

**TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT**

**Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners  
Tuesday, October 4, 2022 – 7:00 PM Agenda**

**Zoom Meeting Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84260842556>

**Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 842 6084 2556**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

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

**Others Present:** Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, John Lulek, Rod Holzworth, Lorraine Brown, Bob Dollar, Neil Robinson, Carl (Pie) Ruby, Chief William Humphries

**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 add** “Health Concerns” to Old Business as requested by Health Officer John Lulek; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Chairman Richards acknowledged the death of Mr. Jonas Rosenthal this past week noting he had served as Fair Haven’s Interim Town Manager for many months. Condolences will be sent to the family.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Traverse moved to **approve the Minutes of the September 20, 2022,** meeting; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed

**Meeting with Neil Robinson -- Hydro Project:** The Board heard from Mr. Robinson who brought along a sign asking citizens to vote “yes” in 2014 on the \$250,099 **Hydro Project**. He gave a detailed presentation of the history of the existing dam that could still be used for electric generation today. Mr. Robinson reported this project is one of only two sites in the State where permit is not needed; that Fair Haven qualifies for Municipal bonding; can bypass the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) process; that Vermont has a low carbon footprint; Hydro is the most efficient power source. Mr. Brown said he thought that Green Mountain Power (GMP) would not accept the power. Mr. Robinson noted GMP is changing their perception on Hydro. Chairman Richards said there was also the issue of needing a substation and other infrastructure needs; that the next test is low flow volume. He noted there is a lot of available funding out there. The committee is ready for application; need someone with grant application expertise; would like a second Select Board member on the Energy Committee; that the return on investment is “huge”, but 20 to 25 years out. Mr. Robinson reported the public wants this project; Chairman Richards said the committee needs to meet with GMP to find out where they stand; may have changed their attitude; that water is the most efficient energy source, and that it was found that no species will be negatively affected downstream by this project. Mr. Traverse said he is not a proponent of Hydro because there are too many questions. Mr. Viger stated he is all for anything to reduce the carbon footprint and reduce

energy cost; what is the up front cost; what funds are available out there. Mr. Dollar stated there is need to find answers to all these questions; are not getting responses from the State or GMP; need face to face meetings; there is a lot of money out there; and if it is not economical and feasible, don't do it. Mr. Traverse noted he would like to see the Energy Committee get broader -- weatherization, wind; not getting reports from the committee; when, how often do they meet. Mr. Greenough noted he has some experience with Hydro and found it to be labor intensive maintenance, needing daily maintenance; who will be doing that; can't say he is totally for it at this time. He also stated that there is a sign at Carvers Falls, maintained by GMP, that reads, at one time, that Hydro station supplied all of Fair Haven. Chairman Richards asked, is the Board interested in doing this project or should we cease and desist. Mr. Greenough said we should pursue all aspects. Chairman Richards stated that Rutland Regional Planning Commission by-laws do not allow wind energy generation in Rutland County. Mr. Viger said we should look for funding sources. Chairman Richards said a lot of preliminary permit work is done; have a verbal commitment with the landowner that the Town has first refusal on the dam property. Mr. Robinson was thanked for his time and effort for this presentation.

**Five Minutes for Public Comment:** Lorraine Brown reported visiting with folks from Canada that were enjoying the Stick Figures commenting on the beautiful Park. She reminded members that the Park fence is "disgraceful", and the Board needs to do something about it. Chairman Richards noted this is budget season; will consider the request at that time.

**Department Head Reports: Police Chief William Humphries reported:**

- \* There is a 2-week detailed report in members' packets
- \* 7 arrests
- \* Served an arrest warrant for two individuals for several different robberies
- \* 65 speeding tickets
- \* 21 civilian fingerprints @ \$25
- \* Have addressed the parking issue on Mechanic Street. Mr. Brown stated the dangerous parking is still going on; Chief will again reach out to them
- \* Mr. Traverse noted there is a truck parking (overnights) on Caernarvon Street at an intersection
- \* Most speeders on Rte. 22A are headed North; one passed the Chief in his police car
- \* Would like to purchase two more crosswalk street signs (\$350 each, plus shipping) and place them on Washington Street at St. Mary's and Heritage Credit Union. Mr. Viger **made a motion to approve the purchase of two crosswalk street signs for an amount not to exceed \$900 paid from the streets and sidewalk account.** The motion was seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

Chief Humphries wants to start a conversation re: the purchase of a car. He experienced sticker shock at the price of a new car (\$40,000 plus). There was discussion re: options; new, used; from State surplus; mileage; price. Mr. Brown **made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to access up to \$25,000 from the Police Vehicle account** for the purchase of a car for the Police Dept. The motion was seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

**Manager Gunter reported:**

**Dept. of Public Works (DPW)** There is a detailed report in members' packets

- \* Hydrant flushing is completed
- \* Are accepting gravel deliveries; sand deliveries next week
- \* Have finished the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) grant work on Mahar Road to mitigate stormwater/erosion issues
- \* Are doing equipment undercoating again this year
- \* Pike will be paving Fourth and Furnace Streets on the 12<sup>th</sup>

**Water Dept.**

- \* Have started demolition of current chemical tanks
- \* Expect delivery of new tanks late November
- \* Water shut offs will start on the 18<sup>th</sup>

**Sewer Dept.**

- \* Sewer line flushing will start on the 18<sup>th</sup>
- \* Waiting on a date for the camera work
- \* Select Board meeting at the sewer plant for a tour on the 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

**Town Manager Report and Communication: Manager Joe Gunter reported:**

- \* Two of the five properties for tax sale have paid their taxes in full
- \* Health Officer John Lulek addressed the rat problem on Grape Street
- \* There was a sewer backup at the Municipal Building last week. The basement has been cleaned up and the problem/cause repaired
- \* There is a roof leak over the Police Dept. entryway. Repairs will be made
- \* The Town website upgrade continues; Bree Gunter, Manager Gunter's wife is the project manager; that is her line of work.
- \* The solar project at the Transfer Station is moving forward; it is expected to pay \$1,000/year during development; and \$9,000/year when active.

There was discussion re: sources options to increase revenue including a possible solar project north of the Air Park. Chairman Richards stated that he is opposed to solar on Air Park property; he wants that area to stay open. Mr. Traverse said it is possible to lease the land to grow commercial crops and still have open property. We should consider everything that comes on the table.

At Chairman Richard's inquiry, Manager Gunter stated he reached out to the Electric Vehicle Charging Station company that reported they are struggling with GMP. He will reach out again.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Banners on Park Sign Posts:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the Policy as written;** seconded by Mr. Brown. The only change is to include that there may be only one banner at a time at each location. The motion carried unanimously.

**Traffic Ordinance:** Manager Gunter reported he received the sign language and updated the ordinance language to incorporate the Fourth St. 25 MPH speed limit and School Zone sign

suggested by Ms. Bonnie Rosati. All changes were reviewed; signs were selected; Manager Gunter will prepare a “clean” copy for signature at the next meeting.

**Health Issues:** Health Officer John Lulek reported a rat incident on Grape Street where he wrote a citation. He said there are two properties on Union Street that need to be cleaned up; two properties in that neighborhood that have chickens. There followed discussion re: how to proceed. Manager Gunter reached out to legal that said the Town can clean out the brick house anytime as a nuisance property. An exterminator will address the rat problem on Grape Street; will get it in writing tomorrow from Orkin that the extermination will not kill cats. We are working on the problem.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Transfer Station Application:** Mr. Brown **made a motion to approve an application for Transfer Station credit** as requested by Jake Helm DBA Premier Roof Solutions; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

**Green Mountain Power (GMP) Easement for Solar Project:** GMP needs to drop poles in the Transfer Station property to progress with the solar project. Copies of the easement and a map showing the current and proposed pole locations are in members’ packets. Members reviewed the easement language line by line; Mr. Holzwoth suggested to ask that a sunset clause be included so that if the solar array “goes away”, the Town will have access to the easement property. Manager Gunter will address this issue with GMP before signing.

**Budget Review Begins -- Budget Overview:** Manager Gunter prepared a budget showing a 3.5% increase as requested by the Board. The budget handout included an explanation page stating the department requests came in at 10.4% increase or \$163,474 over the requested 3.5%. Salary increases are the major contributor to the increase accounting for over 50% of the overall increase. Notable places where funding was cut are enumerated; fuel, heating oil and diesel were not cut as they are considered critical budget line items. The 3.5% does not include appropriations that are voted in each year (adding to the tax bills). Appropriations do not need petitions again this year to be included on the ballot. Chairman Richards stated a 3.5% increase is not realistic; every \$20,000 in the budget adds 1 cent/\$100,000. Mr. Viger said folks do not mind a raise in taxes if they feel they are getting the services. There was discussion re: DPW short staffing; vacations, injury, overtime. DPW is short staffed to account for the salary increases. Members will review and discuss at the next meeting.

**Around Town:** \* The Friday Street Market will continue to mid-October. \* Stick Figures are displayed for a third Halloween season at the Park through the end of October.

**Parking Lot:** Chairman Richards reported the **Zoning Committee** has received a clean copy of their document; there are a few changes left to do; are planning special meetings to finalize the document. Mr. Traverse stated he would like to add **Property Maintenance Ordinance** to the Parking Lot. Discussion was re: that you cannot tell someone what they can do to/with their

property. Mr. Greenough reported that they were told they could not even set foot on the property at 6 Grape Street that is vacant and neglected. Weeds had grown out of control with garbage on the premises. They were finally able to contact the property manager that mowed and removed the garbage from the yard to the garage. Ms. Stanley said that is right, you can't tell someone what to do on their property and you cannot make them clean up. But you can inspire change. She said she had visited folks in the neighborhood where the incident occurred and learned that the next day after the Health Officer inspected, the landlord made repairs to the foundation. She requested that letters be sent to the Town Office stating their experience with rats in the area giving the Town Manager information to support efforts for change. That everyone in the neighborhood needs to do their part or nothing will get done to get rid of the rat infestation. The brick house on Union Street has been vacant for several years and in litigation. Maybe it will take all of us going to the next court hearing to demand action. Folks going to funerals/burials in the nearby cemetery need to drive/walk by these unsightly properties. Not acceptable. Manager Gunter is working on the problem.

**Board Roundtable:** Mr. Greenough said the brick house and rat problem should be investigated to find out what can be done.

Mr. Greenough said the Young property asking price is \$250,000. There followed discussion whether the salt shed and sand and gravel would all fit on the property along with the Town garage. Manager Gunter said he does not support purchasing the property without first giving serious thought and conducting a study to determine whether the property is suitable for the intended purpose. Chairman Richards said it is a good piece of property; unlike at the Air Park, no need to consider the underpass or distance; and need to consider State flood violations at the present location. Mr. Greenough said utilities (water and electric) might be inadequate without upgrade. Mr. Greenough reported, given the increase costs of building, the Dunkin Doughnuts construction project on the corner of Fourth and Washington streets has increased by two and a half times. Manager Gunter is asked to prepare a pro's and con's list for next discussion.

Mr. Greenough spoke re: starting a grant program to repair/replace sidewalks. Discussion was where to start; have to start somewhere. There are several viable sources for funding. The suggestion is to maybe concentrate on Grape Street by paving the sidewalk making it a little improvement zone. Inspiration said Ms. Stanley. Mr. Greenough reminded that folks attending a funeral at St. Mary's often walk Grape Street to the cemetery for burial.

Mr. Brown commented that \* vehicles are parking in front of the school. Didn't we put "no parking" signs up there. \* He stated that funds should be held back for paving projects that are not finished by the agreed upon completion time @ \$1,000/day. That next year's contract should enforce late finish penalty. \* Could we have a larger Christmas tree in the park next year. This one is too small; purchase a much larger artificial tree for the Park.

Mr. Viger is trying to find ideas/programs for teens. Is it possible to marry the Rec Dept. with Park maintenance. The Park is our biggest asset, and we need to do more (activities) for our

youth. Return budget funds for curb appeal activities such as contests with monetary rewards (prizes).

Chairman Richards reported that near his house there are three houses on one water feed reporting very poor water pressure. Manager Gunter will investigate.

**Expenditure / Revenue Reports:** Copies of the computer General Ledger in members' packets

The **checkbook status** is, \$ -3,964.93

**Review of Financial Reports:** Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$36,361.77;** seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$304,612.78;** seconded by Mr. Brown. This includes a Sewer Plant bond payment. The motion carried unanimously.

**Executive Session:** Mr. Traverse **moved the Board and Town Manager into executive session** at 10:10 pm to discuss Attorney/Client Communication, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(1); seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 10:15. Mr. Brown motioned to **Adjourn:** seconded by Mr. Viger and passed. Meeting adjourned at 10:16.

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

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Glen Traverse, Board Clerk