

**APPROVED**

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

**Wednesday September 12, 2018 – 6:00 PM – Richmond Town Hall – 1529 State Road**

**PRESENT:** Mr. Neal Pilson, Chair; Mr. Roger Manzolini; Mr. Alan Hanson; Mr. Mark Pruhenski, Town Administrator

**ABSENT:**

**GUEST:** Ms. Laura Brennan, BRPC; Mr. Peter Beckwith, Highway Superintendent; Ms. Hayley Sumner, Berkshire Horse Works; Ms. Patty Spector, Josh Billings Runaground, Mr. Tom Grizey

Mr. Pilson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Pilson opened the proceedings with item #2 in respect of Ms. Laura Brennan's time. Ms. Brennan serves as Richmond's Marketing Director and provided an update for the Board. Ms. Brennan distributed packets to the Board, the cover sheet of which was a summary of the projects worked on since 2017 – at an average of 2-1/2 hours per week.

The new Richmond Website was largely constructed by the time Ms. Brennan came on board. She has been working with the website, spending some time making updates to it, correcting some issues that were found and finding ways to make it more user-friendly and efficient. The intent is to make the website as accessible to residents, new residents and visitors as possible and Ms. Brennan outlined some of the ways she has attempted to accomplish that end.

During August of this year, a User Survey was conducted, and some of the raw data from that survey was included in the packets. By and large the response to the website, according to the survey, was overwhelmingly positive. Users reported being pleased with the new structure and finding it easy to use and informative. There is a high level of trust in the information being presented. Seventy-Nine percent of the users responded that the website meets their needs either extremely well or very well, which is an excellent start. Further review of the comments received from the survey will help to make future improvements as any website is an ongoing effort. That will continue to be a major part of the work Ms. Brennan will be doing for Richmond.

The website is a launching point of inspiration for other projects, including the e-newsletter. Ms. Brennan provided a sample of the version of the e-newsletter that launched in July, which is in alignment with the look and feel of the new website. The new e-newsletter was reconstructed and made about 50% shorter, which has helped readability. Reporting on the number of people who are opening it and how many of those are clicking on something within

the newsletter to get to the website, Ms. Brennan noted that the click-through rate has gone up by 16%. Mr. Pilson noted that there are 700 subscribers to the e-newsletter and Ms. Brennan added that she had been surprised at the outset to find that the majority of those subscribers are residents and more than half of them open the newsletter on a regular basis, which for a government organ is a very high rate.

Mr. Manzolini asked if Ms. Brennan was aware of the contest available for municipal websites. Mr. Pruhenski advised Ms. Brennan that the Town plans to submit its website to that contest either this year or next. Ms. Brennan agreed that the website is an excellent candidate for that kind of event. Mr. Pruhenski will work with Ms. Brennan on making arrangements to enter the website in the competition.

In addition to the website and the e-newsletter, which now appear to be paired in terms of the color scheme and design elements, there are a few other projects in the works. Ms. Brennan went on to describe a tri-fold brochure that had been redone about a year ago. An inventory of about 1,200 of them remain in storage. Ms. Brennan contacted Berkshire Brochure Display, the company that distributes advertising literature to hotels, restaurants, theatres, etc. to arrange for those brochures to be distributed. The good news is that Berkshire Brochure Display advised Richmond that they had run out of brochures, which indicates an interest in Richmond. The timing of that distribution was designed to reach people who potentially might become second home-owners or who already were.

A small portion of the remaining brochures was held aside for a final project, which Ms. Brennan described as a direct-mail campaign aimed at realtors and corporate recruiters throughout all of Berkshire County. It was sent to 150 realtors and 25 corporate recruiters who are talking to people about moving here. The packets contained a copy of the Richmond brochure, an information sheet on the Richmond Consolidated School that contained contact information for Parent Ambassadors, a very powerful addition for people who are considering moving to the Berkshires and overwhelmed with information on various school districts. Being able to provide direct contact information for parents with children at the Richmond Consolidated School was a great opportunity. The information included also made the recipients aware of some shifts that have occurred in School Choice availability as more of the slots are being taken by residents of the Town. Inside the larger packet, a smaller packet was included that held a USB Thumb Drive with digital copies of a welcome letter from Mr. Pruhenski, the school paper, the Richmond brochure and the video of Richmond. The theme was "Unlocking Richmond" and the packet was "Your Key to a Better Place in the Berkshires." That Thumb Drive is now in the hands of nearly 200 people who are selling the Berkshires all the time.

Mr. Pilson noted that several brokers have remarked that this packet is a very effective marketing tool that will help to get young families to move here. Ms. Brennan said that the mailing was followed with an invitation via email to join our e-newsletter distribution list. The

Open Rate of that email was excellent and resulted in between 10 and 20 new people signing up to receive the e-newsletter, which reinforces the message about Richmond.

Moving on to Next Steps, Ms. Brennan spoke about plans for the remainder of fiscal year 2019. The intent is to augment the direct marketing efforts that are underway with public relations. Ms. Brennan and Mr. Pruhenski had discussed some opportunities that will be coming up in the future, such as hosting the Josh Billings Runaground, which provided a great deal of free press on how Richmond stepped up and rescued an important community event and provided an illustration of the way the community pulls together to help a neighbor in need. There will be follow up with some human-interest stories arising out of that event, and opportunities for stories in relation to the development of the new Richmond Library. It is hoped that the local media will do profiles of some Richmond residents, both multiple-generation residents and newcomers.

Work will continue on the website, including some technical changes that will bring the Richmond website up higher in the list of search results and further refinements to the e-newsletter that will further increase the engagement level for that publication.

Mr. Manzolini asked if Ms. Brennan had a plan to address some questions that had come up from the website survey. Ms. Brennan responded that several of the issues that were raised during the survey have already been addressed and those issues will continue to be addressed. Mr. Manzolini noted that his concern is that the website not contain any items of personal interest and that information placed in one page of the website need not be repeated in other pages. Ms. Brennan agreed that the website must be maintained as a municipal site and should be reserved for municipal business. The e-newsletter is the place to post items of interest and events coming up. That will eventually be included in a Policy Statement.

Ms. Brennan addressed Mr. Manzolini's second concern by advising him that in the migration of content from the old website to the new one, there were places where information was duplicated that did not need to be. Information placed in one page of a website can be linked to several other places, which means there is only one place that needs correction if an error is found. That issue had already been noted and has been worked on since the beginning. In fact, certain documents that are in the library of documents, are being linked to from pertinent pages, rather than repeating them on those pages.

Mr. Pilson thanked Ms. Brennan for what he noted was an extraordinary job in bringing his vision of marketing Richmond to fruition.

**Josh Billings Runaground – Request for Events in Richmond on 9-16-18:** Ms. Patty Spector, representative for the Josh Billings Runaground, presented a special event permit application to the Board and the hand-out for participants that contains specific information for each contestant about the race and about Richmond. Those packets will be distributed on Saturday, the day before the race.

Mr. Peter Beckwith, Highway Superintendent asked Ms. Spector to please warn the bicyclists about the intersection turning onto Summit Road that is narrow and curved on both sides and that there's an island and a telephone pole there. Ms. Spector responded that there has been a video on the website and on the FaceBook page of the bike ride, including that turn. Mr. Pilson noted that Summit Road will be closed both ways (at State Road and at Swamp Road) five minutes before the bikers arrive. There was further discussion of the bike route and what plans were in place to maintain the safety of the contestants and vehicular traffic at all points along the route. Mr. Beckwith added that he has created several warning signs to indicate which roads will be closed and when, that will be posted tomorrow to provide an early warning to motorists. Mr. Pruhenski advised that the same kind of information has been posted on the FaceBook page and on the website, with the detailed sheet received from Ms. Spector and a notice is included in the e-newsletter.

Mr. Pilson offered suggestions about parking. He noted that the key problem will be Swamp Road between Summit and Boys Club Road. Cars should not be allowed to park on that road. Therefore, for that short stretch on Swamp, there should be No Parking signs. Mr. Pilson thought that people might be allowed to park on Osceola or Yokun, both of which are relatively low traffic roads. Bartlett's can arrange their front and back parking lots as they see fit. Mr. Beckwith offered the opinion that parking on Osceola is not a good idea as there is a ditch on either side of the road, which is narrow to begin with. Mr. Pilson clarified that he was not suggesting announcing that parking would be allowed on Osceola and Yokun, only that there would not be any No Parking signs on those roads. Mr. Hanson had a question about whether East Road should be reduced to a one-way street. Mr. Pilson responded that East Road will not be regulated as there will not be bikers on that road, only runners, who tend to spread out much more than bikers do. There was a discussion of how best to deal with East Road.

Mr. Manzolini moved to approve the special permit application. The motion was seconded and carried by unanimous approval.

**Lenox Road/Lenox Branch Road Intersection Discussion:** Mr. Peter Beckwith, Highway Superintendent provided an update for the Board. He had the engineer come out, as discussed at the previous meeting, and obtained a proposal from him to do a study of the two intersections in question. Mr. Beckwith was in favor of the proposal, which he requested the Board sign. He also noted that he is able to cover the cost of that fee from his department budget. Mr. Manzolini moved to approve the proposal, which was seconded by Mr. Hanson and adopted by unanimous vote. Mr. Pilson signed the proposal.

**Solar Speed Signs in Richmond Consolidated School Zone – Update:** Mr. Pilson noted that he had attended a School Committee meeting last night at which a number of people commented on having noticed a reduction in the speed of cars going past the school when the signs are flashing. It was noted that the signs are now correctly yellow, rather than white, thanks to Mr. Beckwith.

**Town Barn Discussion Continued:** Mr. Beckwith reminded the Board that they were scheduled to discuss the various options for dealing with the structure outlined at the last meeting and decide at this meeting how to proceed. Mr. Pilson requested a summary of those options from Mr. Pruhenski who outlined them as follows: 1. Replacement of the existing wooden structure with a metal sided building similar to the one erected across the street years back. 2. Mr. Ted Andrews addressed the Board several times, requesting that the wooden building be restored. The Board met with Mr. Jack Sobin, a pole barn construction expert, at the site and received an estimate from him of the cost to provide construction drawings in the \$3,000 to \$4,000 range including \$100 per hour travel time expenses.

The Board will decide at this time whether there is any interest in pursuing the first third of that building or dismantle the first third of that building, demolish the remaining portion of the building and replace it with a metal-sided building.

Mr. Manzolini suggested that the Board compromise by removing the existing structure but, instead of replacing it with a metal-sided building, replace it with a barnboard sided building. In other words, a pole barn with board and batten siding. Mr. Pilson asked Mr. Beckwith if that would create a building that would provide the Highway Department with 100% utility. Mr. Beckwith responded that, if there are no changes to the dimensions of the original plans, simply changing from metal siding to wooden siding, the functionality should remain the same. Mr. Pilson said that, since the functionality of the building will not be impacted by a simple cosmetic change from metal siding to wooden siding, he was in favor of the compromise. Mr. Hanson was also in agreement with that compromise. There was a discussion of the monetary impact of moving to board and batten siding. Mr. Manzolini felt that the cost should be very close to the original estimate. Mr. Pruhenski asked for a vote from the Board to accept that change. Mr. Manzolini moved that the Board agree to replace the existing structure as originally planned, with the current footprint, but to replace the proposed metal siding with barnboard and batten siding. The motion was seconded by Mr. Alan Hanson and adopted by unanimous vote.

Mr. Pruhenski asked the Board for one more decision on this issue and that was whether, once the existing structure is demolished, do they wish to keep it or offer it to someone. Mr. Hanson felt the Town should attempt to sell the timber frame structure, which some people would see as a valuable item. Mr. Manzolini proposed that the barn as it stands be offered to anyone who wants to come in and remove it, they may do so at no charge. Offering it as surplus would allow the Town to get it dismantled free of charge. Mr. Pruhenski will arrange for that offer to be made public and will bring to the Board any responses he receives.

**East Road Update – Driveway and Culvert Issues:** Mr. Pilson asked Mr. Beckwith for an update on that situation as he was aware that Mr. Beckwith's crew had been at the site recently. Mr. Pilson said that he had noted that, because of the recent heavy rains, in front of #751, the water was not coming from the culvert, which was open. The water that was eroding the road was coming down the driveway, curling around the mailbox and digging a 4-foot canyon into East Road, which the Highway crew filled in. Mr. Beckwith added that the crew members felt

they could make an adjustment to the situation and, while they were filling in the road, made a minor adjustment to try to stop the water before it got to the road. Mr. Pilson said that he mentioned that because he is aware that four of the properties on East Road have received letters from the Town Administrator concerning needed repairs to their driveways and there appears to have been some work done. Mr. Beckwith acknowledged that some work has been done and in one case the contractor consulted with Mr. Beckwith as to what was needed and then proceeded to make those changes, but in several cases the driveway was simply returned to its previous state, which did not address the problem.

Mr. Pruhenski reported that each of the four residences on East Road received a new letter dated September 4<sup>th</sup>, containing a copy of the February 26<sup>th</sup> letter. Mr. Pruhenski read one sentence of the September 4<sup>th</sup> letter, "I noted that we have not received a response and it appears that the problem has not been addressed. Any further delay may require the Town to turn this matter over to our legal counsel since we consider this to be a serious safety issue." If there are no results from this letter as November approaches, Mr. Pruhenski will revisit the issue. He did note that some residents have begun work on the problem.

**Constable Policy:** The Policy was available for final approval and Mr. Pruhenski has submitted revised copies to the Board and to Chief Bullett for circulation to the Constables. Mr. Pruhenski pointed out some of the changes that arose from the last meeting: The revised version was once again reviewed by the Town Attorney and she was provided the 1990 version of the Policy that Mr. Tom Grizey brought to the Board for review. The attorney made a few edits to the version now before the Board including the provision (found in the 1990 version) that Constables may not carry firearms during the performance of their duties. The voting clause, No. 6 was added. That bullet read, "as may be directed by the Chief of Police under GL Chapter 54 Section 72, where in the case of early voting, Constables may serve at elections to preserve order, protect the election officers' supervisors from interference with their duties and to aid in enforcing the laws relating to elections." Mr. Pruhenski noted that it was his belief that the gap in the issue of serving at elections was the greatest area of concern expressed at the last meeting.

Mr. Pilson asked Mr. Hanson and Mr. Manzolini if they were comfortable with the way the Policy now read. Mr. Manzolini said he was comfortable with it if the Chief was. Chief Bullett said that he was comfortable with the policy as it stands at this time but offered the possibility that other issues may arise in time. With the Chief's approval, Mr. Pilson accepted Mr. Manzolini's motion to approve the Policy, Mr. Hanson has seconded the motion and it was passed by unanimous consent. The Policy was signed as required.

**Town/Non-Profit Collaboration Request – Berkshire Horse Works:** In Ms. Hayley Summer's absence, Mr. Pruhenski suggested that this item not be dealt with.

**One-Day Wine and Malt Application for Balderdash Cellars:** Mr. Pruhenski advised the Board that he had let Balderdash Cellars know that they had gone through all 30 of their allotted

permits for this year. In addition, at the August 26th meeting, the Board was presented with the Annual Application from Balderdash. ABCC statutes say that once an Annual Permit Application is submitted and stamped in by the local licensing authority, the organization can no longer use or apply for any additional one-day permits. Balderdash has withdrawn their six applications and, in a conversation with the owner, Mr. Pruhenski was satisfied that he understands the process. On September 26<sup>th</sup>, the Board will hold a Public Hearing, which has already been advertised in *The Berkshire Eagle*. Assuming the Board's approval of the license, it will go to the State and, within three to four weeks, they will have their Annual License. After that, renewal of the license will occur once a year.

**Appointment Requests - Finance Committee:** Mr. Pruhenski presented two applicants for the one vacant seat on the Finance Committee. Mr. Fred Schubert and Mr. Bob Youdelman have expressed an interest in that position. Mr. Manzolini moved that Mr. Bob Youdelman be appointed to the vacant seat on the Finance Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pilson and carried by unanimous approval.

**Town Administrator Contract:** This issue was deferred to an Executive Session to be scheduled prior to the next regular meeting.

**Special Town Meeting Timeline for October:** Mr. Pruhenski wished to confirm that the Board members had received those dates and that there were no conflicts. The dates were reviewed as follows: Monday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 PM – Budget Advisory Committee meeting to review financial articles on the draft warrant. Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM – regular Board of Selectmen's meeting, at which Mr. Pruhenski will submit the final warrant for the Town Meeting for the Board's signatures. Thursday, October 11<sup>th</sup> – the Warrant will be posted by Constables. Tuesday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM – Special Town Meeting at Town Hall.

Mr. Hanson advised the group that he will be unavailable for the October 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Mr. Pilson and Mr. Manzolini will both be able to be present. All other dates and times were confirmed by the Board.

**Mail / Sign Warrants:** Warrants were duly executed. Mr. Pruhenski distributed mail for the Board. One is a letter from Ms. Ruth Bass and the other a Municipal State Directory which, Mr. Pruhenski noted, will contain some out of date information due to its lengthy preparation time before publication.

**Sewer Matters:** Mr. Tom Grizey advised the Board that the pumping station at the boat ramp had been struck by lightning. The automatic dialer took a direct hit and is no longer working. Attempts were made to find a local business that could repair it but there was no one with the right skills. Mr. Grizey shipped the part out to the manufacturer in California who rebuilt it and shipped it back. The dialer is now back in service but needs to be completely reprogrammed. Most of that work has been accomplished at this point and the dialer is functioning better than it had as it now advises what problem the alarm is indicating. Mr. Pilson thanked Mr. Grizey on behalf of a grateful town for his swift and efficient action.

**Town Administrator Updates:** The School Solar Project – Work began on August 29<sup>th</sup> and is expected to be completed on October 26<sup>th</sup>. At that point permission to operate can be applied for, which generally takes about three to four weeks and it should be operational by mid-November.

The DPW position – There were twelve applications, which Mr. Peter Beckwith, the Highway Superintendent and Mr. Pruhenski reviewed together. They selected four out of the twelve for interviews scheduled for Friday morning with Mr. Roger Manzolini and Mr. Alan Hanson. An agenda was distributed to the Board and the applications, with the addresses redacted to preserve anonymity, were provided for their review. In addition, a set of ten questions was created by Mr. Beckwith and a spreadsheet with the names and certifications of the applicants, as well as a space for notes was distributed to the interviewers. In response to Mr. Manzolini's question as to the decision process in choosing four out of the twelve applicants, Mr. Pruhenski was able to advise him that many of them did not have a CDL license and, as we need an employee capable of driving the equipment, and the process to obtain a CDL license too costly and too time-consuming, those candidates were eliminated. Mr. Manzolini began a discussion with Mr. Beckwith about the specific expectations the person to be hired will be facing and what Mr. Beckwith's personal expectations of the new employee will be, including, most importantly, someone who is a team player.

There is some room in setting the salary as Mr. Navin, whose open position is being filled, had been one of the Town's highest paid DPW employees, earning over \$24.00 an hour. The strategy decided upon was to take the difference between Mr. Tyler Kern's pay rate and Mr. Navin's pay rate and bring Mr. Kern's rate up slightly and bring the new man in at a little higher rate so that the salary can be competitive with other towns. Mr. Pruhenski will provide a pay range for the purposes of the interviews and encouraged the interviewers to support the candidate chosen to give adequate notice to his current employer.

The School Playground Project – The job went out to bid this summer, but the Town did not receive any bids as August is the contractors' busiest time of year. A new IFQ was issued on September 6<sup>th</sup>, the bid package went on Com Buys, which is our procurement requirement for the State. It was posted on the website and at Town Hall and was sent directly to about sixteen local contractors. The completion date for this round is November 15<sup>th</sup> and, between including a larger number of contractors and having the date go into the late Fall early Winter, we should have a substantial response.

The School Window Tinting Project – Mr. Pruhenski reported that he had been working for a while on trying to get three bids for the job. A contractor was finally selected, and a contract signed for \$11,900. Last year the school encumbered \$13,900 to pay for this project so the funding is in good shape. Workers from Mr. Tint out of Springfield, who was the winning bidder, will arrive and begin work the week of December 24<sup>th</sup> to install a 4mil reflective safety-tinted covering on all the windows that are within 6-1/2 or 7 feet of grade so that even a tall person cannot see in from the outside. The double benefit of the project is safety and maintaining



those rooms 2 degrees cooler in summer and warmer in winter and has the added benefit of keeping the window glass from shattering in the event it is broken.

**Department Head Meeting** – Mr. Pruhenski reported on the department head meeting held that morning at which a number of issues were discussed, including Performance Evaluations. Self-evaluations have been submitted from each of the department heads and appointments have been scheduled for each of them to review the evaluations with Mr. Pruhenski. It is anticipated that those should be completed by mid-October. This round is considered a trial run and will not go in the personnel files. The idea is to give the employees an idea of what they will be rated and judged on. These meetings will give Mr. Pruhenski the opportunity to talk with each of the department heads and open a line of communication between them.

**Selectmen's Matters;** Mr. Pilson noted that the reason the Josh Billings Runaground will be held in Richmond this year is that toxic cyno-bacteria was found in the Stockbridge Bowl. Mr. Pilson expressed his concern that if toxic bacteria was in the Stockbridge Bowl this year, it could be in Richmond Pond next year. He has, therefore, asked the Richmond Board of Health to investigate the potential danger to Richmond Pond. This threat is not goose excrement, it is a neurotoxin that is very serious. The people around the Stockbridge Bowl are shocked at this event and property values have dropped significantly. Those values may recover if subsequent testing shows that the toxic bacteria has been eliminated, but there is the lingering concern that if it happened once, it can happen again. What Mr. Pilson would like to determine is whether Richmond Pond is significantly different from the Stockbridge Bowl in terms of water flow or inlets and creeks and wetlands and whether any of those factors might offer some protection. It was his expressed hope that the Board of Health would begin an examination process to determine what action, if any is available to the Town to protect the Richmond Pond. He is anticipating having the Board of Health do its research and report back to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Manzolini cited a newspaper article which indicated that the problem is man-made and the result of runoff from overbuilding, the use of pesticides and fertilizers on land surrounding the Bowl, the use of chemicals for weed control in the water, etc. Once the specific causes have been identified, it would be necessary to take whatever steps were required to eliminate the possibility of that kind of contamination occurring in the Richmond Pond. Mr. Manzolini suggested that the Richmond Pond Association should take an active role, along with the Board of Health, in conducting the search for those root causes. He also noted that the Stockbridge Bowl administration is undoubtedly conducting a study of their own, which Richmond should be aware of. Mr. Pilson advised that Mr. Ken Kelly, the President of the Richmond Pond Association has historically received all the information from the Stockbridge Bowl and follows it very closely.

**Chief William Bullett:** Chief Bullett addressed the Board with a question about his authority to close a road in Richmond on his own initiative. Mr. Manzolini responded that he believed the Chief has the authority to close any Richmond road at any time for any reason he deems appropriate to the public safety.

DOT Flagger Class – Mr. Beckwith reported that all the people who attended that class passed so there are now five certified flaggers in the Town of Richmond.

**Approval of Minutes:** As there were questions regarding the Minutes of August 20, 2018 (Executive Session) and August 22, 2018, the approval of those minutes was deferred to the next meeting.

Chief Steve Traver announced that the new fire truck will be delivered within the next few days. There was a discussion of inviting the public to see the new truck.

**Next Meeting Dates: September 26, 2018 and October 10, 2018**

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Alan Hanson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Pilson', written over a horizontal line.

Mr. Neal Pilson, Chair