

**TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT**

**SELECTBOARD; Water and Sewer Commissioners; Liquor Commissioners; Cemetery Commissioners**

**Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT – January 11, 2022 -- 7:00 P.M. -- REGULAR Meeting**

**Zoom Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82912664164>**

**Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 829 12664 164**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Jeff Sheldon, Rod Holzworth, Glen Traverse, Carol Egan arrived at 7:31 pm

**Others Present:** Town Manager Joseph Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Dept. of Public Works Superintendent (DPW) Aaron Kerber, Jim Britt, Peg TV, Nate Saxon, DPW, Ceil Hunt, Lillian Billewicz, Linda Sienkiewicz

**Call To Order:** Acting Chairman Jeff Sheldon called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

**Amendments to the Agenda:** Mr. Traverse made a motion to add under Old Business: Appointment to the Planning Commission; seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed.

**Approval of the December 28, 2021 Minutes:** Mr. Traverse moved to approve the December 28, 2021 Minutes as presented; seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed.

**Five Minutes for Public Comment:** The Board heard from Ms. Lillian Billewicz who stated she represents tax payers that feel the Board and Administration are not focusing on Town priorities. She read prepared articles she wants to have included in the Town Meeting Warning. a) to use sidewalk reserve account to repair sidewalks, not as to secure grants; b) stop planned project to make changes to the Park and Ride area; c) to abolish the Economic Development Committee and use Castleton University interns for such projects as website update; d) remove Mr. Gunter as Town Manager for just cause. She presented copies to members noting these taxpayers have expressed respect for Mr. Holzworth. Mr. Sheldon thanked Ms. Billewicz for her comments.

**Department Head Reports:** Mr. Kerber Dept. of Public Works (DPW) Superintendent reported:

- \* Have used approximately 319 tons of salt to date
- \* Have received 22" of non-accumulating snow to date
- \* Continue working on equipment maintenance; working on one truck that is down
- \* Have cleaned the Water Treatment Plant Clarifier; is back on line
- \* Have submitted the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) list
- \* The State is expected to pave Rte. 22A next summer; plan to finish laying the 8" water line on North end of Washington Street before paving
- \* The Sewer Plant upgrade continues with issues of delays in equipment delivery; their work force is impacted by COVID; there was an electrical issue, now repaired -- the State was made aware; meeting tomorrow

**Town Manager Report & Communication:** Manager Gunter reported:

- \* Congratulations to Police Chief William Humphries celebrating his 18<sup>th</sup> year in Fair Haven. Manager Gunter noted the Chief has been a mentor to him still offering good advice
- \* Congratulations to David Ricard also his 18<sup>th</sup> year on the Fair Haven Police Force
- \* James Bassong is completing his 4<sup>th</sup> year on the Police Force
- \* There were two arrests
- \* All Police force members are working with masks at all times
- \* Continue to conduct fingerprinting for other than police, such as School hires; this generating revenue
- \* Chief Humphries wishes to acknowledge the passing of Ramon "Bunny" Ruby who supported the Town and especially the Police Dept. in many ways; including printing of the Town Report for many years
- \* The Police Dept. reported no incidents on New Year's Eve
- \* Received suggestions and ideas for ARPA fund use from committees and local residents
- \* The trailer at 8 Lockburn Ave. will be sold on the 24<sup>th</sup>
- \* Expect construction of the Solar array at the Transfer Station location to start in the spring
- \* There will be a meeting with Fed. Reps re: new American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) guidelines
- \* Met with Linda Barker re: planned Grand Opening of the Dog Park in May -- there will be hotdogs
- \* The Town Hall upgrade will include: an American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant bathroom, elevator, sprinkler system and corridor improvements. When the project was started in 2018, it was much more extensive; high cost of labor, materials and supplies has caused reduction of the project scope
- \* Can use the Fair Haven Grade School library for Town Meeting; voting will be at the Legion
- \* Working on Declaration of Inclusion for Centers for Disease Control (CDC) compliance
- \* Edited Local Option Tax flyer (in members') packets. If members have any edits, please let Manager know; would like to start sending them out tomorrow.
- \* The Local Option Tax 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing will take place at 6:00 pm on January 25, 2022; 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing at 6:00 pm on February 8, 2022

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**General Fund Allocation:** Because of an error, Manager Gunter stated he gave members a wrong amount when budgeting the match grant fund allocation. After lengthy discussion re: how best to address the issue and its impact on the budget, Mr. Traverse **made a motion that because of an error, to change the \$150,000 grant match allocation to \$96,809;** seconded by Mr. Holzworth. This change makes no difference to the budget totals. The motion carried unanimously.

**Appointment to the Planning Commission:** Mr. Traverse **moved to expand the Planning Commission from 5 to 6 members;** seconded by Ms. Egan. There was conversation re: perhaps having another person interested in joining. Mr. Sheldon questioned, is it better to stay at a lower number or having more members that sometimes cannot attend. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to appoint Linda Sienkiewicz to fill the vacant spot on the Planning Commission;** seconded by Ms. Egan. If another volunteer is interested, the Board will have to repeat these two motions. The motion passed unanimously.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Revenue Review:** Manager Gunter stated real numbers will not be known until it is determined how many appropriations are voted in. Manager Gunter and members reviewed the proposed revenue budget line by line. Discussion items included: West Haven Transfer Station fee. It has stayed the same for several years, is it reasonable to increase. Mr. Holzworth suggests to adjust this fee (up or down) at each contract year; to advise West Haven that negotiations are now on-going; all agree. The Police Ticket and Parking Fines line was reduced. Mr. Traverse suggests speeders should be fined more often -- would be a deterrent rather than only a warning. The line was raised to \$20,000; Mr. Holzworth noted the goal is to make streets safer. Manager Gunter noted delinquent taxes are significantly lower. A last review will be at the January 14, 2022 meeting at 7:00 p.m. for final vote.

**Review of Warning:** Article 4 re: sale of cannabis was noted. Are waiting for the Rescue Squad to submit a request -- need to know the request amount; they have not reported to this Board for over a year. Manager Gunter noted there is an article on the 2017 Warning to include the Rescue Squad on the ballot without signatures. There followed discussion re: whether or not signatures are required for appropriation requests to be included on the Warning. The State requires signatures only for those running for Municipal office. Ms. Egan said for this year, to make accommodations. Manager Gunter noted receiving a request from Restorative Justice Center. Mr. Traverse **made a motion that because of the COVID pandemic, signatures for Appropriations requests, on the ballot last year, and that have not increased in amount are not required to submit signatures.** The motion was seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously.

**Tax Stabilization Review and Approval:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the commercial tax stabilization application as requested by M.T. Associates (Dunkin Donuts);** seconded by Ms. Egan. The current land value assessment value is \$30,000; they expect to have the building(s) demolished by April 1<sup>st</sup>; expected improvement value is 8 to \$900,000; the Economic Development Committee has reviewed the application and recommends approval; taxes would be assessed on current land value and half of the improvement value. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Egan **made a motion to approve the residential tax stabilization application as requested by Stepping Stone Learning, 400 River Street;** seconded by Mr. Traverse. The current property value is \$214,000; she expects to make 80 to \$100,000 improvement/addition; taxes would be assessed on current property value and half of the improvements cost. The motion carried unanimously.

**Review Policies:** Three (3) policies, Capital Program and Budget Policy, Reserve Fund Policy and Class 4 Highway policy (in members' packets). Manager Gunter requests members to review and send edits to him for further review at the next meeting.

**Request to Move Playground Reserve Funds:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to move \$25,707.33 from Recreation to the Playground fund to allow payment of the playground equipment in March.** The motion was seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously.

**Truck Trade:** DPW Supt. Kerber stated the Board voted to fund \$50,000 into the Highway Equipment fund and noted the 2015 International model 7600 required \$14,000 in repairs over the last 18 months. He reported being told that any truck ordered now could only be delivered in another year. DPW received notice from ATG of Westminster, VT (info sheet in members' packets) they have a 2022 Freightliner model 114SD fully equipped ready to go; may not be available at a later date. Lengthy discussion followed including: what is owed on the "green machine" (\$26,100); it was ordered November 2019, delivered in March; trade in value is \$45,000; how best to pay for the trade; total cost is \$158,417 including trade. Board members request a written payment plan for continued discussion at the January 14, 2022 meeting.

**Parking Lot:** Work is on-going on Munger Road, Zoning Regulation Updated and Adams Street Bridge replacement

**Board Roundtable:** None

**Review of Financial Reports:** Checkbook Status: \$965,554.91

Mr. Holzworth moved to approve payment of the Payroll warrant for \$31,572.69; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Holzworth moved to approve payment of the General Fund Warrants of \$256,160.71; seconded by Mr. Traverse. Included are payments for Appropriations and \$6,000 for tank cleaning. The motion passed unanimously.

**Executive Session:** Mr. Traverse made a motion to enter into executive session with the Town Manager at 9:17 p.m. to discuss Attorney-Client Communication 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(1); seconded by Ms. Egan and passed unanimously.

The recording secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:45 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 9:46

Respectfully submitted,  
Claire L. Stanley

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Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk