

# TOWN OF RICHLAND WATER DEPARTMENT

1 BRIDGE STREET PULASKI, NY 13142

## MINUTES OF THE RICHLAND WATER ADVISORY BOARD

**Date:** November 7, 2023

**Kind of Meeting:** Regular monthly water board meeting

**Place:** H. Douglas Barclay Courthouse Jury Room

**Water Board Members Present:** Doug Schwalm, Chairman  
Ken Moonan  
Krista Fox  
Robert Jeffery  
Tim Crouch

**Others in Attendance:** Water Supervisor Ron Novak  
Mary Yerdon, Water Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER:** Tonight's meeting was called to order at 6:00pm with Doug Schwalm leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Tim Crouch started the meeting by thanking Supervisor Novak and Chief Water Operator Hicks for giving him a tour of the wellsite's. Robert Jefferies would like the cancelled water board meetings to be rescheduled within the same month if possible.

Water pumped in October was 11,874,700. Last year 11,560,000 gallons were pumped for the same time period.

1. **Cornell Cooperative Extension** requested a modification to water rates pertaining to farmers. The Town Board voted not to modify the current exemption. It would be difficult to modify and would only apply to three or four people.
2. After the **inspection of the Richland Water tank**, the engineer found some deficiencies on the roof. Those repairs have been completed. There was also discussion over the anodes in the bottom of the tank. The engineer felt it may not last 5 years when the next inspection is due. He suggested another inspection in three years rather than waiting five years. A diver would have to go into the water tank to replace anodes or the tank would have to be emptied. Emptying the tank would not be an option. It would cost \$10,000-\$12,000 and take about half a day. The anodes are rust protection so you should not wait the full five years. Krista Fox would like to know if there is a three-year plan in the budget to make sure this can be looked at again and the money will be there.
3. **The Verizon cell Tower** contractors were there last Monday. They surveyed and placed a stake in the ground where the tower would be. The contract company and Attorney Seiter have been going over the contract and it is close to be finalized for \$18,000 a year for 25 years-to be reviewed every 5 years. The amount paid will go to Water District #2 because they paid for the land with water district #2 project funds.
4. **Tap update:** The water department uses New York Underground to perform our directional drilling when placing a tap. They charge \$25.00/ft and do a fantastic job. Supervisor Novak highly recommended renewing their contract. They are much more accurate and quicker than using the Village's old pusher. We usually do 6 taps a year and this year we installed 18 (mostly new houses).
5. Residents on Town Line Rd (South of Halsey RD) turned in a signed petition requesting water. This would include installing water lines (4500 lineal feet), 7 valves, 2 or 3 hydrants, and district formation costs. In June 2022 it would have cost \$675,000; the current price would be estimated at \$775,000 and cost each house \$100,000.00 to enter the water district. It is not economically feasible. Tim Crouch gave Albion residents on the same road a blank petition to collect signatures to take to the Albion Town Board. Part of the road already has pipe installed and would cost each house about \$7500.00 to receive the water

from the Town of Richland. The process starts with the residents who would like the water bringing that information to their Albion Town Board.

6. **The new generator** is up and running. The town is in the process of submitting the paperwork to the county through the ARPA program to get reimbursed. Tammy Whaley is the ARPA coordinator. The Town Board decided to put the old generator up for auction on Auction International. It was manufactured in 1999 and several repair parts are not available. It has a blown motor and a radiator leak. It was estimated to cost \$4800.00 just to fix the radiator.
7. There is no new information on the entrance pole.
8. **Curb Stop:** There are some issues with property owners using their own curb Box key to turn water on/off at the curb. The town owns the curb stop and when something goes wrong it is a \$1500.00 repair. It requires digging up the curb stop. Improperly using the curb key can cause issues making it not possible to turn the water off at the curb. The town charges \$25.00 to turn it off and back on. The homeowner is responsible for paying for this repair when they turn it on/off themselves. Supervisor Novak can have a notice posted on the Towns Facebook page and on the Town of Richland website informing them the town owns the curbstop; only a town employee should be turning it on/off.
9. **Relevy:** There is approximately \$50,527.00 to be placed on relevy. That will change if people pay their bills before November 27, 2023. It was suggested if people could use charge cards, maybe they would use that method to pay the water bill on time. Mary will look into this.
10. There is a **campground on Town Road-2** cabins and 4 campers. According to a neighbor, It is supposed to have a new septic system, landscaping and it requires a 2-inch line rather than a ¾ inch line. Neighbors are frustrated and feel the owners are not complying. They want to know why they are not made to comply. Supervisor Novak recommended compliance should go through zoning and Oswego County Health Department. The DEC is also involved in this due to wetlands in the area. According to the OCHD a 2" line is required.
11. **Transducer** in Fernwood Well #1 failed on October 31 at 3:50am sparking an alarm. The transducer monitors the water level in the well and without the ability to measure it, the pumps won't run. We also have no chemical pump for well #1. Well #1 is not operational until further notice. Transducers are custom to a well based on size, voltage, resistance, and well depth. It would have to be ordered and custom made. It usually takes 2-4 weeks to get one and the cost is about \$1000-\$1100. The Operators ran a test and tried to overflow the water tank and with the valve wide open it would not overflow. Between the two wells there is only about 25% pumping capacity. With the valve open from Richland, we are about 425 gallons per minutes input into the Fernwood tank. With the valve wide open that tank would be empty in 1 hour and 15 minutes if a large fire occurred on the south end of town. The fire company and fire control have been notified of this issue and have been asked to call us immediately if a fire occurs. The Fernwood tank also supplies the Bishop Road tank with water which supplies Sandy Creek.
12. **Chemical Pumps:** There is still a chemical pump issue. The electronics on well #1 chemical pump in Fernwood is fried. Parts were taken from well #1 chemical pump to fix well #2 chemical pump. Hopefully the chemical pumps will be fixed in two weeks; The Chemical pump project total cost is about \$7000-\$7500. Cyclops is the chemical pump supplier. One of the two chemical pumps has come in and one is on the shelf (required by DOH). Once done with this chemical pump project, the pumps in Fernwood will be the same at the Schoeller wellsite in Richland. Chemical Pumps are about \$1950.00 each. The Chemical Pump project in total is about 7,000-7500 (Aqualogics and Cyclops will undertake this project). When the project is done, Schoeller and Fernwood will have the same pumps. We will only be required to keep one extra pump on the shelf because they are the same (\$1950.00 each).
13. **Fernwood wells rehab:** The town board indicated 2 new water pumps will be in the 2024 budget but did not vote on it. PT Supply out of Watertown would rehab the well. Probably couldn't be done until Spring due to the weather. The well water pumps will be paid for out of Reserves. Bill Havener, Director of OCDOH said the well rehab requires engineering plans. Water pump replacement does not require engineering plans, but this is a complete rehab replacing the pump, motor, wiring, drop tube converted to stainless steel, and check valve to variable frequency which changes the flow characteristics. If well #2 goes down in Fernwood, the only water supplier would be Schoeller. The new water pumps for Fernwood will be in the 2024 budget. It takes about 2 months to receive them once ordered. PT Supply out of Watertown would be doing the pump installation. These pumps will be coming out of reserves not ARPA. Supervisor Novak informed the water board he does have his engineering stamp. He could stamp any plans, but he will not because he doesn't carry the costly liability insurance. He could do the engineering plans and have another engineer (like B&L) stamp them.

14. A **fire hydrant** on route 3 was reported to us as leaking. It was on a hillside and not noticeable. It leaked approximately 1,000,000 gallons of water. It is now disconnected. It will be fixed when the parts come in (approximately \$600 to fix it). It takes several weeks once the parts are ordered. There are no houses nearby.
15. **Charge to Sandy Creek for water use:** Town Supervisor Yerdon, Water Supervisor Novak, and Laird Petrie met with Sandy Creek Town Supervisor, Tim Ridgeway, Water Supervisor Kasler, and Town Clerk Tammy Miller to inform them their water rate from the Town of Richland will remain at \$4.50/1,000 for 2024. After a full year at the new rate, there will be better numbers on the cost to make 1,000 gallons of water. Currently it costs \$4.14/1,000 to make water.
16. **The Bishop Road tank** is due for the 5-year inspection. In the 2019 inspection report it stated the paint was starting to fail. Possibly a grant could be applied -it would require a preliminary engineering inspection. According to B&L it could be about \$600,000 to paint the tank. B&L should be contacted to get the ball rolling and get an estimate for them to write a preliminary engineering report in time to apply for the grant. Typically grants have to go in during June. If the 5-year inspection is in May 2024 the finished report could be used for the grant application (approximately \$3,000 to inspect). The town of Tourin recently found it less costly to replace the tank than to paint it. Bishop Road and Fernwood grants should probably be applied for at the same time. **It's up to the town board to act on this.**
17. **The chlortec system** is 100% nonfunctional. The company is out of Texas that would come here to evaluate and report what the problem is. Preliminary discussion with the chlortec company is the titanium plates (2) failed. They could be \$70,000 each. In 2010 there was a project to do the windmill and the clortec system at the same time. The grant covered 90% of the cost. They knew when it failed it would be too costly to fix. It has lasted around 13 years. The chlorine cost is about \$7500.00 a year. It would better at this time to just use the chlorine. This would be a **board decision** whether to have the technician fly in. There is also a company on the Atlantic Coast.
18. **"D" Certification:** A town the size of Richland requires a "D" certified water operator. Supervisor Novak and Chief Water Operator Hicks have both taken and passed the operator "D" licensing class. Sandy Creek Water Supervisor, Mike Kasler has a "D" certification but the DOH wouldn't allow him to cover 2 towns. The Village of Pulaski has 4-D's. There is an MOU with the Village for us to use their "D" operators to cover us until our 2 operators get their "D" certification paperwork.
19. **Extra funds from the project:** There is approximately \$100,000.00 left over from WD#5 project. Sandy Creek wants to use that for the well 27 repairs. The problem is Sandy Creek would own the pump until the project is closed. Then Richland would buy it back for \$1. It gets complicated because WD #5 money would buy it and install it on WD #2 property. WD #5 would have to be reimbursed by the other districts. Sandy Creek asked Richland to submit a bill for a new chemical pump for about \$1950.00. Supervisor Novak and the water advisory board recommend we should do both of these two items. **This needs board approval.**
20. **The EDU for WD #5** is estimated to be \$827 per EDU. The high EDU charge in WD #5 is caused partially by only 34% of the property owners are receiving water from the system. Another issue is the project cost for Richland WD #5 is roughly \$4,800,000.00 and the loan has to be paid back. Another problem we had was the project was held up over a year due to the issues with the DEC drilling under the sand dunes. During that time, the project cost went up \$3,000,000 so another loan had to be obtained by the lead agency (Sandy Creek). These loans are from Rural Development with an interest rate is 2.25%. Once the project is closed the EFC will take over these loans at 0% interest. This will make the loan repayment lower.
21. WD #5 was supposed to be audited every year since the project started (5 years). This was not completed. Laird Petrie audited the 5 years of the joint project, and everything was exactly as it was supposed to be. This should be finalized in Spring 2024 and then Sandy Creek can combine the two loans.
22. Electrical inspection: There is about \$1,000,000.00 of electrical equipment at the Schoeller well field. Osmose is a company that can inspect the entire electrical system. They check the condition of the pole in the ground, etc. Each pole is between \$9,000 to \$10,000 to replace. **This would be a town board decision.**
23. There were seven applicants for the water mechanic in training position. Town Supervisor Kern Yerdon, Water Supervisor Ron Novak, and Councilman Allen Goodsell are planning to conduct the interviews. No one from the Highway Department wanted the job. According to union contract, they have to be hired first and they must live in the Town of Richland unless they get a waiver from the Town Board. They plan to do the interviews and then make recommendations to the town board. Due to its size, the law requires the Richland Water system to have 2 certified water operators. Therefore, Supervisor Novak has to perform certain operator tasks at times. Supervisor Novak said when he is out of town, he still gets as many as 20 phone calls.

It should be noted that the town board cut Supervisor Novak's hours in half as well as his salary. Then it was reversed at the next meeting back to the original hours and salary.

Robert Jeffery made a motion to accept the minutes from the August 6 meeting. Tim Crouch seconded it. All were in favor.

*At approximately 8:30 pm a motion was made to close the meeting by Krista Fox and seconded by Ken Moonan. All were in favor. The next meeting is scheduled for December 5.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Yerdon  
Town of Richland Water Clerk