

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

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

Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT – May 4, 2021 -- 7:00 P.M. -- REGULAR Meeting

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85164917263>

Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 851 6491 7263

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Glen Traverse Chris Cole, Jeff Sheldon, Rod Holzworth, II, Carol Egan

Others Present: Town Manager Joseph Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, William Chmielewski, Peg TV, John Lulek, Judi Sutherland, Bob Richards, Neil Robinson, Linda Barker, Deborah Fallon, Johnathan Billewicz, Christopher Stanton, Rachel Meigs, Police Chief William Humphries

Call to Order: Chairman Chris Cole called meeting to order at 7:00 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 *Parade* to New Business; *Attorney, Client matter* to Executive Session; seconded by Mr. Sheldon and passed unanimously.

Appointment with Energy Committee: Chairman Cole reported that Mr. Robinson asked to meet with the Board for an update on the Hydro project. Mr. Robinson presented a handout of the Hydro Committee history and noted \$10,000 was approved for a study to determine the feasibility of a hydro project. In 2014, Engineer Jay Boeri did an extensive study and prepared a report (available at the Town Office) stating Fair Haven is the only Vermont Municipality that owns an existing dam. It is believed that now, with changing times; the "Green Movement"; the remnants of an existing dam; and possible availability of COVID money, the project could produce "clean", renewable energy enough to power all of the Town of Fair Haven, including school buildings. Mr. Robinson stated he had spoken to Pete Ruby, who expressed interest in participating. Mr. Ruby has contacts (with a geologist), building experience and would be an asset to the committee. Discussion included that given challenges at the time: the five million dollar bond; 25 year payback; negative court rulings; and power distribution, it would have been easy to give up. It is good to find so many still on board for the project. Mr. Richards feels the committee is not well organized at this time; Mr. Robinson feels it would be valuable to have a Select Board member on the Energy Committee. It is suggested to re-connect with Mr. Boeri, and make inquiries whether COVID money can be used for this purpose. The Board feels it is worthwhile to continue working to further the Hydro project.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse moved to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2021 meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Ms. Rachel Meigs expressed concern re: smokers on Main Street sitting on stoops discarding butts on storefronts and into historic buildings. This causes offensive odor, is a fire risk and affects business. She stated she is not trying to be the bad guy and understands that tenants are not allowed to smoke inside, but there must be a solution, such as smoking out back. Health Officer Mr. Lulek stated it is illegal to smoke within 25' of a storefront.

Discussion included: no signage for no smoking in the park enforced mostly during events; that some people are not easily mobile; are sidewalks owned by the Town or by building owners. Chairman Cole acknowledged the concerns stating ordinance(s) will be reviewed.

Ms. Linda Barker reported the Bark in the Park event raised \$5,000 for the Dog Park. The fund now has \$20,300 for the Dog Park; are in really good shape.

Department Head Reports: Police Chief Humphries reported:

- * There were six arrests
- * Cited 12 River Street for junk; provided a copy of the ordinance
- * On April 24th Drug Take Back Day, 95 pounds were collected
- * Increased effort to curb speeding
- * There were three traffic accidents
- * Continue to maintain a high downtown visibility
- * Last night there was a truck rollover on Rte. 4; caused by a health issue

Town Manager Joe Gunter reported:

- * Inclement Spring weather has slowed grading, patch work and street sweeping
- * Street line striping and painting will be done this month by a professional company; funds are budgeted
- * The Water Treatment Plant is running well; dealing with Inman Pond Spring "turnover"
- * Are happy contractor doing the Adams Street pump station upgrade
- * Received a letter, after the last meeting, from Ms. Denofer who is against the playground location for the Dog Park
- * The test borings for the (removed) Municipal Building fuel tank, showed no spills were detected
- * Received an e-mail from the Land Water Conservation Fund stating they will cover the extra cost of the playground
- * Contacted a biologist Re: Koi fish in the Cedar Grove Cemetery pond. He said to either pump down the pond and shock with Clorox, or pump it down and let it freeze. The Board consensus is to go ahead with the biologist's suggestion to shock the pond.
- * Representative Bernie Sanders is looking for projects / ideas for appropriation of State stimulus funds. The Board suggests submitting the Town garage, getting it away from flood plain, and the Hydro electric generating project.
- * Working on several sites for the Dog Park
- * Salt shed project is going to the Planning Commission for permitting

OLD BUSINESS

Dog Park Discussion Continues: Manager Gunter reported a site on Prospect Street; two possible land donations. Chairman Cole summarized views from the previous meeting that Academy Street and playground locations are off the table. Mr. Traverse stated he wants to avoid locating it anywhere that would take land off the tax rolls; does the Board support placement at the Air Park. Mr. Billewicz suggests across from the Heritage bank or the property between Shaw's and Mac's Convenience Store; the location can be seen from the highway; folks travel with dogs; good for business. Should not be much opposition since there is already barking at Woof Pack and truck noise

at the store(s). Ms. Egan noted, will have to wait until June for the State person to do the wetland delineation at the Air Park. Ms. Fallon suggests using the Air Park runway, away from RC Fliers who are mostly not Fair Haven residents. The Board asked Manager Gunter to reach out to Mac's and if that is a "no go", plan on the Air Park north end.

NEW BUSINESS

Cemetery Deeds: Mr. Sheldon **made a motion to grant** the sale of cemetery lot 94S in Section 11 as requested by Mark Ferguson, Craig Ferguson, Todd Ferguson, Rick Ferguson, Kerry Atkinson; seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously. Members signed the document.

Mr. Sheldon **made a motion to grant** the sale of cemetery lot 94N in Section 11 as requested by Todd Ferguson; seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously. Members signed the document.

Letter of Support for Cultural Facilities Grant: Mr. Sheldon **made a motion to write a Letter of Support for Cultural Facilities Grant;** seconded by Ms. Egan. This is to apply for \$20,000 (no match) for refurbishing at the Municipal Building; finish bathroom(s), upstairs exits and corridors. The motion carried unanimously.

Job Description Approvals: At Mr. Holzworth's inquiring why these job descriptions needed Board approval, Manager Gunter stated it has been past practice to vote approval. Mr. Holzworth feels the only one that needs Board approval is the Accountant Clerk. It is the Board consensus to proceed to approve the Manager's decision(s). Members reviewed changes to job descriptions for Water Treatment Assistant Operator; Assistant Transfer Station Operator, and approved as written. Office Assistant and Accountant Clerk are considered confidential positions. Discussion included: Union contract addresses behavioral issues such as smoking, breaks, vacation, etc. Who is responsible for care/cleaning of work spaces including trucks and equipment. It was determined that everyone is responsible under the direction of the Superintendent of Public Works.

Tax Stabilization Policy: Information sheet in members' packets. Mr. Traverse reported the Economic Development Committee has been working to make the policy more incentivized to encourage home improvements and to attract commercial and industry. They have reviewed other Town policies for ideas and are trying to make the policy more easily understood, noting the difference between residential and commercial. At this time, the policy is being reviewed by the Listers for input. Lengthy discussion followed including: eligibility, values, and process for application. At initial review, the policy looks good and the committee is encouraged to continue the work and perhaps include "frequently asked questions".

Parade Plan Approval: Applefest is scheduled for the 18th of September with rain date on the 25th. The parade is planned for the same dates. Ms. Egan **made a motion to approve** the Parade plans as presented; seconded by Mr. Holzworth. Mr. Traverse stated the Parade Committee is meeting on Monday and will address selection of a Citizen of the Year as suggested by Ms. Egan. The motion carried unanimously.

Water / Sewer Budget; First Discussion: Draft copies of the budget are in members' packets. Manager Gunter stated the guiding principle was keeping the budget as close to zero increase as possible. Initial review shows the budget includes the bond payment; water use is down 4¢; sewer is up 6¢; this is an honest budget without fluff. Water and Sewer Department Heads will be invited to attend the next meeting.

Parking Lot: The Economic Development Committee is working on **Tax Stabilization**; Manager Gunter is working on the **Adams Street Bridge grant**; the consensus of the Board is to remove **Ally Closure** from the Parking lot.

Board Roundtable: Ms. Egan reported the Rutland Free Clinic is looking for sites for dental needs education. Ms. Egan has the expertise and is willing to be liaison for this purpose. There is need to provide a space (at no cost) to offer the service. The clinic grant runs to June 2022.

Mr. Sheldon said someone reported to him coming upon a hole by Stewarts Shop where there was no one and no signage. Manager will research this.

The Firehouse beam repair cost was under the insurance payment.

Review of Financial Reports: The checkbook status is \$417,924.74

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the Payroll warrant for \$29,413.76**; seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously.

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the General Fund Warrants of \$71,672.78**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse moved the Board and Town Manager into **executive session** at 9:25 p.m. to discuss -- 1 VSA 313(a)(1) Contract Negotiations; 1 VSA 313(a)(3) Police Chief Contract; 1 VSA 313(a)(1) Attorney/Client matter; seconded by Ms. Egan and passed.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 10:25pm

- Mr. Sheldon motioned to approve Manager Gunter to sign the new five year contract with Police Chief William Humphries; seconded by Ms. Egan and passed unanimously
- Mr. Traverse motioned to authorize Town Manager Gunter to sign the solar land lease with MHG Solar; seconded by Ms. Egan. This contract and option is for a land lease at the Fair Haven Transfer Station. The motion passed unanimously
- Mr. Traverse Motion to adjourn at 10:27; Seconded by Ms. Egan

Respectfully submitted,
Claire L. Stanley



Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk