

**TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT**  
**SELECTBOARD; Water and Sewer Commissioners; Liquor Commissioners;**  
**Cemetery Commissioners**  
**REGULAR Select Board Meeting**  
**Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT – August 11, 2020 -- 7:00 P.M.**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Jeff Sheldon (via conference call), Bob Richards, Glen Traverse, Carol Egan, Jay Brown

**Others Present:** Town Manager Joseph Gunter, John Lulek, John Seighman, Erik Alling (via zoom meeting link).

**Call to Order:** Chairman Bob Richards called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Amendments to the Agenda:** Manager Gunter requested that a cemetery deed be placed on the agenda under new business. Mr. Traverse **motioned to add the approval of the cemetery deed under new business**, seconded by Ms. Egan. Passed

**Bike and Pedestrian Grant Discussion:** Erik Alling reviewed the history of the Bike and Pedestrian grant scoping work. He quickly reviewed the 4 proposals noting Alternative 4 focuses only on pedestrian travel; it includes crosswalk placement, bump outs, and grassy areas. There followed lengthy conversation exchanging ideas, possible loss of parking, noting areas of risk, need for sidewalk repair on both sides of Main Street. Mr. Brown was concerned about the Pedestrian islands in the center of the business block and in the free parking area. He noted that plowing would be an issue.

Mr. Traverse **motioned to accept alternative 4 of the bike and pedestrian scoping study** and noted the concerns of board members about the pedestrian islands, Ms. Egan seconded. Passed 4/1 Mr. Brown voting against.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Traverse made a **motion to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2020 meeting**; seconded by Ms. Egan and passed. Mr. Richards abstained because he was not present at the July 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Five Minutes for Public Comment:** John Lulek noticed that the dead tree on Marble Street was removed. He was also concerned about town hall repairs. He wishes the town hall refurbishment project ended. He feels the project is a waste of money. Mr. Lulek noted high brush along Prospect Street. Mr. Brown also had concern about the town hall refurbishment project. He was concerned about the beam over the fire department and did not want to waste money on the building.

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

- \* Paving will begin next week in the village;
- \* There was an update about the unruliness of the Eagles club. The police are monitoring the situation and the Club has threatened to close the location if the issues persist;
- \* South Main Street has been under heavy patrol and 32 speeding tickets have been issued;
- \* The road side mower is running again. Aaron found a Deck for the mower that was only \$50.00;
- \* 6 businesses have expressed interest in the upcoming grant competition. Deadline is August 24<sup>th</sup>;
- \* Letters have gone out to homeowners who have overgrown trees and bushes. They have until the end of the month to correct the problems;
- \* The tree on Marble has been removed;
- \* Budget season is approaching;
- \* The mayor will be holding a fundraising event in the park this Saturday;
- \* 10 Adam's street has received violations for their dogs and their junk; the police are monitoring the situation;
- \* 27 Grape St. has been issued a warning again for the large amount of junk on the property;
- \* There were 2 dog bites over the last few weeks. The police have issued citations. It is important to note that the town is not party to lawsuit concerning these incidents.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Grand list adjustment:** Mr. Gunter explained that the Listers found 3 errors that need to be adjusted to the grand list. Under Vermont state law the Listers must ask the Board of Selectmen to approve the changes:

- **Mr. Travers motion and Ms. Egan seconded** to approve the change in assessed property value for the property owned by Thomas Brusco and Joy Sayer located on Scotch Hill Rd. with span # 216-070-10166 from \$251,900 to \$228,500 Passed
- **Mr. Travers motion and Mr. Sheldon seconded** to approve the change in assessed property value for the property owned by John and Janet LaBate located on Washington Street with span # 216-070-11415 from \$78,100 to \$92,900. Passed
- **Mr. Travers motion and Mr. Sheldon seconded** to approve the change in assessed property value for the property owned by Jason LaBate located on Lewis Ln. with span # 216-070-11315 from \$161,000 to \$145,800. Passed

**Trees in the Park:** Mr. Gunter stated that there is a tree that was cut down in the park across from Community Bank. He was requesting the board to approve the replacement of the tree with a Red Sugar Maple. Discussion about the tree and location continued.

**Mr. Traverse Motioned to use an amount not to exceed \$1,950** from the Tree Replacement Capital Reserve Fund to replace the tree, Ms. Egan Seconded. Passed

**Trees Downtown Fair Haven:** Mr. Calvi did not come to the meeting to discuss the trees as planned. The topic was tabled

**Grant submission:** Mr. Gunter presented a number of ideas to submit to the state for grant funding. From the list the board supported the idea of requesting funding to upgrade the Town Hall Bathrooms to become ADA compliant. Mr. Gunter will develop a grant proposal and bring it to the board.

**Ballot Language for the 1% option tax:** The board reviewed the proposed ballot language for the 1% option tax. **Mr. Brown motions to accept the language as written;** Ms. Egan seconded. Passed.

Language adopted for the November Ballot:

- **ARTICLE 1:** Shall the voters of Fair Haven vote to authorize the creation of a charter for the purpose of initiating a local option tax?
  
- **ARTICLE 2:** Shall the voters of Fair Haven assess a one percent (1%) local options sales tax on all eligible sales, rooms and meals sales, and alcohol sales in accordance with 25 V.S.A. §138 and use those revenues to pay down Wastewater treatment facility bonded debt?

Manager Gunter presented the board the revised draft of the Option Tax Informational Flyer. After discussion Mr. Traverse requested the word “food” be changed to “groceries”. Manager Gunter said he will make the change. Flyers will be mailed in the next water bill and tax bill.

**Appointment to the rescue Squad Board:** John Seighman sent a letter to the Board of Selectmen expressing interest in serving on the Board of the Rescue Squad.

Ms. Egan asked Mr. Seighman about his qualifications. Seighman noted his experience as a paramedic, an EMT and a fire fighter.

**Mr. Brown Motioned to appoint Seighman to the board of the Fair Haven Rescue Squad** Mr. Traverse Seconded. Passed

**Parking lot:**

Brief discussion about tax stabilization, Lewis Lane ownership and the Personnel Policy

**Board Roundtable**

Ms. Egan noted a red unlicensed car parked on North Main St. And that the Griffith Rd. Sign had been vandalized. Manager Gunter Said he would look into these items.

Mr. Brown asked if the state project would be doing landscaping on 22A and if there was anything to be done about the burnt down house on 2<sup>nd</sup> street. Mr. Gunter said he would check on 22A but the home on 2<sup>nd</sup> street was private property.

Mr. Brown also noted that the stop signs on Academy, Cedar, Cemetery and Pleasant Streets were obscured and that the brush on the grass island at Dutton and 22A was grown over. Manager Gunter said he would get this taken care of.

And finally Mr. Brown said he heard of the State looking to build a new prison and was wondering if the town could somehow put in a bid for this. Manager Gunter again said he would look into this.

Mr. Traverse noted that school was starting soon and wanted the cross walks repainted. He was also concerned about the dilapidated RV that was parked on Washington. Mr. Gunter noted that the RV was gone as of 2pm. He will look into getting the cross walks painted though he noted that moving Highway staff from their current projects to paint cross walks will push all projects back at least a week.

Mr. Sheldon did not have anything tonight

Mr. Richards Wanted to know about the safety committee meetings. Mr. Gunter said they had only met once since he was hired. Mr. Richards also wanted the board to think about redoing the signage around the war memorial, perhaps moving the stop sign to in front of the library.

### **Financial Reports:**

There is \$468,503.67 in the checking account

**Mr. Sheldon motions to pay the general fund warrant of \$54,118.31** seconded by Mr. Brown passed

**Mr. Sheldon motions to approve the payroll warrant of \$33,994.73** seconded by Ms. Egan. Passed

**Mr. Brown Motioned to adjourn** Mr. Sheldon seconded. Passed

Meeting adjourned at 8:34PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Joseph Gunter

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Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk

Attachment 1  
Local Option Tax Information sheet

**PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS**

- Town Office  
3 North Park Place
- Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> 2020, 7:00pm
  - Tuesday, October 6, 2020, 7:00pm

***When is the proposed vote?***

**VOTE – AUSTRALIAN BALLOT**

American Legion Post 49  
Tuesday, November 3, 2020  
10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

***Why local option tax?***

- The local option tax will increase the number of people contributing to the wastewater treatment facility's annual \$152,000 payment.

***What is the local option tax?***

- The local option tax is a 1% tax charged to products and services bought in Fair Haven

***Who pays the local option tax?***

- Anyone that buys a product covered by the local option tax in Fair Haven pays the tax. This includes people from out of state and from other towns.

***Where will the tax money go?***

- All of the money will go to pay off the wastewater plant refurbishment.



***Does that mean People from New York and other towns help pay for Fair Haven's Wastewater plant?***

- Yes. When people come to Fair Haven to shop they pay the 1% tax and help pay for the Plant

**What products will the 1% be added to?**

- The 1% will be added to purchases such as:
  - Jewelry
  - Room rentals and meals
  - Alcohol products
  - Amazon.com purchases

**What is exempt from the 1%?**

- 1% will not be added to:
  - Groceries
  - Clothing
  - Home fuel oil
  - Car purchases
  - Gas
  - Anything that is not currently taxed

**How much money are we talking about?**

- Revenue from the Local Option Tax
  - Vermont Department of Tax's Economist estimate \$123,000 in taxes collected. Fair Haven will keep \$86,000 (70%).
  - This figure *does not* include online purchases from companies like Amazon which are also taxed at the 1% rate. Online taxes will increase the amount collected.



- The state of Vermont rolls 30% of the collected local option tax (about \$37,000) into the PILOT program
- Fair Haven received \$13,000 from the PILOT program last year.
- Loan payment
  - The loan payment is expected to be \$152,000 for 30 years
- The remainder of the payment
  - There will be about \$66,000 that will need to be raised in property tax or from sewer use fees.



***What happens if I vote no on the local option tax?***

- If the local option tax does not pass the \$152,000 payment will need to be added to the sewer bill; the property tax; or a combination of those two.

***So, what does that do to my sewer and tax bill?***

- Your sewer bill will go up.
  - If the \$152,000 payment is included on the sewer bill, residents will see an increase of about \$176.76 a year in sewer fees;
  - With the local option tax, the yearly increase would be about \$74.00 in sewer fees.
  
- Your Property taxes will go up.
  - If the \$152,000 payment is included on the property tax bill;
  - If your property is valued around \$180,000, your property tax will increase by about \$148.00 per year.



***What do other towns spend their local option tax money on?***

- **Rutland Town:** uses the local option tax in their operating budget
- **Killington:** uses their local option tax dollars to fund its golf course;

- **Rutland City (2% tax):** uses the additional tax in its operating budget
- **Colchester:** pays off debt (like Fair Haven will do) and funds voter approved projects;
- **Fair Haven:** Would be fiscally responsible and pay off debt. Once the debt is paid the tax can go away or residents can vote to spend the money in other ways.

***What do I do next?***

- Vote
- Both Articles must pass for the local option tax to take effect
- The proposed voting day is November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

***Proposed Articles***

- **ARTICLE 1:** Shall the voters of Fair Haven vote to authorize the creation of a charter for the purpose of initiating a local option tax?
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