

**TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT**  
**SELECTBOARD; Water and Sewer Commissioners; Liquor Commissioners;**  
**Cemetery Commissioners**  
**REGULAR Select Board Meeting**  
**Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT -- October 6, 2020 -- 7:00 P.M.**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Bob Richards Jeff Sheldon (on phone), Jay Brown (tardy), Glen Traverse

**Members Absent:** Carol Egan

**Others Present:** Town Manager Joseph Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, William Chmielewski, Peg TV, John Lulek, Rod Holzworth, II., Police Chief William Humphries

**PUBLIC HEARING:** Second and final hearing re: **proposed 1% local option tax** vote on November 3, 2020. Manager Gunter prepared a handout, a calculation of 8.3¢ per \$100 increase to property taxes if the \$152,000 yearly payment is added. Mr. Holzworth reminded that this tax has the same exemptions as sales tax; will not know how much is to be collected until post Covid-19. Manager Gunter reported the national average of on-line purchases for the last 8 quarters is 11%; do not have on-line sales information for Fair Haven or other individual Towns, and there is no reliable estimate of on-line sales. All tax is collected by the State; 70% is returned to the Town; 30% stays with the State. If the cost is imposed on users only, the sewer base rate would increase from \$16.30/qtr. to \$60.50/qtr. or \$242./year. Mr. Sheldon asks, if payments could be started a year early which would reduce the impact? At Mr. Holzworth's inquiry of what would happen if the local option tax is voted down, Chairman Richards said there are only two options: to incorporate the cost into the regular budget, causing a dramatic increase; or put it onto users only. Payments start in two or three years, depending on construction start.

The PUBLIC HEARING was closed at 7:22 p.m.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Bob Richards called the meeting to order at 7:23 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Amendments to the Agenda:** Manager Gunter asked to remove "Fuel Bids"; are not yet received.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Traverse made a **motion to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2020 meeting** as written; seconded by Mr. Sheldon and passed.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2020 Special Meeting;** seconded by Mr. Sheldon. There was question re: Mr. Scott's comments. Mr. Sheldon **moved to table until a conversation with Mr. Scott could occur;** seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed.

**Five Minutes for Public Comment:** Mr. Lulek, Health Officer stated under the (Covid-19) circumstances, he does not support any Town sponsored Halloween activities such as Trunk or Treat.

He also noted the Rutland Halloween parade has been cancelled. Discussion included that Dr. Lavine, State Health Commissioner stated no objections to Halloween activities, as long as strict guidelines (gloves, masks, etc.) were observed. Posting guideline reminders on social media would be helpful.

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

- \* The \$41,000, no match equipment grant is received that will allow upgrading to digital records.
- \* Last Friday, there was an accident on River Street where a motorcycle ran into a police car causing the motorcycle driver leg injury and totaling/ruining the police car. Officer Hewitt was “shook up”; met with the crisis worker; is fine now.
- \* Would like to promote folks decorate their homes for Halloween as a Covid-19 safe and positive alternative to outside gatherings.
- \* The annual **food drive** is on track
- \* Three small, hand held LINDAR units for speed control and four boxes of flares were purchased.
- \* Officer Dale Kerber completed 12 years with Town.

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

- \* Manager Gunter read aloud a letter from Neil Robinson in support to the local option tax.
- \* Sent composting information as requested previously by a resident.
- \* A letter of apology was received from Mr. Pentkowski stating he was confused about the source of the noise from the manhole.
- \* Received three requests for sewer abatement: two for garden watering and one for hot tub fill. All three were denied; can appeal to the Board.
- \* Highway winter sand is received.
- \* Will finish the grant work on Scotch Hill this week; the grant supervisor is pleased with the work.
- \* DPW is working to prepare for winter work which will include undercoating trucks this year.  
7:35 p.m. Mr. Brown arrived
- \* Academy and Adams Street sewer quotes finally arrived.
- \* Water flushing is done.
- \* \$24,000 no cost Covid-19 grant for technology upgrade is received.
- \* The fuel tank will be closed tomorrow.
- \* Work on park lighting is coming along.
- \* The Lewis Lane letter was sent last Friday.
- \* Water shutoffs will be starting soon; some customers have not paid for a year.
- \* Waste Water Treatment Plant design is 60% done.
- \* The Town will receive a 7% insurance discount.
- \* The State requires all fuel tanks to be inspected; not allowed to pump fuel from the old tank into the new one; not allowed to donate fuel from the old tank; library just had theirs filled; the contractor offered to purchase the fuel for 50¢/gallon; there is about 1,000 to 1500 gallons of fuel. Manager Gunter will reach out to Fair Haven Concerned and BROCC.
- \* Dog Mayor Murphee has requested to have a “Halloween Spectacular” in the Park. Discussion included: can’t stop anyone from Trick or Treating; need to remind folks of safety and Covid-19 guidelines; the consensus of the Board is to not allow Town sponsored activities.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**MHG Solar Improved Proposal:** There is new interest with a proposed different contract that does not require long term commitment. If the Board is interested Manager Gunter will pull the contract for further review. Mr. Brown felt the Board had given them quite a firm no in the past. Chairman Richards said to pull the contract and see what they now have to offer.

**American Legion Request for Funds:** Post 49 requests \$5,000 for stone used to fill in the trench caused by a sinking Town owned water pipe under their parking lot. Mr. Brown stated that job was way over done; dug too wide; and done privately. Mr. Brown **made a motion to not pay the \$5,000 requested**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed.

**Cemetery Deed:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve sale of cemetery lot 54 South in section 11, as requested by Agnes Plante**; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed. Members signed the deed.

**Fuel Tank Loan Resolution:** Mr. Brown **made a motion to sign the Loan Resolution, \$26,000 for five years at 0% interest**; seconded by Mr. Traverse. The original estimate was for two tanks in the basement (\$20,000). It was since decided to install a 1000 gallon double walled tank outside requiring additional \$26,000. The project includes closing the old tank and all cleanup. The motion carried -- members signed the document.

**Water Connection Permit Approval:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the water/sewer connection** at 22 and 24 Capital Hill as requested by Craig Roberts; seconded by Mr. Brown. There is sufficient capacity; all fees and permits are done. The motion carried.

**Governor's Highway Safety Grant:** Police Chief Humphries reported the current contract has expired. Due to Covid-19, the new contract has been delayed for a couple months and requests approval of current contract criteria for the interim. He presented a letter of approval from the Sheriff's Department and notes he has documentation of work done. Mr. Brown stated he wants to see the new contract before approving and noted he has not supported this plan in the past. He complimented the Police Dept. for a good job slowing traffic on South Main Street. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to grant temporary approval until the 2020-2021 Governor's Safety Grant contract is ready**. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sheldon and passed with Mr. Brown dissenting.

**FY 2021-2022 Budget:** First draft of proposed budget with accompanying documents was in members' packets. Manager Gunter gave a brief overview of the budget noting that as presented, there is an increase of 2.89%. He feels that infrastructure is important and notes the budget is DPW heavy. It was necessary to include \$9000 for the proposed police dispatch fees though disposition of this matter is unknown; also a roadside mower and \$5000 for paving. It is also noteworthy that the Fire Truck is paid for and not included as well as a part-time Rec Director.

**Parking Lot:** Mr. Brown asked if, for the winter, the Ally can be closed to walking traffic only using the snow blower?; salt is deteriorating the buildings. Would snow pile up cause problems also. Mr. Gunter will research this matter.

**Board Roundtable:** Mr. Brown reported there is a deep manhole on Mechanic Street that needs to be filled in. There is a manhole on South Main Street needs repair.

Mr. Brown reported there will be a donation for the playground from the Castleton Legion.

At Mr. Sheldon's inquiry, we are still waiting for the engineer's report for the status of the cracked beam in the fire house. The discussion was that now the USDA has approved a grant for an elevator; if it turns out the upstairs cannot be used, there is no need for an elevator.

Chairman Richards reported there was a complaint that RC Fliers "strong armed" people at the Air Park; need to be reminded that they are guests and need to share the Air Park space being good neighbors; that all walkers are welcome there.

Mr. Brown related that in Essex, the Town cleaned up DPW trucks and equipment and let kids climb all over them; there was a hay wagon for rides. He felt this is good public relations and perhaps could be considered as an activity here in the spring, following strict Covid-19 regulations.

He reported that Rutland Economic Development Corporation (REDC) sponsored a program, giving out certificates of purchase good at local businesses. Funding for applications ran out quickly and Fair Haven did not participate.

**Review of Financial Reports:** The checkbook status is \$70,693.18

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the Payroll warrant for \$34,424.41**; seconded by Mr. Mr. Brown and passed.

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the General Fund Warrants of \$592,594.36**; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed.

**Executive Session:** Mr. Traverse moved the Board and Town Manager into executive session at 8:40 p.m. under 1 VSA 313 (a)(1) for attorney – client communications; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

Out of executive session at 8:55.

**Adjourned** at 8:55 – Mr. Brown made a motion; seconded by Jeff Sheldon and passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Claire L. Stanley

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Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk