

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

**Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners
Tuesday, September 20, 2022 – 7:00 PM Agenda**

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88588588180>

Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 885 8858 8180

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Glen Traverse, Bob Richards, Chadd Viger, Rich Greenough

Others Present: Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Jim Britt (PEG TV), John Lulek, John Seighman, Bookkeeper, Liz Ambuhl, Rod Holzworth, Tracy Richards

Call to Order: Chairman Bob Richards 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 **moved** to meet with Bookkeeper Liz Ambuhl; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse moved to **approve the Minutes of the September 6, 2022,** meeting; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed

Meeting with Bookkeeper Liz Ambuhl: The Board heard from Ms. Ambuhl reporting on requested information re: digitizing payroll. She researched programs re: cost and program capabilities. The cost for Paychex is \$8 to \$10,000/year, plus a \$600 set up fee. It allows employees to directly log into the computer and enter their time/hours with cell phone or other means. Water Dept. and Transfer Station do not have access to a computer. All information is pretty easily compiled by computer (W-2, checks, taxes, payroll, vacation, etc.). However, the downside is that this program does not have the capability to communicate with NEMRC, and the same manual work would still need to be done as it is now. There would be no office staff time saved, even add more. Chairman Richards stated this seems cost prohibitive. Ms. Ambuhl recommends to consolidate budget line items for individual employees to save time; the State no longer mandates separating summer and winter work. Time clocks cost is \$55/month. Ms. Ambuhl has received no response from other Towns contacted. She suspects they have the same issues. Manager Gunter noted that though time clocks seem old fashioned, they do what we need. Mr. Viger said he was seeking to find a way, what is needed to save human time. Ms. Ambuhl noted that each time she does payroll, it gets easier; consolidating budget line items would save time; all of each employee's time would fall into one DPW category; Tracy Richards commented that Dept. Heads could keep track of line item hours for transparency. Also, she noted some payroll systems have been known to malfunction. Ms. Ambuhl said that NEMRC is very good responding to and fixing any problems that arise, also capable of keeping track of grants hours. Mr. Greenough said that keeping track of time is sometimes critical, citing in the case of a natural disaster. Mr. Holzworth noted that consolidating line items is not possible

unless or until budgeting is changed, as funds are allocated to each line; itemizing is necessary for transparency to the voters. The Board thanked Ms. Ambuhl for her time and preparation.

Meeting with Town Treasurer: The Board heard from Town Treasurer Tracy Richards who stated Manager Gunter spent a lot of time to help her get oriented to the job; she found no discrepancies; the Manager has a good plan going. She found Liz Ambuhl very patient; both she and Eileen Richards were very helpful and supportive. It is interesting; met with the Listers and learned how property assessment process works; everybody was forthcoming. Met with the auditors who stated that they have never seen books look so good and were impressed with Ms. Ambuhl's work. She said that if anyone has questions to contact her. The Board thanked Ms. Richards for volunteering to take on the position and for her time getting acquainted with the job and for the report tonight.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Mr. John Lulek reported that his appointment as Health Officer is up in October. After 45 years, he is retiring at the end of October. Mr. Traverse thanked Mr. Lulek for his 45 years of service; Chairman Richards stated the Board is "sorry to see you go" but have certainly earned your retirement. Though the assistant Health Officer is interested in assuming the position, Chairman Richards noted that the process is to advertise as in the past, for interest from the public.

Mr. Brown arrived at 7:45

Department Head Reports: Manager Joe Gunter reported:

Police -- detailed report including breakdown of revenue is in members' packets

- * 26 Traffic/Municipal violations
- * 2 car crashes
- * 26 civilian fingerprints @ \$25 = \$650
- * Received the pole-mounted speed sign ordered (\$3500) using the Highway Safety Equipment Grant; delivery of 3 pedestrian crossing signs ordered using the same grant funds to be placed in the Main Street area is expected soon

Dept. of Public Works (DPW) -- detailed report in members' packets

- * Completed most of the planned crack sealing over the last two weeks with a rented machine. Will receive credit for lost time due to a malfunction
- * Will be flushing hydrants next week
- * Gravel delivery has started; waiting for winter sand
- * Will complete MRGP grant work on Mahar Road this week
- * Will be starting annual equipment maintenance preparing for winter months
- * Still waiting for a date from Pike for paving Fourth and Furnace Streets

Mr. Brown stated a \$500 daily late fee should be imposed for every day over contract finish date of Sept. 15th. Mr. Traverse stated Scotch Hill Road continues to deteriorate; Mr. Greenough said it was sealed today.

Water Dept.

- * In process of replacing chemical tanks; expect completion in about 12 weeks
- * Have replaced two hydrants

Sewer Dept.

- * The plant is running very well
- * Waiting for a date to do the sewer main flushing and sewer line camera detection work

Town Manager Report and Communication: Manager Joe Gunter reported:

- * The State will pay the next Trailer Park water bill. All water bills are paid. The non-profit agency program working with the Trailer Park ends in December; they will pay 70% of water bills through Oct. The State can/will advance tax money to the Park Manager, but cannot guarantee the funds will be forwarded to the Town.
- * The BHB company working on the Sheldon property for solar array will be taking another look at land adjacent to Munger Road and reassess wetland boundaries.
- * Have upgraded the NEMRC program to automate some functions
- * The Trailer Park tax sale requires a 60 day notice
- * Will be offering five properties for tax sale, also requiring 60 day notice if taxes are not paid
- * Still working through the audit -- expect to complete October 1st
- * Preparing for December bids for Lights in the Park and Park and Ride projects for Spring 2023 construction. Mr. Greenough requests to push for doing the Lights in the Park first to accommodate concerts. Chairman Richards reminds to review which lights are actually to be purchased.

OLD BUSINESS:

Salt Shed: Manager Gunter said there is nothing good to be said about the salt shed. He was unable to find the Amish sawmill to discuss lumber purchase. With current cost there is nothing that can be done with the amount budgeted. Mr. Brown **made a motion to refuse the \$152,000 salt shed grant monies**; seconded by Mr. Traverse. Mr. Greenough asked, if we do that, where are we. If we move to the Air Park, should move all at once; too much travel if salt shed is there and garage and gravel stays put. Mr. Viger asked if the Town can sit on the grant funds, if so, for how long. The motion carried unanimously.

Traffic Ordinance Discussion: Manager Gunter reached out to the High School again. They support a 25 MPH speed limit on Fourth Street. Signs have been requested; are awaiting language before making the final sign language edits to the ordinance. * Mr. Viger inquired if there is an ordinance re: use of engine brakes. Mr. Greenough noted they are a safety device on trucks; cannot ban their use, can only suggest for limited use; it was suggested to put up engine brake signs on Scotch Hill Road, Washington Street and Capitol Hill.

NEW BUSINESS

Property Sale -- Discussion: Manager Gunter prepared a list of and map descriptions for members. Members decided to remove the property (ball park) on Academy Street from the list as well as the lot behind it. Lengthy discussion followed including: parking at the Eagles Club; where exactly each property is located and if they can be sold. Members will study the maps and determine for next meeting which Manager Gunter is to research further for sale.

Cemetery Deed: Mr. Brown **made a motion to approve** the transfer of lot 149, in section 11 owned by Mr. Earl Corey (deceased) and Sally Corey back to the Town of Fair Haven and to transfer lot 144, in section 11 to Mr. Earl Corey (deceased) and Sally Corey. The motion was seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Policy Review: Back Flow Prevention

Chairman Richards noted it seems wordy. Manager Gunter reported DPW has no problems with it, have received no complaints. Any new construction requires this. Mr. Greenough **made a motion to keep it as it is**; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

Banners on Park Sign Posts: Mr. Traverse commented that there were two banners at the same time which was unsightly. Discussion was that some events remove their signs immediately after the event is over (flags and concerts) and some do not. Farmers Market and Friday Street Market go on all summer; should we add another signpost -- no; have no signs at all; should be asked to take down signs when another event is to occur. Mr. Holzworth said that some comments have been heard at his business from vacationing out of town folks that have seen the signs and plan to attend the events.

Around Town: * On Sunday, September 25th, at 2:00 pm, Historian Polly Allen will present at an event held at the Legion re: the history of the "little Red House", on Capitol Hill. * Stick Figures will again, for the third year, be displayed at the Park for Halloween beginning October 1 & 2.

Parking Lot: Manager Gunter reported having reached out again re: the **Adams Street Bridge replacement**. Mr. Brown suggests using a temporary steel bridge, or using I-beams with planking, opening the bridge up for cars only. It is necessary for emergency situations. Chairman Richards reported the Planning Committee will meet with the Regional Committee re: **Downtown Designation** expecting to receive a final copy for the **Town Plan**. Only item is changing setback designations, with neighbors' agreement.

Board Roundtable: Mr. Greenough stated he appreciates the good work done by the Town crew ditching on Scotch Hill; it will make a difference. * He is enthused re: property sales to grow the tax base and hopes for more ideas to be brought forward. * Need to continue work re: moving the Town barn and salt/sand shed at once and to where; may need a bond to get the work done. * Some Streets need new/repared sidewalks -- would like to pursue grants for this work.

Mr. Brown asks that Police check parking in the Street at the Day Care location on Mechanic Street -- a dangerous situation. * He spoke with a lady on Furnace Street re: water not going into the manhole. He assured her the paving would take care of that problem. * He expressed concern that garbage was not picked up by the people responsible for Applefest held in the Park last weekend. * Is there any chance a crosswalk could be painted from the East Park entrance to the Bank for next summer concert season. * He expressed concern that one parttime police officer had reported 72 ½ hours in a two week period.

Mr. Viger noted * how do we increase the tax base. Start a marketing campaign; reach out to Castleton University interns interested in developing a program; would be a good partnership with C U and a good opportunity for the students.

Mr. Traverse commented re: the TIF program, to seek empty spaces to start businesses. Chairman Richards suggested to reach out to Vergennes for ideas to change downtown. They provided incentives for new businesses to clean up empty spaces to make them attractive where a business could be interested in a startup.

Chairman Richards said he would like more discussion re: consolidation of budget line items. Ms. Ambuhl made a good presentation -- please let her know the Board appreciates it; there are opportunities for savings. Manager Gunter prepared a handout of the 11 line items involved in Dept. of Public Works payroll. * Chairman Richards inquired re: the Fire Dept. investigation. * Chairman Richards inquired, is there any interest in moving the Select Board meetings to Monday -- he has a conflict with Regional Planning meetings. Mondays are very difficult for office to prepare materials for the meeting. Mr. Richards stated will have to advertise for someone to take his place on the Regional Planning Commission.

Review of Financial Reports: Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$35,296.75;** seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$158,078.97;** seconded by Mr. Viger. This included payments to Cassella, BC/BS, and a bond payment. The motion carried unanimously.

The **checkbook status** is, \$186,544.41

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse **moved the Board and Town Manager into executive session at 9:00 pm** to discuss Personnel: Attorney/Client Communication, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(1); seconded by Mr. Brown and passed.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:45; Motioned by Mr. Brown; seconded by Mr. Viger

Board adjourned at 9:46; motioned by Mr. Brown; seconded by Mr. Viger

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk