

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT
SELECTBOARD; Water and Sewer Commissioners; Liquor Commissioners;
Cemetery Commissioners
REGULAR Select Board Meeting
Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT – August 25, 2020 -- 7:00 P.M.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

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

Others Present: Town Manager Joseph Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, John Lulek, Mike LaDuke, Rod Holzworth, Beverly Fedolfi, Mike Morris, David Calvi, several folk on conference call.

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.

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse **moved to add** “*Water Bills*” to the agenda; seconded by Ms. Egan and passed.

Mr. Traverse **moved to add** “*Personnel, 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(4)*” to Executive Session; seconded by Ms. Egan and passed.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse made a **motion to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2020 meeting** as written; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: At Mr. Lulek’s inquiry, the Insurance Adjuster will be here next Friday to inspect the Fire Station beam project.

Water Meters/Billing: Chairman Richards reported that five meters were sent out today to be tested. Expect results in two weeks. Manager Gunter stated he would start by giving some unpopular facts. Most homes use more water in the summer; the last billing was for cold winter months; there were almost no variations when comparing bills, summer to summer; this bill is for a four month period (not a qtr.). 88 residents were found to have leaks; of those, 36% saw no change; surprisingly, 10% saw a decrease; 38 homes saw an increase. We did a random sample and found: 60% had no change; 20% had an increase; 10% saw a decrease. At the end of the day, we will “figure this out”. There is a lot of talk on social media; folks are feeling frustrated; your concerns are not dismissed; will work with individuals and do any and all research necessary; we have a good, dedicated staff doing their best with a new program; folks are being heard.

Ms. Ikerd (on phone) reported her bill went up to 62. If the plumber finds no leak, how to proceed; if leak does not go to sewer, is there a waiver? Mr. Richards explained that sewer charge is waived when water does not go to sewer, ex. filling a pool.

Ms. Fedolfi explained, in detail, the complicated billing process that includes: both old and new meters; this is a four month billing; due dates are set and cannot change; homeowners are contacted when a leak is discovered (earlier detection is easier with the new program); charged by the thousand gallons -- if you use 1999 gallons, you are charged only 1 unit. She gave examples of ways to check for leaks, such as: check your own meter -- if the meter is running and no water is on; use food coloring in the toilet tank when not in use; if you will be away, read your meter before leaving and again upon return.

Mr. Smith (on phone). If it is found that the meter is defective, who pays for the plumber? Manager Gunter said, in that case, the Town would pay the plumber.

Ms. Fallon (on phone) reported she will try suggested ideas for possible leaks; expect to write a letter requesting sewer abatement for watering lawn/garden. Manager Gunter stated this is an old meter; was checked yesterday and is still running.

Ms. Chapterlain (on phone) stated she is expecting a plumber tomorrow. What is the policy for notifying customers when leak is found? Mr. Gunter noted they plan to "sweep" all meters weekly for a while and those found will be notified. All are welcome to the office; we will deal with folks individually; payment plans can be made.

Mr. LaDuke reported the new meters allow for much more information. Chairman Richards said the Board will re-visit this matter in two weeks; this will be worked out.

Bike Trails: The Board heard from Mr. Calvi and Mr. Morris who propose using some Town land, such as the North Woods for hike/bike/ski trails and ask if the Town is interested in promoting this beautiful underused resource. They shared examples of projects in other Towns. They discussed examples of different sites and levels of possibilities such as: a trail around Inman Pond -- not difficult to prepare as there is little obstruction. Needs would include: a small parking area; signage to identify time/distance/ level of routes; check with the State re: rattle snakes are protected. A kids trail can be constructed in a very small area (size of a football field). Could get the school(s), Rec program involved; also could coordinate with some private land owners. They noted contact with many people who comment on how Fair Haven is a great place -- start a hike/bike ride from the Park and end up at the Air Park not knowing there is more beyond. After discussion, the Board asked that Mr. Calvi and Mr. Morris prepare a basic mapping plan of suggested location(s) to give the Town a place to start. Members commented that this is a good idea and thanked them for their time and effort.

Department Head Reports: Manager Gunter reported the north end of Mechanic Street paving is done; will finish next week. Second, Allen, First and Grape Streets are in process.

- * Depot Street permitted catch basin is done
- * Will be working on brush cutting and culverts on Scotch Hill
- * Crosswalk painting is in progress
- * Cut brush and cleaned sidewalk on Southside
- * The Griffith Road sign is ordered
- * The water pooling problem on Caernarvon Street is being addressed
- * Down to 80 water meters left to install
- * Roadside mowing is done -- Mr. Brown reminded, some roads are not done
- * Brush on corner of Academy Street is also being addressed

- * Big dying trees on West Street and brush on Corner of Maple Street are being addressed
- * The Police Dept. is focusing on speeding issues -- Mr. Brown noted they have done an excellent job policing speeders on South Main Street since new pavement.
- * Are issuing daily citations for junk cars and barking dogs
- * Are working on the Department donated car, putting equipment back into it, getting it ready
- * There was vandalism at the playground; repairs are being done to the trailer
- * The playground gate is locked at night

Town Manager Report & Communications: Manager Gunter reported:

- * Has written a grant for Municipal Building bathrooms
- * Does the Board want another for the sprinkler system? Consensus is, yes
- * The painting on the brick building on the corner of Main and River Streets is finished; have received several complimentary comments on the project; are looking to do something similar on the Green Building
- * The dead tree on South Main Street is to come down
- * Does the Board want to discuss permanently closing “the Alley”; Mr. Brown noted winter maintenance is a problem; salt is deteriorating the brick work; will be on a future agenda
- * Will put a “For Sale by Town” sign up at 30 South Main Street
- * Starting work on a 80/20 match grant to replace the downtown sidewalks; project cost \$500,000
- * Have reached out to several entities for Harassment Training; no replies received
- * Have applied for \$20,000 Covid-19 money grant

OLD BUSINESS:

Personnel Policy Review and Approval: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to accept the new Personnel Policy** as written; seconded by Ms. Egan and passed unanimously.

USDA Loan Resolution for Wastewater Plant: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to accept and sign the USDA Resolution for the \$3,720,000 Wastewater Plant loan**; seconded by Ms. Egan and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Fee for Refusing Water Meter Replacement: There are 80 meters left to be replaced. There is a group of folks that are holding out. Does the Board wish to impose a fee for refusing? It is the consensus of the Board to wait until results from the current meter inquiries is resolved before addressing this issue.

Petition Requirements for Ballot Article Submission: Mr. Brown **made a motion to waive the Petition Requirement** for Town Meeting of March, 2021; return to requirement for the 2022 Town Meeting and thereafter; seconded by Mr. Traverse. Mr. Brown commented that a representative from petitioning groups should be present at Town Meeting to answer questions. The motion carried unanimously.

Manager Gunter reported the Lawyer handling the Lewis Lane project got back to him today; will call him back tomorrow.

Parking Lot: The **personnel policy** was approved tonight; still working on **Lewis Lane** ownership.

Board Roundtable: Mr. Brown inquired, if intersection sidewalk perimeters have been seeded? Have no information on this issue. * There is a manhole on South Main Street that needs repair. * Is there a schedule for cutting curb grass? * He has checked the on-going paving; they are doing the base coat.

Mr. Traverse reported someone asked re: did DPW use the **safety box** when repairing the manhole on Grape Street? Manager Gunter will check.

Chairman Richards commented that workers are not wearing masks at the Transfer Station; also there is smoking there and in vehicles.

Review of Financial Reports: The checkbook status is \$326,082.79

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the General Fund Warrants of \$95,098.81;** seconded by Mr. Brown and passed.

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the Payroll warrant for \$33,360.28;** seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed.

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse made a **motion to enter into executive session**, to include the Town Manager, at 9:04 p.m. under 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(1) to discuss contract Civil Litigation; and 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(4), Personnel; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

Out of Executive Session at 9:28 pm; no action taken

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire L. Stanley

Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk