

BOARD OF SELECTMEN/SEWER MEETING

Wednesday March 11, 2020 – 6:00 PM – Richmond Town Hall, 1529 State Road

PRESENT; Roger Manzoloni, Chair; Neal Pilson, Selectman; Alan Hanson, Selectman; Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator

ABSENT:

GUEST: Steve Traver, Richmond Fire Chief, Emilie Jarrett, R.N.; Louise Maron, Ph.D., Board of Health; Clarence Fanto, Berkshire Eagle; Peter Beckwith, Richmond Highway Dept. Super.; Peter Cohen, Chair Board of Health; Andy Fisher, Board of Health

There was a discussion between Chief Traver and Roger that included a decision to have the Board hold a special meeting to explore Chief Traver's interim position as Fire Chief of West Stockbridge.

Villages of the Berkshires: The meeting with the Villages having been cancelled, Roger thought it prudent to have the Board of Health meet with the Selectmen to advise them of what should be done to ensure the health and safety of the residents of Richmond.

Emilie Jarrett introduced herself to the Board and reported that the Board of Health had met with the Richmond School on Monday to determine what safety measures they have put in place. She noted that they are being proactive and the school nurse has put together a COVID-19 Plan that includes specifying the kinds of cleaning solutions to be used and the requirements around handwashing. Emilie distributed copies of the Plan to the Board.

Emilie remarked that the school is impeccably clean and there are cleaning stations throughout the school.

Emilie suggested creating a call list to include the School Superintendent, the Principal and the School Nurse, as well as the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Health and herself, the Berkshire County Board of Health and Chief Traver.

On the subject of school closings, the DPH wants schools to work with them in the event of an episode that the school believes would warrant closing. The School Superintendent is in touch with Mark Maloney of Emergency Management for Region 1 of the Mass. DPH. Emilie noted that the immediate concern is whether school trips should go forward or be cancelled. Neal noted that in high schools in the Northeast, just about every school trip has been cancelled and the colleges have sent their students home during a time that is normally a spring break time. Final decisions will be made after that period.

Roger said it looks like the school is in good shape and has a good plan in place. He is concerned about the rest of the community and whether information about the virus and how to keep safe is getting to everyone. Emilie outlined the steps that have already been taken to get that information to Richmond residents: She provided a direct link to the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health website to Phyllis LeBeau for inclusion in the e-newsletter, which was done. She also asked that it be placed on the Town's website. Berkshire Medical Center also has an information website. Roger asked how that information could be distributed to those people not receiving *the Berkshire Eagle* or who do not use computers for email or website visits. There was a discussion of several options to make that information universally available. It was decided to have copies at sites around town.

There was discussion on what would be a point in which the Town should be forced to cancel meetings. It was decided that whatever actions the Town undertakes are reasonable and rational and that they are under the guidance of the Richmond Board of Health. He asked that the Richmond Board of Health communicate with Danielle as Town Administrator, to the School and with the Council on Aging and keep the Selectmen apprised of any actions they recommend.

There was a concern voiced from the floor about the upcoming Town Caucus. There was a discussion of what constitutes a "crowd" and the directive to maintain 6 feet between people, especially for the highest-risk population. Emilie pointed out that such important meetings could be conducted through remote viewing programs.

Neal noted for the record that the discussion of the COVID-19 outbreak was a topic not reasonably anticipated by the Chair within 48 hours of the meeting and is, therefore, not included on the agenda.

Peter Beckwith, Highway Superintendent - Updates: The Dublin Road Culvert Project. One of the engineers has advised Pete that they are at 25% design for it, that the preliminary estimate might not be accurate and that there might be a need for an upgrade, which he asked that the Town authorize without providing any numbers. Peter said he would not authorize anything without a cost analysis and more accurate numbers. He is waiting to hear back from them.

Road Closing Signs were posted on all gravel roads for one week, including one that restricted truck traffic. There seems to be evidence of that being effective in preventing damage to the roads such as was seen in January. When the signs were taken down, they were left at the side of the road in case a localized incident required putting them back up.

Peter spoke to a representative of Hollow Fields and obtained his contact information in case that road needs to be closed down in the future. He also advised that gentleman that instead of allowing parking up there, cars could park at the other side of the trail head by Summit Road, and at the cemetery. Hollow Fields will do the best they can in case the road needs to be closed again and they will divert parking as advised.

About road closing in general, Roger has requested that a list be created of the oil companies that service this area. Such a list is being created. Roger has spoken to some of the vendors about notifying them of road closings. They were very receptive to having that information and dealing with their customers about possibly rescheduling deliveries.

Notification of road closings should also be provided to UPS, FEDEX and the other major delivery services so that they can avoid having their trucks stuck in the mud for an entire day or more.

Peter has been working with Danielle on a Road Capital Plan and they have developed a list of projects they are hoping to accomplish this year and possibly in FY21. Danielle noted that two of the bigger problems needing to be addressed right now are Rossiter Road and Perry's Peak Road that need the same kind of improvement that was done so successfully on West Road. Pete noted that the plan is to correct the roads at the two ends and eventually work towards the middle, thereby creating a viable exit at both ends of the road. Funds for this work will be coming out of Road Construction or State Aid accounts.

Renew Contract for Assessing Software: Roger moved that the Board authorize the Town Administrator to sign insurance renewal contracts for the Board. The motion was seconded and adopted by unanimous consent.

Authorization of TA to sign insurance contracts: Roger made a motion to have Danielle Sign all routine insurance renewals for the Town and to let the Board know when those have been signed. Neal Seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Discussion of Treasurer Temporary Status: Roger responded that he supports Danielle's recommendation to seek a treasurer to work at least three days a week if the update from Paul on the 23rd is not a positive one. There was no dissent from the other Board members.

Report on the School Committee and Discussions with the Berkshire Hills Regional School District: Neal reported on those discussions and the future status of Richmond's Consolidated School. Berkshire Hills has advised the School Committee that they would no longer provide the Superintendent services of Peter Dillon beyond this June unless our Board agrees to these discussions. If the Board agrees, they will provide Superintendent services for one more year, but not to the Shaker Mountain Union Partners, Hancock and New Ashford.

Berkshire Hills wants to present Richmond with two options: a merger of our district into Berkshire Hills for all grades and classes or a merger of our district for the high school grades only. Neal expressed his reservation with both options and noted that no financial information has been received from Berkshire Hills, which makes it difficult to assess the financial impact of either option on Richmond, on the tax base or on our high school students who under this arrangement would be required to attend Monument Mt. High School, rather than having the option of the tuition agreements the Town currently enjoys with Lenox, Pittsfield and Berkshire Hills.

Neal stated that this report was given to the Board as an FYI. The decisions on the issue are within the purview of the School Committee. Any change in status would have an impact on the Town and on the tax base and would, therefore, have to be voted on by the Town and by the other towns within the Berkshire Hills School District including Stockbridge and West Stockbridge.

Neal emphasized strongly that those decisions are within the jurisdiction of the School Committee and an eventual vote by the Richmond Town residents.

Sewer Matters: There were no issues to bring before the Board.

Town Administrator Report: (see attached) Danielle reported that the Municipal Building Cte. will begin to discuss project costs at their next meeting and schedule presentations for the Town on exactly what the project will entail.

The 698 telephone numbers for Town Hall are still operative. They are costing about \$200 per month and Danielle would like to turn them off as the new numbers have been posted for quite a long time. If the 698 numbers are turned off and someone calls on that line, they will hear a message to the effect that this number is no longer in service and to use the new number, which will be provided. That notice will be in place for a few weeks.

Danielle reported that the DEP now requires all municipalities to undergo third-party inspections of landfills. Their inspection noted a much larger area of landfill than the Town has any record of that has not been capped. Pete and Danielle have had a discussion with the DEP in which they were advised that the extra section of the landfill was brought to the Town's attention in 2008.

Roger noted that at the time that the State required that the Town cap the landfill they provided the information as to what needed to be capped, where and how. Danielle said that now the State is saying that the access part needs to be capped. Peter noted that the Town has been given a grace period to get the work done, but it is now part of our third-party inspection report that the Town is not in compliance with DEP. Pete expressed his belief that the State will be willing to work with the Town and he and Danielle will work together to create a plan to be worked on over time.

Danielle reported that one phase of the work, to clean up the old concrete culverts, has begun on the upper level of the landfill. The inspector returned and said the State wanted the Town to do some test-pits, which required that an area be cleared in order to get to the spot they wanted tested with an excavator. This was done yesterday, and Danielle and Peter are waiting for the State to return and advise how they want the Town to proceed at this point. In the meantime, they are requiring that all existing trees be cut down and the area planted in grass which can be maintained.

In response to a question from Neal about the State's ability to compel the Town to comply, Danielle noted that the DEP can begin fining the Town. Peter noted that he and Danielle doubt

that the DEP wants to get to that point, given the conversation they had with the Manager of the area who has dealt with Richmond previously and has been satisfied with the way things were. However, now that the inspection report has been turned in and is going up the chain of command, there is a potential problem. At a meeting with the DEP on March 23rd, the issue of a timeframe for compliance will be discussed. The State has already indicated that it would be satisfied with the Town completing portions of the work over time so that the cost will not be prohibitive.

Town Meeting Warrant: Danielle reported that she is working on the draft of the warrant for the Town Meeting and she will provide that for review at the next meeting. There are three proposed bylaw changes that will be included.

Roger asked for the deadline for the Town's Annual Report from the Selectmen, which was the previous day. Danielle said if Roger could get it to her by next week, it would be on time.

Danielle reported that she has not received any photos for the cover the Annual Report so she will be extending the deadline to see if anything comes in that they can review at the next meeting. If not, there are pictures from last year's contest that can produce a good choice.

Important Upcoming Dates: March 23 – the Town Caucus; May 2 – Baby Town Meeting; May 20 – Annual Town Meeting.

Danielle wanted to take vacation time the week of April 20th but there is a Selectmen's meeting scheduled for April 22nd. Roger said they could reschedule their meeting to accommodate Danielle's time off.

Peter Cohen asked what he would need to do to arrange for a mailing to the entire Town so that he could disseminate information on the COVID-19 virus from the Board of Health. Roger advised him that it would cost approximately \$1,500., which could come out of the BOH budget very appropriately.

Next Meeting Dates: March 25, 2020 and April 8, 2020. There were no conflicts and the dates were approved.

There being no further business before the Board, there was a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and adopted by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM

Signed:

Roger Manzolini, Chair