

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners
Tuesday, June 28, 2022 – 7:00 PM Agenda

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86528659525>

Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 865 2865 9525

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Glen Traverse, Chairman Chris Cole, Bob Richards, Jay Brown, Rich Greenough

Others Present: Health Officer John Lulek, Jim Britt (PEG TV), John Seighman, John Ferguson, Patrick Frazier, Mary McNeil, Glen Roberts, Rod Holzworth, II, KeithWhitcomb (Rutland Herald), Police Chief William Humphries, Sean Galvin, Trace Richards, Water Dept. Chief Mike LaDuke, Lillian Billowicz, Anthony Chambers, Charles Delancy, John Maconnell, Anta McConnell, Diane Ferguson, Tammy Dominguez, Casy Groesbek, Dan Groesbek, Mitchell Matteson, Mark Oldsen, Joseph Michael Ridolfo, Kristi Arredondo. On Zoom: Jeff Sheldon, Linda Barker, Deborah Laiacona, Devon Neary, Brian Breslin

Call to Order: Chairman Chris Cole called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse **made a motion** to add to Executive Session, “*Civil Litigation*”, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(1). The motion was seconded by Mr. Richards and passed unanimously.

Appointment of Assistant Health Officer: Mr. Traverse made a **motion to appoint John Seighman** as Assistant Health Officer; seconded by Mr. Richards and passed unanimously. Members thanked Mr. Seighman for his commitment.

Approval of Minutes of May 17, 2022: Mr. Brown moved to **approve the Minutes of the June 14, 2022** meeting; seconded by Mr. Richards. The motion carried unanimously.

Department Head Reports: Police Chief Humphries reported:

- * There were four (4) arrests
- * 35 traffic violations
- * 33 finger printings @ \$20.
- * Total of 141 calls to the Dept.

Mr. Brown reported there has been for some time, an unregistered motor home in the free parking area. Chief Humphries will investigate/make inquiries

Otter Creek Communication District Update: The Board heard from Traci Richards who is the local representative to the Communication Union District (CUD) that is studying ways/options for providing high speed broadband internet technology in Vermont. The Otter Creek CUD includes the Towns of Goshen, Brandon, Chittenden, Pittsford, Sudbury Hubbardton, Benson, West Haven, Fair Haven, Castleton, West Rutland, Rutland City, Rutland Town, Proctor, Mendon, Shrewsbury, Poultney, Wells, and Pawlet -- Towns of diverse population and density; more Towns have higher negotiating power than individual Towns when applying for funding (grants) and negotiating with

providers. The Public Service Board is the governing body and is studying questions including: who owns existing structures (towers); which providers have good experience; what is the cost to consumers; what needs to be done to expand the grid. They are currently applying for administrative grants; the next step is securing grants and other funding for infrastructure. Each CUD has their own plan; are currently negotiating with Consolidated Communications and E K Services; a web site is available with information. Mr. Brown asked if the State is supervising, why are Towns paying. A CUD must obtain funding via grants, gifts or loans and not from local taxes. They are building the broadband structure "from the ground up"; Towns decide tower(s) location; State and Districts apply for funding; are trying to work as fast as possible; Towns are not obligated to join a district. Ms. Richards expects to report to the Board again at a later date. Members thanked Ms. Richards for her time and efforts.

Department Head Reports: Town Manager Joe Gunter reported:

- * Water line flushing is on hold pending resolution of Green Mountain Mobil Home Manor issues
- * Water Dept. has changed their Sampling Plan for the State; moved the sampling from Maplefields to Fair Haven motors
- * Ryan Moriarity, Water Dept. intern has secured a full-time job in Poultney with a \$5. pay increase
- * The underground work at the Sewer Plant is about done and paving has commenced; are now working to finish the garage area

Dept. of Public works (DPW)

- * Continue patch work
- * Working on Swamp Road shoulders
- * The tractor is rented for roadside mowing and will be available soon
- * Crosswalk painting is coming up

Mr. Brown commented that the loose manhole at the bus stop is still not repaired; there is a hole on Green Road where the culvert was replaced -- no reason this stuff is not done

- * DPW is short staffed; dealing with time off for vacations

Mr. Lulek commented the manhole at the Episcopal Church needs work

Manager's Report

- * New hire, Liz Ambuhl is doing well
- * Set the tax rate on June 30th -- will have a meeting next week
- * The elevator comes next Thursday
- * The Audit is still going on
- * There have been two applications for the Business grants

A gentleman reported he is being double billed for taxes; does not get receipts from the Town when his mortgage company sends in the taxes, only receipts from the mortgage company. He is asked to come to the office tomorrow to meet with Manager Gunter and resolve the issue.

At his inquiry, the Board decides on the amount of budget surplus with the guidance of the auditor who suggests carrying a large enough amount to cover emergencies

Public Hearing -- Lights in the Park and Park and Ride Upgrade: Manager Gunter reported this hearing is to provide a project update to the Board and he gave a brief history of the project noting that it started in 2019 planning to make improvements to downtown. A Revitalization Committee was formed that developed a survey to get suggestions from residents for possible projects. Two

hearings were held for residents to discuss and offer ideas. The handout of the final design shows there are 56 parking spaces, 8 of them handicap. Mr. Breslin reported that several plan options were presented in October 2021. The final design will be submitted to V-Trans for environmental review. After approval, the project goes to a bid process with construction next spring/summer. He showed (on a monitor) detailed views of the Park and Ride improvements including: sign improvements, cement sidewalk, lighting, power source, landscaping, drainage, rain garden with two crossings, low maintenance plantings. Mr. Breslin also noted, the canon will not be moved; the bus stop building will not be moved. The plan shows Park light(s) placement with underground power to them; existing Park trees will be protected. The cost as submitted in October is: Park and Ride, \$352,000; Park lighting, \$196,000. Grants are received for: Park and Ride, \$288,000 with \$72,000 match; Park lighting, \$115,200 with \$38,000 match.

Ms. Lillian Billowicz representing a group Fair Haven Taxpayers United reported she presented to the Board in November and January the group's strong opposition to the project and the proposed replacement of sidewalks. She commented before starting new projects, fix the old ones and stop the waste of money -- even if it is State or Federal grants, it is tax money. Ms. Billowicz presented a petition to the Board and stated it is their intent to continue to pursue on any/all avenues and hope to include it on the November ballot. Park lights will be on programable timers and/or different circuits. Someone questioned, what kind of businesses are expected to come. Manager Gunter said the downtown improvement is an attempt to make the downtown more attractive -- a place where people can linger. Mr. Richards commented about a possible theater upstairs over the laundromat. Chief Humphries commented that Brandon has recently gone through this kind of downtown improvement. It used to be a tough Town and their climate has changed dramatically -- the same benefits could be seen in Fair Haven. Mr. Richards stated he does not understand the opposition to improvements in Town. Mr. Traverse commented trying to improve for safety, aesthetics, making it more attractive for folks when visiting for Town events such as Concerts, Street Market, Fair Haven Fridays, and a new brewery. The sidewalks need improving and the infrastructure under Main Street needs to be replaced before the State paves Rte. 4 through downtown. Mr. Galvin commented that without improvement, we will lose what we've got. He stated he appreciates the Board's effort. Mr. Neary commented the result of this community based project is threefold. Improved downtown **safety** for traffic and pedestrians; **accessibility** that is ADA compliant and improved **economics**. The project also meets the goals of the Regional plan. Taking advantage of available grants is a financial considerable advantage to the Town. Chairman Cole congratulated Mr. Neary on his new position.

Appointment with Green Mountain Mobile Manor Residents: Chairman Cole reported the Board met a month ago for non-payment of the water bill. Late this afternoon, Manager Gunter received a letter from Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) who's Mobil Home Program advocates and supports residents by connecting with several organizations to bring situations to safe and sustainable conclusions. Manager Gunter stated the Town has been talking with CVOEO since 2019 as well as with the Housing Authority action or satisfaction. CVOEO representative Ryan Gerrity stated the water bill will be paid; he is working with residents to organize and find a resolution. He commented that this is a nice park that has seen many problems including an enormous water leak. Manager Gunter said water lines cannot be flushed until this leak is addressed and repaired. The leak leaves the line open to contaminants that could cause danger to the entire water community. Mr. Gerrity noted they were only recently informed of the full scope of the issue and are committed to working with residents to resolution. They are working

with other organizations; VSHA is gathering resident information; no other housing is available; there are programs that can deal with infrastructure; working toward viable business plans for residents; exploring all options. Mr. Brown inquired that CVOEO knew about the water leak a month ago, why is it not fixed. Mr. Gerrity said, the process takes time. He said it is important that 1) residents remain safe -- there are children and folks with health problems involved; 2) the Town gets paid; and 3) repair the infrastructure. Mr. Richards said this is not the resident's fault; the Estate/owner is stuck in Probate Court. How does CVOEO work with Probate? The agency sees the seriousness of the situation; we work with residents; programs are there now; working with organizations to get this done as fast as we can; cannot give a realistic timeline; will follow up with report(s) to the Board; we welcome ideas and information. Chuck Delancy said some work was done on the water leak and the usage was down by half until the water was turned back on that caused more leaks -- he feels that problem is on the Town. Manager Gunter said he will work with CVOEO. Chairman Cole noted that residents do not pay water bills, they pay lot rent that covers water. Mr. Traverse thanked Mr. Gerrity for being here tonight. Hopefully CVOEO can work with residents to resolve the water/sewer issue and remove abandoned trailers to allow for new lots. Chairman Cole stated he is encouraged; that Mr. Gerrity has a plan to move forward. Mr. Chambers stated the water was shut off illegally and presented Manager Gunter and Board members with copies of Court filings.

There was a five minute break.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: None

OLD BUSINESS

Treasurer Pay: No one has been found for the position; Mr. Traverse is currently helping office staff. Mr. Traverse has made inquiries of other Towns for guidance on salaries and found there is no comparison as each Town has different job descriptions. The average time spent is 10 hours per week; the budget is currently at \$3500. Discussion was how best to proceed. Mr. Traverse made a **motion to increase the budgeted salary to \$6500 and readvertise**; seconded by Mr. Richards and passed unanimously.

Water Sewer Budget -- Final Review and Rate Setting: Mr. Richards made a **motion to set the water use rate at \$7.95 per 1,000 gallons**; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

Mr. Richards made a **motion to set the water base rate at \$38.50**; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

Mr. Richards made a **motion to set the sewer use rate at \$13.31 per 1,000 gallons**; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

Mr. Richards made a **motion to set the sewer base rate at \$25.00**; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

Parking Lot: Mr. Richards stated **Zoning Regulation Updates** is still on hold; Rutland Regional said they can start the Town Plan.

Board Roundtable: Mr. Greenough said the hole on Green Road is where the culvert was replaced and the gravel is not stable. He reported that Mr. Kerber told him there is no budget for paving there.

Mr. Greenough commented that the planter at the Stewarts intersection (donated by the Grade School) needs flowers

Mr. Brown commented that the person who was repairing the motorcycle on Main Street at the Park was doing engine repairs to a car. It does not look good on a Sunday morning to have someone changing oil on Main Street over a catch basin

Mr. Brown asked to make sure the Street would be blocked off for the Concert on Thursday

Mr. Richards said he is on a Committee that oversees State Funded projects that do not need permitting. This is through the Regional Planning Commission along with Mettowiee Conservation Committee. More to come

Review of Financial Reports: Mr. Richards **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$554,985.96;** seconded by Mr. Brown. This includes \$141,000 water/sewer debt; \$211,620 final appropriations. The motion carried with Mr. Traverse abstaining.

Mr. Richards **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$34,440.24;** seconded by Mr. Brown and passed with Mr. Traverse abstaining.

The **checkbook status** is, \$588,446.94

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse **moved the Board and Town Manager into executive session** at 9:50 pm to discuss Personnel: Labor Relations, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(1); Civil Litigation, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(1); seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

Out of **Executive Session** at 10:24 pm by motion from Mr. Brown; second by Mr. Richards

Mr. Brown **moved to adjourn** at 10:20; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Select Board Clerk