

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

Selectboard; Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners

MUNICIPAL BUILDING Tuesday, November 16, 2021 - 7:00PM - Regular Meeting

Zoom Meeting Link: <http://us02webzoom.us/j/86822470065>

Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 868 2247 0065

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Chris Cole - Chair, Rod Holzworth, II, Jeff Sheldon (via phone)

Members Absent: Carol Egan, Glen Traverse

Others Present: Town Manager Joseph Gunter, Recording Secretary Jennifer Jackson, Jim Britt of Peg TV, Health Officer John Lulek, Superintendent of Public Works Aaron Kerber, Chip Greeno C&C Fireworks, Charles Greeno C&C Fireworks, Lorraine Brown with the IBC Committee, Kim Rupe - CEDRR, Lyle Jepson - CEDRR, Ceil Hunt from Fair Haven Concerned, Chelsea Gaudet, Lillian E. Billewicz, Rec Director Nicole Rice (via phone).

- 1. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Cole called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
- 2. Amendments to the Agenda:** Mr. Gunter asked for an addition to the executive session for a contract negotiation V.S.A. 313 (a) (1). **Mr. Holzworth made a motion to make an amendment to the agenda to add contract negotiation V.S.A. 313 (a)(1) to the executive session;** seconded by Mr. Sheldon, passed unanimously.
- 3. Approval of Minutes of November 2, 2021:** Mr. Holzworth **motioned to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2021** meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Sheldon and passed unanimously.
- 4. Appointment with Lyle Jepson from CEDRR:** Mr. Jepson from Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) stated that Fair Haven has given \$500.00 to their organization and the regional marketing initiative for the last 6 year and he was at the meeting to talk about the donation from the town for the next year. Mr. Jepson is asking each town to donate \$1.00 per resident as Rutland, their biggest donor does. Kim Rupe shared a handout with highlights of CEDRR's work in the Rutland Area. With their help about 50 families equaling around 100 people have moved into Rutland County. The new families are working in healthcare, remote work, and nonprofit sectors. None of the families have moved into Fair Haven, but there are currently no volunteers from Fair Haven to encourage individuals to come to the town. CEDRR would be open to volunteers with the Real Rutland & Concierge from Fair Haven joining their organization. CEDRR has a large online social media presence and spends about 51% of their raised funds on FACEBOOK marketing. CEDRR is still updating their webpage, REALRutland.com, and have asked

towns to fill out an inventory if they would like more information on the page or if they think something is missing.

Mr. Jepson said that they have raised around \$600,000 in about 55 years and spent around \$544,000 mostly on marketing and digital advertising. Business community is subsidizing the project, ones who need employees and advertising through them. He stated that one of the major issues that the area, and Vermont, is facing in trying to get more people to move in is the lack of affordable housing. This lack is hurting the businesses.

CEDRR's largest fundraiser is their annual REAL RUTLAND FAMILY FEUD event on February 26th. They are looking for local businesses and/or towns to play. Entry fee is \$1500.00.

Mr. Cole asked if there were any questions from the board. Mr. Holtzworth stated he would like to talk to the economic development committee and get their opinions. Mr. Sheldon asked if the \$500.00 is already in the budget; it is.

Ms. Hunt asked Mr. Jepson's opinion as to who the town can work with to help with the rental costs and housing shortages. Mr. Jepson stated that finding investors and property owners that are willing to develop duplex or more than one resident housing would help. That there are grants available, they are looking for more. The real need is a developer to come to the community and a plot of property to build. He stated that there is a domino effect; once one developer comes in and develops property then more will. Chairman Cole stated that Mr. Gunter and Ed Bove from RRPC have been working on a transportation company.

5. **Renters meeting for water shutoffs:** Manager Gunter reported the policy states that before there can be a water shutoff, renters are to be afforded a hearing before the Select Board. Chelsea Gaudette, renter from 18 W. Park Place, explained her situation and stated that her family was in the process of obtaining assistance through VERAP and brought her application number. Manager Gunter stated that if she can show she is approved for assistance then developing a payment plan with the town would be the next step. **Mr. Holtzworth made a motion to allow Manager Gunter to enter into a payment agreement for past water and sewage fees with 18 West Park Place.** Mr. Sheldon seconded the motion. Manager Gunter stated the agreements are usually for a 6-month term. Ms. Gaudette stated she would make an appointment to speak with Manager Gunter the next day. All were in favor of the motion and the motion passed.
6. **Five minutes for Public Comment:** Mr. Lulek was pleased to see the municipal building had a mask policy in place again. Ms. Brown had two items for the board. First, she would like to see some money allocated in the budget to help repair/repaint the park fence. Secondly, the IBC (Itty Bitty Committee) had operated for 2 years without a budget and are asking for a small stipend. They are in need of Christmas lights and they normally have to scrimp and save. \$500.00 would be a wonderful gift.

Ms. Hunt stated that Fair Haven and the United States of America have birthday's coming up; 250 years. The Historical Society would like to support the celebrations. She was wondering if the Selectboard had thought about the upcoming birthdays at all. Chairman Cole stated that a committee would be great. Ms. Hunt stated that the Historical Society and the IBC can work together to acknowledge the dates. She would like the town to share their past accomplishments but also look forward towards the future and what we want to become.

Ms. Billowicz from Fair Haven Tax Payers United, a group formed to closely monitor the spending by the selectboard, constrain excessive and needless spending, and to direct the town manager and selectboard to focus their attention, efforts, and spending on older projects around town before aspiring to new adventures. She presented two documents with signatures to Town Manager Gunter and Chairman Cole, pursuant to 17 V.S.A 2642 a3A. She then read the documents. Her group opposes the changes to park and ride, sidewalk changes from the grade school to liberty street, and removal of trees from downtown, and oppose the spending of \$100,000 for this purpose. They request any and all planned funding, contract and negotiation, studies, grant seeking or matching for and revitalization purposes to cease. The second article states that they oppose the creation, authorization and funding for a new \$15-20,000 paid position on the economic development committee.

Department Head Reports:

Superintendent of Public Works Aaron Kerber reported:

- The Highway Department;
 - Transfer station boys have been getting set up for the solar project.
 - Getting winter and summer equipment ready for use and storage.
 - Have attended trainings on how to manage roads better.
- Water:
 - Reviewed inspection reports; the tanks will both need help in next few years.
 - South tank will need a clean up of the floor, there is build up of material on the floor of the tank.
 - North tank will need the protective coating fixed on the exterior as there is concrete at the bottom of the tank. There is a company coming Nov. 17 to give a quote on cleaning, coating, and fixing the cracks. Funds will be needed to fix this.
 - The guys have been out locating curb stops without maps and recording locations to be quicker on calls
 - Prices for Adams Street Water Bridge repair later in the agenda.
- Sewer and Wastewater:
 - Sewer Main flushing went well.
 - Waste Water Plant Upgrade
 - No equipment; monthly meeting was today and the time frame was moved closer rather than farther away.
 - Short staffed but they are still responsive to issues and desires.

- Adams Street pump station needs controls upgraded. There were three calls last night but extra rain has been a challenge. Control panel doesn't respond properly.
 - Generator shipment keeps being pushed off - they hope by Friday to hear about shipping.
- They are looking into renting a trailerable generator to utilize the pump which is in storage and dormant.

The Police Chief was absent so Manager Gunter reported:

- Car break-in suspect has been apprehended.
- Food drive will be postponed due to COVID cases increase.
- Police went to a masking policy.
- Chanel 3 reached out and are doing a story on 22a which will be out on Thursday.
- New ACO has handled barking dogs on Scotch Hill.
- Jr. Spartans were given a police and fire escort for their championship win.

7. Town Manager Report & Communication: Joe Gunter reported:

- He signed the town up with Main Street America to do a Shop Small Program to generate economic development.
- Grove Street who town helped find money to pay excessive Water Bill.
 - They drilled a well and are disconnected from the town water.
- Masks are mandatory for all departments at town hall until the middle of December when the situation will be reassessed.
- 12 South Main Street Property sold for \$7500.00. The town is in the process of transferring the property to the new owner who will redevelop it.
- Closed on revolving loan; Mr. Nelson took a loan for \$30,000 to put in a sprinkler system in the Play House.
- Dog Park permit is with the State, they are reviewing it.

8. Old Business

- a. Fireworks Permit:** Manager Gunter went over the draft of the permit created. It was asked to remove the \$5000.00 fee and input a donation to the Town for \$1000.00. Manager Gunter opposes creation of a donation to the town because the Town of Fair Haven isn't a charity organization, it is an entity that takes fees for issuing permits.

C&C Fireworks promise to follow all State Laws regarding the sale of fireworks. They stated that State Laws may change within the next few months which would make some of the points on the new contract redundant.

The Board held a discussion as to what changes they expect to see on the final contract. Mr. Holtworth stated the contract needs to be clear and able to survive changes that are out of the town's hands. Manager Gunter stated that the legal department vetted the current contract and that it was a good contract. It was decided that Manager Gunter and C&C Fireworks could work together with

the lawyers to correct the contract before bringing it back to the selectboard again for approval.

- b. Appropriation policy:** Manager Gunter passed out the current and proposed appropriation policy for the board to consider. Manager Gunter made a few changes; under "applicability" he added Fair Haven Free Library and the Chamber of Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR). On page 2 "postmark" was removed from the 2nd paragraph and "38 days" was added in the timeline. This was done because the time between receipt and vote allows the town to complete the work they need to do. Mr Holtzworth drew attention to the last paragraph on page 2 requesting for future money but asking for how money was spent in the past. He would like to see from requesting agencies a record of how the money and their services directly or indirectly benefit the tax payers of Fair Haven. A discussion ensued over what the town wanted to see from the requesting organizations. Manager Gunter ended the conversation stating he will draft more language and send a copy to the lawyers to look over and will bring it back in two weeks for Select Board review. Chair Cove let Manager Gunter know what in the meantime as long as no increase in money is asked for, no signatures are required; as long as required documentation is delivered on how money is spent.
- c. Adams Street water line repair bids:** The water line is placed in the structure of the Bridge and is difficult to fully assess. Two bids were obtained to complete the work.
- i. Cassella Construction - \$22,121.42; 5 days work; Available to begin December 1.
 - ii. Beldon Construction - \$20,281.81; 5 days work; Available to begin mid-December.
- Superintendent Kerber recommends moving forward with Cassella Construction and using Capital Improvement Funds. The recommendation is based on the desire to complete work before more freeze thaw cycles. The board discussed the recommendation. **Mr. Sheldon moved to accept the Cassella bid on Superintendent Kerber's recommendation not to exceed \$22,121.42 from water capital improvement funds.** Mr. Holtzworth seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.
- d. Salt Shed bids:** Contract negotiations happening but bids came in high. Working with funders and contractors to see what to do.
- e. ARPA funds continued:** Manager Gunter suggests, on the recommendation of the VLCT, that the select board pull together a committee of residents to decide what the town wants to spend their money on. A discussion took place on who should be included in the committee. It was decided that members of the other committees in town and citizens should be included and they would be asked to put together a list of ideas with the top choices highlighted for the selectboard to approve. Manager Gunter will reach out and get back to the board with a report in a couple of weeks.

9. New Business

a. Grant-in-aid equipment grant match request: Mr Kerber is looking for a signed letter of intent to purchase a tow behind leaf debris blower with grant match funding. The grant will pay up to \$5600.00 of the purchase. The machine cost between \$8900-9000. The grant would match at most up to \$3400.00. The machine would be used for blowing street curbs, maintaining stone line ditches, and general leaf blowing in the park and cemeteries. This is the second round of funding this year and may be the last time this grant is available to fund equipment. The grant has helped the town out many times in the past. Mr. Cove asked for questions. Mr. Holtzworth voiced concern over the volume of air that this machine can create and the potential for harming bystanders. Mr Kerber assured that his staff would learn how to properly handle the equipment before use. He also stated that the benefits of the blower greatly outweigh the risk of use. Chairman Cove asked if there was any other equipment on the list. Mr. Kerber stated a jumping jack compactor is available but the town already has one and the match is less. Mr. Sheldon asked which budget the request would be coming from. Mr. Kerber requested the Equipment Reserve fund. It was asked if the town can maintain and store the equipment and if we have the time and resources to use the equipment, they can and do. This piece of equipment will also help the town maintain the stone lined ditches that were funded by the state. **Mr. Sheldon motioned to sign a letter of intent for \$3,400.00 not to exceed grant match from the equipment reserve fund, to match the purchase of the tow behind leaf blower from the grant-in-aid equipment grant.** Mr. Holtzworth seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

10. Budget Review Continues: Chairman Cole asked Manager Gunter to give a brief review and if there were questions they would go over them next meeting.

- a. Town Manager:** 2.25% contractual increase in salary and dues and meetings when up to support ICMA membership dues.
- b. Muni Building:**
 - i. Increase in budget because of tech services - NEMRIC
 - ii. An increase in the cost of office supplies.
 - iii. Fence for park on ala cart list - \$7000 to do the project. If the board wanted to cover it, municipal building and grounds is a good place to put the funding.
 - iv. 2 years ago money was asked to fix and paint the building. The woodwork on top of the building was quoted 2 years ago and with the lead paint removal and work it was around \$50,000.
- c. Health inspector:** Health inspector had no change in budget, but \$40.00 from travel and mileage was added to pay.
- d. Baseball activities:** Baseball activities is down slightly. Money is needed to maintain the property. They are asking \$5000/year. They are proposing a groundskeeper just for the ballfields and an all year part time recreational director

for \$10,000 annually. Mr. Gunter asks this understanding of the upset to budget but would like the board to consider what this does for the town.

- e. **Recreation:** \$5600.00 Increase in salary to cover the cost of an increased minimum wage.
- f. **Special events:** no change.
- g. **Intergovernmental Exp:** Taxes increase \$18,000 but hasn't received a bill yet to be able to accurately report
- h. **Judgements and damages:** decrease \$5,000 because the deductible was reduced.

Nicole Rice wanted to state that the year round recreation director position is what families in town want. She receives calls from families all the time wanting more 4,5, 6 grade level activities after school all the time.

11. Parking Lot: Added inclusion policy and removed tax stabilization policy

Policy to cap reserve funds	Adams Street Bridge replacement
Downtown Designation	Zoning Regulation Update
Munger Rd	Inclusion policy development

12. Board Roundtable: Mr. Sheldon mentioned a request from Bob Richards and the hydro-energy committee. They are interested in pursuing a right of 1st refusal around the property around the dam. Purchase or use Option. Bob is working with Joe to get the discussion on the agenda to talk about the dam.

13. Review of Financial Reports

a. Expenditure/Revenue Reports

Mr. Sheldon motioned to approve the payroll warrant \$32,723.64; seconded by Mr. Holtzworth. All in favor and motion carried.

Mr Sheldon motioned to pay the general fund warrant for \$499, 945.29; seconded by Mr. Holtzworth. Mr. Holtzworth asked what "live scan" was. Mr. Gunter stated it was the police department's new finger printing machine. Which is grant funded money. All in favor and motion carried.

b. Checkbook status: \$422, 686.65

14. Executive Session: Mr. Holtzworth motioned to enter Executive Session with the Town Manager to consider contract negotiations 1 VSA 313 (a)(1); seconded by Mr. Sheldon, passed unanimously and the motion carried.

- a. **Manager Review 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(3)** tabled until next meeting with more board members
- b. **Contract Negotiation 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(1)**

15. Recording Secretary as excused at 9:25 p.m.

Board came out of executive session at 10:03 pm

Mr. Holtzworth **motioned to reject all bids for the salt shed project**, Seconded by Mr. Sheldon.
Motion passed.

16. Adjournment Mr. Holtzworth motioned to adjourn at 10:05 pm

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Jackson

Jeff Sheldon
Board Secretary