

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN / SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

**January 3, 2018 – 6:00 PM – Richmond Town Hall, 1529 State Road**

**APPROVED**

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

**GUESTS:** Mr. Tom Grizey, Mr. Andreas Schmid/Solect Solar

**Approval of Minutes of December 13, 2017:** Minutes were distributed that contained the changes requested by Mr. Pilson. Mr. Manzolini moved that the minutes be approved as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pilson and passed by majority vote.

**Osceola Notch Road-Discussion on fence/plowing:** Mr. Pruhenski provided a quick update on the situation. A compromise with the property owner was reached that the replacement fence would be set at a 45% angle to avoid the snow plow's hitting it in the future. There was no need for further discussion at this time as the matter has been resolved.

**Veteran's Agent Contract for Approval:** Mr. Pruhenski recalled the Board's request to have assurances from the new Veteran's Agent that there would be a Veteran's Agent and an Honor Guard available for the Memorial Day Parade. Mr. Pruhenski spoke with Pittsfield and was assured that, if the Agent was personally not available, there would be a representative sent in his place and that an Honor Guard would also be provided. Mr. Manzolini suggested that at about a month before Memorial Day that agreement be confirmed. Mr. Pruhenski will put that item in the Operating Calendar.

Given the Board's approval, there was a contract needing to be signed with the City of Pittsfield, which was executed.

**Rebates/Abatements for Signature:** Papers were distributed and signed.

**Richmond Telephone Book – Discussion:** Mr. Pilson noted that the Richmond Telephone Company has discontinued printing their telephone book, which he felt was of great value to the community. He asked whether the Town should request that they continue to publish the book. A discussion of the relative merits of the book resulted in the consensus that there was sufficient value in it to Richmond residents, and that Mr. Pruhenski should go ahead and contact the phone company, which he agreed to do.

**BRPC Delegate – Discussion:** Mr. Pilson noted that two members of the Richmond Planning Board were also members of the Board of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Pilson felt that the agenda items of the BRPC were of sufficient importance to Richmond that a member of the Board of Selectmen should be appointed to the Commission or at least have the opportunity to attend those meetings. There was a discussion of the makeup of the delegates to the Commission and when those appointments end. The latest appointment was in June, so when the time to reappoint comes next June, the Board will look at having one of them appointed to the Commission. In the meantime, the Selectmen are always welcome to attend the meetings.

**Richmond Shores – Letter and Invitation to Assoc.:** Mr. Pruhenski sent a letter to Paul Brown, the President of the Association about the condition of the roads at Richmond Shores. There have been recent issues with the mail truck getting stuck there and the Fire Chief has expressed concerns about not being able to access some of the properties at the Shores without four-wheel drive. The letter was an

invitation to meet with all concerned parties to work together towards a solution. Mr. Grizey brought the Board up to date on the issue. He reported that on the day in question, when it had been raining heavily all day, the road iced up, and the mail truck slid off the road and then another car slid off the road. The State Police and the Richmond Fire Department were called to the scene. The sand truck came in at approximately 8:00 AM and sanded the road. The rain continued, and the sand ran off. The truck returned about 1:00 PM and sanded the road again, which washed away again in the continuing rain. This happened several times. This has been happening every time we have a heavy rain.

In this instance, the State Police called the town to come down and sand the road, which they did. This is a private road and the Fire Chief was concerned about the difficulty of accessing the area in case of a fire and the Highway Department crew was upset with the need to pay overtime and incur other expenses to maintain a private road. The problem with access is with cars or trucks with two-wheel instead of four-wheel drive.

Mr. Pruhenski felt that it has been made clear to the Richmond Shores Association that, if they want Fire, Police, Garbage Collection and Highway services to cover Richmond Shores, they are responsible for providing access for those vehicles that is safe and navigable.

If the Association responds and asks for a conversation with the Board, that will be welcome. If not, they are on notice as to what needs to be done.

**Farm Bureau Membership:** Mr. Pruhenski was asked to get a membership to the Farm Bureau in 2017, which he did. That membership is now expiring and Mr. Pruhenski asked the Board if they wished to have him renew. Renewal of the membership will cost \$70. and Mr. Manzolini felt it was well worthwhile and, on behalf of Mr. Alan Hanson, who was absent from this meeting, he asked Mr. Pruhenski to go ahead and renew. The Board is trying to revitalize the town's Agricultural Commission.

**Solar at Richmond Consolidated School – Mr. Andreas Schmid:** Mr. Schmid arrived and was introduced to the Board. Mr. Manzolini asked about the elevation of the solar panels above the roof's elevation and whether the roof is adequate to support the panels. The cells are mounted at a 5 to 10-degree pitch so that they will be pointing south as much as possible. Mr. Manzolini then asked how Mr. Schmid's company would accommodate the town in fixing a leak in the roof. Usually, what they do when installing a system is to contact the installer who is warranting the roof. Their concern is to do what they can to help the town maintain their roof warranty. To that end, they work with the roofer to inspect the roof, and the roofer will review their report before the system is installed. Mr. Schmid described how penetrations into the roof are handled. Some penetrations are required with installation on a pitched roof. Those are flashed appropriately, and the company has not experienced any leaks with that system. Flat roofs are not penetrated, but are provided with a ballast to support the pitch of the solar panels. They call in a third-party structural engineer to evaluate the system. If the roof is not adequate, the engineer will decide what needs to be done to its structural components to repair it and allow the system to be put in place. This tends not to be an issue with a pitched roof because they are only adding approximately 2.5 pounds of weight per square foot. With a flat roof that requires a ballast, the additional weight per square foot comes up to 4.5 or 5 pounds. In this area, there is a relatively low wind rate, which requires less ballasting and, therefore, less weight.

Mr. Pilson asked how snow is handled. At this time of year there is relatively little sun to begin with, so there is not a great loss if the panels are covered with snow for a couple of weeks. Their production estimates (which he provided) considers this and every issue involved in annual production.

Mr. Schmid explained the advantage to the town that the program offers. It is expected to produce 89% of the annual electrical usage of the school, which will all but wipe out the school's electric bill. In the summer, it may be that the system will over-produce electricity, which will go back into the grid, spin the meter backwards, and produce a credit from the electric company. Mr. Schmid explained more of the billing process and which costs were offset and how they occur and that the program means that the school's energy is almost completely green.

The bottom line is that the anticipated savings per year over twenty years is between \$9,400 - \$14,020. Mr. Pilson asked for a list of the organizations for whom Mr. Schmid's company has installed a similar system so that they could inquire as to their satisfaction with the program.

Further discussion of the costs involved in repairing or replacing the roof within the twenty-year period elicited the response from Mr. Schmid that his company would pay for the temporary removal of the solar panels in case of such repair or replacement. He further indicated that the existence of the solar panels on the roof increases the life of the roofing materials.

Mr. Pilson asked what the timeline for this process would be. Mr. Pruhenski said that before the issue could be brought before the town at a town meeting, determination of the life of the roof would have to be made, which involves a structural engineering inspection. Mr. Schmid noted that the first order of business would be to have his company's electrician come out to look at the electrical service and the roof, which is difficult at this time of year with the snow. The next step would be to get an engineer to look at the roof and provide a report on its condition, most likely from the roofer who installed it.

Mr. Pilson asked if the company could install additional panels to increase production to 100% of the school's usage. Mr. Schmid suggested that the better way to reduce costs would be to look at ways to reduce the use of energy at the school. Mr. Pruhenski noted that just last week, the school's entire lighting was replaced with LED's. Mr. Schmid did a quick calculation of the actual impact of changing the school's lighting to LED and found that with that reduction in usage, the current proposal would possibly cover 100% of the school's anticipated electrical usage.

The consensus of the Board was that the program was worth pursuing in principle. There was a discussion of the possible ways to engage the children in projects to further reduce the use of electricity at the school.

Mr. Pilson asked what are the next steps that should be taken to continue to educate the Board and extend involvement to the School Committee. Mr. Manzolini asked that the company provide the Board with a list of the possible unintended consequences. There was a discussion of some of those unintended consequences and how they would be handled or prevented in advance. The company insures the system and indemnifies the town against liability.

The new solar incentive program in Massachusetts begins in June or July, which is when the company would prefer to have the system in place. That would likely require a Special Town Meeting to occur before the regular Town Meeting held in May. The company has a slide presentation they could present at a public meeting.

The Board will pursue further discussion of this project at their next scheduled meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Schmid will prepare a sample proposal for the Board to evaluate at that time. The Board will advise the School Committee of these discussions and ask for their involvement. Mr. Pilson noted that the Board is not ready to sign or commit to anything at this time, but would like to pursue further information. Mr. Schmid agreed that these discussions and information gathering will incur no obligation to the town. Mr. Schmid offered additional information on how the system can benefit the town.

**Town Administrator Performance Evaluation-Forms for February Review:** Mr. Pruhenski wanted the Board members to have the form available so that the combined reviews could be put on the agenda for the February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board. Mr. Pruhenski will send a copy to Mr. Hanson. All forms are due back on February 7<sup>th</sup>, when Mr. Hanson will consolidate all three forms into one.

The Board and Mr. Pruhenski will have a working session on February 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:00, before the regular 6:00 Board Meeting. The final, typed and reviewed version will be put on the agenda for the meeting of February 28<sup>th</sup> for signature.

**Town Administrator Updates:** The new Flow Meter was installed at the Elm Road Pumping Station on December 19<sup>th</sup>. The Board had approved \$5,000 for the Flow Meter, the actual cost was \$3,935. Mr. Pruhenski distributed some photographs of the work done and thanked Mr. Brazie and Mr. Tom Grizey for the work they did in organizing and installing it.

Christmas Day rollover accident on Rte. 295. A reverse 911 notice was sent out that morning. Feedback from the community was positive.

Mr. Pilson brought out a copy of the newspaper story of the gas release incident, which he noted should also have received a reverse 911 notice. Mr. Pruhenski agreed that it probably should have happened. One of the reasons it did not was the rapid nature of the incident, and the lack of available information at that time. If a notice had been sent out it would have gone out after the event was over. The Fire Chief did not feel it was necessary, but Mr. Pruhenski noted that in the future, more information is better and he will take that into consideration.

The annual ABCC report has been filed with the State on the day after Christmas and the town has met all of its alcohol licensure obligations with the State for the year.

**Surplus Vehicle Update:** Two vehicles were sent out for bid: the 1998 International and the 1988 Chevy Rack Body. One bid was received for each vehicle on December 28<sup>th</sup>. The International was purchased for \$2,790 and the Chevy Rack Body for \$290.

**Senior Work-Off Program for 2017:** was closed out at the end of the year. Mr. Pruhenski sent the results to the Assessors for tax abatements. The total abatements for the year of \$5,626, down from last year's total of \$6,357.

**Selectmen's Matters:** Mr. Manzolini addressed the Municipal Building Committee's inquiry about whether they will be budgeted for consultants and things of that nature for the upcoming budget. Mr. Pruhenski said he will need a number from the Committee by February 1<sup>st</sup> to make that happen.

Mr. Manzolini asked whether there is anything in the current budget for the MBC now. Mr. Pruhenski noted that there was not, but that there is consultant money set aside for Long Range Planning. He

thought using that money could be easily justified, depending on the exact wording of the original approval. Mr. Pruhenski will research whether the wording of that budget item could be justified for use for the MBC's consultant.

Mr. Manzolini reported that the MBC is looking at the possibility of renovating the existing town hall, rather than including a new Town Hall in their project. The Committee is asking the Board to determine if this building is restorable, what would be required to meet ADA specifications and the town's needs and, if that is feasible, what kind of budget would be needed over what time frame. This is an option they are considering. A set of requirements will need to be created to tell the engineering firm what to look for in their assessment of the feasibility of making the current town hall conform to the town's needs. Mr. Pruhenski suggested that the cost to accomplish that be considered in budgeting for the Municipal Building Committee. There was a discussion of the possible upgrading of the septic system for this building, which raised the issue of ownership of the building, the property it sits on and any possible nearby property that could be used to upgrade the septic system.

It was noted that the Town still needs a Field Driver.

Mr. Pilson raised the issue of the request from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission for Richmond to act as the District Local Technical Assistance lead town. They sent a form they would like the Board to sign that would identify Richmond as the lead applicant. Last year Lanesborough was the lead applicant and Richmond has been asked to serve in that capacity this year. Next year another town will be asked to be the lead.

Mr. Manzolini moved that Richmond agree to be the lead applicant for this year. He was seconded by Mr. Pilson and the motion was adopted by unanimous consent. The forms were signed as appropriate.

**Sewer Matters:** Mr. Pruhenski explained the back story to some unpaid bills for work done by Mr. Grizey and Mr. Horace Brazie. There were at one time, six outstanding bills for sewer repairs done by Mr. Grizey and Mr. Brazie. Mr. Pruhenski had recommended that Mr. Grizey and Mr. Brazie function as independent contractors and not town employees for the purposes of these repairs and bill the individuals directly. Mr. Grizey discovered, however, that there would be extensive costs involved in getting the proper insurance coverage, etc. and decided against going independent.

Mr. Manzolini asked whether there was money in the Sewer Commissioners budget that could pay these outstanding bills. He was advised that there may be money available but that the money from the home owners was not forthcoming. Mr. Manzolini suggested that the solution to the problem was as follows: the town could pay Mr. Grizey and Mr. Brazie out of the available budgeted funds. Those funds would be replaced by payment of bills sent by the town to the homeowners. If, after a certain amount of time, the bill remains unpaid, the Town will take whatever action is appropriate until it is paid.

Mr. Pruhenski noted that paying Mr. Grizey and Brazie out of town money might create some problems. He suggested that the policy possibly be changed to require that payment for services will be made at the completion of the work. The town would receive that payment and can then issue a check to Mr. Grizey and Brazie. Mr. Pruhenski will discuss the issue with Paul Lisi, the Town Treasurer, to see what he has in mind and what leverage the town has.

**Unanticipated Topics:** Mr. Pruhenski distributed a list of people to be remembered on the Annual Town Report "In Memorium" Page and asked for the Board's help in determining if the list was complete.

Mr. Pruhenski submitted a request from the Board of Assessors for the Board of Selectmen to sign their annual Tax Map contract in order to get the tax maps printed. The contracts were signed as appropriate.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Manzolini moved that the meeting be adjourned. He was seconded by Mr. Pilson and the motion was carried by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Neal Pilson", written over a horizontal line.

Chairman