town Clerk

Guest: Ron Veillette, Rick Bell

Roger opened the meeting shortly after 6:00 PM with a reading of the Governor's Executive Order stating the changes for the Open Meeting Law during the COVID-19 virus emergency.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the February 12, 2020, February 19, 2020, March 11, 2020, March 20, 2020, March 25, 2020 and April 3, 2020 were all approved as amended via motions seconded and adopted by unanimous consent.

Update on Town Functions: Danielle reported that all town hall employees were working from home this week while plumbing repairs were completed in the building. The Highway Department is at full staff and doing roadwork. Townspeople have mostly been understanding as to the need for Town Hall to be closed and staff, all of whom are working from home, are coping extremely well.

Special Permit and Advertising Fees: After discussion of the need to have permit applicants cover the costs of legal advertising and required mailings, Roger moved that the Board authorize that the fee structures of all permits be amended to reflect the actual costs to the town. Neal seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous vote. Danielle will advise the other Town Boards and Committees to look at the fees for their permits and amend as needed.

Driveway Permit – West Road: All paperwork and plans for the project were submitted appropriately and received the approval of Peter Beckwith, Highway Superintendent and Shep Evans, Agent for the Conservation Commission. Roger moved that the Board approve the permit as conditioned by Peter Beckwith and Shep Evans. Neal seconded the motion, which was carried by unanimous vote.

Town Elections: In order to have the Town Meeting on June 17th and the Elections on June 20th, the Town Caucus must be held no later than May 13th. A discussion of how to hold the elections in accordance with the emergency laws, resulted in the decision that the Caucus would be moved to Saturday, May 9th at 11:00 AM and held at the school parking lot. All attendees would be required to remain in their cars, thus complying with current social distancing rules. Neal made that motion, which Roger seconded. The motion was adopted by unanimous vote.

Ownership of Town Hall Building: A long-standing question of the ownership of the Town Hall building and the land on which it stands has been moved forward by research done by Rick Bell from material gathered by Gloria Morse. A timeline of ownerships and sales records is appended here that seems to show clear ownership of the building and grounds by the Town. However, in the event that a decision is made in the future to attempt to sell the building, Danielle will ask the Town Council to if it is necessary to begin proceedings to obtain a clear deed and title. Danielle will also advise Dick Stover of the Richmond Congregational Church of these proceedings.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant: Danielle advised the Board of the three proposed bylaw changes that will be included in the Warrant:

1. Treasurer/Collector will be under the direction of the Town Administrator and not the Board of Selectmen as currently written.
2. The Tax Collector will have the authority to ask the Assessors for a list of delinquent taxes from time to time at his discretion , rather than just once a year as it currently is written.
3. Non-Criminal Processes. Danielle is working on updating a 1991 bylaw proposal that was voted down and is including designation of an Enforcement Officer for each type of summons. It was discussed whether to approach the State Police to take on that role for the Town.

Recycling and Trash Pick Up: Roger asked that the inconsistent message on the website as to whether to sort recyclables or not be removed. Danielle will attend to it.

Sewer Operation and Maintenance Fee: Angela reported that the calculation of this year's fee was arrived at by dividing the total 2020 budget of \$53,660.00 by the 134 users, which equals \$400.45 per user. Because of an error in the calculation for the 2019 fee that created a false decrease in the amount owed by each taxpayer, there will be an increase from the 2019 bill of \$80.78. The tax bill mailing will include an explanation of the error that caused this increase.

Sewer Matters: No sewer issues, but there is a need for an additional trash barrel at the Boat Ramp. Danielle will ask Pete B. to take care of it.

Selectmen's Matters: Al reported that there is a collection of unregistered cars on lower Dublin Rd. between Summit and Sleepy Hollow. The Zoning Enforcement Officer will be asked to deal with that, although the Fire Department may also have an issue.

A discussion of how the town can help with the efforts to see that everyone who needs food is being attended to. Danielle noted that she has been approached by a number of volunteers, all working independently. Danielle wants to see a uniform game plan put in place and is planning to arrange a Zoom virtual meeting to work towards creating a common goal. In response to concern that the lunch program at the school may be running out of money to buy food it was

noted that the school is receiving reimbursement from the State to fulfill its requirement to provide free lunches.

Neal raised the issue of the Berkshire Hills School District proposal to Richmond School. He will be meeting with the Berkshire Hills School Committee, the Richmond School Committee and the Advisory Committee to discuss the options. A consultant is being retained to be sure everyone understands the discussion points on this possible merger. In the meantime, Berkshire Hills District has assured Richmond that Peter Dillon will continue to provide School Superintendent support to Richmond Consolidated through June, 2021 but not to Hancock and New Ashford.

Roger asked that all minutes be brought up to date and posted on the website as several are currently missing. Danielle said that she expects the Budget Advisory Committee to approve all their outstanding minutes at their next meeting.

In response to a question from the Board, Danielle advised that the Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant has been received and is being worked on.

A second incidence of collected junk has been noted at the turn at Lower West Road. Danielle will ask Paul Greene, the Building Inspector, to look at both sites.

A discussion of the unreasonable amount of traffic and parked cars at Hollow Field on Perry's Peak Road raised discussion of some possible alternative access points to Hollow Field and the decision to work with the BNRC to limit parking to 20 cars. Roger will collect some photographs of the problem for a meeting with the BNRC so that they can see the problem.

Sign Warrants: Put off until the next meeting.

Future Meeting Dates: May 6, 2020 and May 20, 2020 (1st and 3rd Wednesdays) There were no objections from the Board members. Both meetings will take place at 6:00 PM, through Zoom.

There being no further business before the Board, a motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous approval.

Signed:

Roger Manzolini, Chair

Timeline – Richmond Town Hall Building/Land History

(1) 1795 (Annual Town Meeting)

- Three men were appointed by the Town of Richmond at the annual town meeting in 1795 to represent the Town of Richmond in the purchase the following properties/land: the Richmond Meeting House (near the location of the current Town Hall) and the Congregational Church of Richmond MA from the property owner, Zachariah Piersons.

(2) 03/25/1796

- Deed: The property (land and structure) for the Richmond Meeting House and the Congregational Church of Richmond MA was sold by Zachariah Piersons (free of all encumbrances) to the three men appointed by the Town Of Richmond at the annual town meeting in 1795.
- The street name at the time was Mill Lane (vs the current Church Lane).
- Reference: Registry of Deeds (Berkshire Middle District) – Book 36, Pages 37 and 38 (hand written), recorded 04/06/1976

(3) 1824

- Separation of Church and State enforced by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

(4) 03/19/1900

- Quit Claim Deed: The Town of Richmond sold the Congregational Church of Richmond MA, and the land its sits on, to the Congregational Church of Richmond MA for \$1.
- Reference: Registry of Deeds (Berkshire Middle District) – Book 303, Page 314

(5) 1842

- In 1842, the Old Town Hall was built “a little south” of the Richmond Meeting House, which was destroyed by fire.
- The Old Town hall was used from 1842 through 1922, when it was considered too small for town use.
- Reference: RIC.62 (<http://mhc-macris.net/Details.aspx?MhcId=RIC.62>)

(6) 1923

- The Old Town Hall building was sold to Richard Malumphy and then relocated as a dwelling on Church Lane, Richmond MA.
- The current Town Hall building constructed on same location as Old Town Hall on Church Lane.
- Reference: same as above.

(7) 11/12/1969

- The boundary lines of land for the Church property and the current Town Hall property are shown in the documentation for the proposed addition to the Church before the Church fire.
- Reference: Registry of Deeds (Berkshire Middle District) – Book 414-D, Page 174

Source of Information: Gloria Morse (Richmond Historical Commission) on 04/21/2020, telephone conversation, based on her research.