

**TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT**  
**SELECTBOARD; Water and Sewer Commissioners; Liquor Commissioners;**  
**Cemetery Commissioners**  
**REGULAR Select Board Meeting**  
**Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT -- November 17, 2020 -- 7:00 P.M.**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

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

**Others Present:** Town Manager Joseph Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, William Chmielewski, Peg TV, John Lulek, Rod Holzworth, II., Guy Charlton, Benson Select Board, Police Chief William Humphries, Amanda O'Connor, Communication Union District (phone), Constable Don Parker (phone)

**Call to Order:** Chairman Bob Richards called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Amendments to the Agenda:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2020 meeting;** seconded by Ms. Egan. CORRECTION. Pg. 1, **Grant Recipients.** Mike Davidson was awarded \$4,200 to upgrade electrical system; Dave Nelson was awarded \$10,000 for a sprinkler system; Kevin Durkee was awarded \$5,000 for energy efficiency upgrades to the Wooden Soldier Building. Cindy Pritchard and Judi Sutherland served on the Economic Development Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

**Meeting with Benson Select Board:** The Board heard from Mr. Guy Charlton, Benson Select Board who requests to enter into a contract with the Fair Haven Police Department for law enforcement in Benson. His request is for three (3) random hours per week as was their previous contract which worked well. Mr. Charlton feels this would be mutually beneficial allowing police coverage in Benson and income to Fair Haven, the cost can be negotiated. Chief Humphries said the Dept. can cover this amount of time if the Board votes for it. Mr. Brown stated the Fair Haven Police Dept. is not for hire and cited liability issues. Mr. Traverse disagrees stating there is the same liability whether in Benson or here, and that it provides a revenue stream. It was not a unanimous vote to discontinue the contract and Benson was advised to return to negotiate the issue with new Board members. Mr. Brown **made a motion to deny the request for Police coverage contract with Benson;** seconded by Mr. Traverse (for discussion). Mr. Richards noted when police are in Benson, they are not here -- do not want to lose coverage and focus in Fair Haven. Mr. Charlton reported they have tried working with the Sheriff Dept. and found it was not adequate because they were in Benson every Wednesday for the same hours at the same place; Fair Haven's policing was random hours and much more effective. Mr. Sheldon noted the coverage liability is the same whether in Benson of Fair Haven. The motion carried 3 – 2 with Mr. Sheldon and Mr. Traverse dissenting. Mr. Charlton thanked the Board for their time.

**Five Minutes for Public Comment:** None

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

- \* Were fortunate to have a very steady two weeks
- \* There was a pursuit Halloween night traveling 78 mph in a 35 mph zone with a child in the car. Charges are pending
- \* Police escorted the Senior Athletes parade
- \* There was an issue with a light switch on one of the cruisers, now repaired

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

- \* Chief Humphries has sent a letter to a resident on Adams Street stating they must comply to remove the "junk" on the property or there will be daily \$500. fines. Manager Gunter and the Chief are working together to resolve this matter in consideration of neighbors.
- \* Public Works Dept. has been working hot patching streets
- \* The Park fountain is removed -- in future will be removed in October
- \* Working to repair the intake at the Water Treatment Plant. Have reached out to Wayne Elliott for advice on the repair -- it is not the pipe, but the cement "tunnel" that is cracked
- \* Working on developing the 90% plan for the sewer upgrade project
- \* Working on Playground and Downtown grants
- \* There are water/sewer grants coming up -- if you know anyone who is 60 days or more in arrears, they can apply (on line) by December 15<sup>th</sup>. Suggest a press release to get the word out
- \* The weekly water meter readings have been successful. In the last six weeks, there have been daily contacts to the office to resolve issues with good success. Are still sending letters to users that have unusually large usage. There are still about 80 meters to install; had to stop again due to Covid-19
- \* The Harassment training is scheduled for tomorrow
- \* Will be installing the new server; it will take two days with intermittent usage interruption
- \* Heard from the Rescue Squad; they are requesting a \$123,000 appropriation this year (about double last years); they need this amount to stay solvent and will provide a budget. Discussion re: do they realize that if this is voted down, they receive no funds. Manager Gunter will reach out to Rutland Regional that may be able to provide service for less.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**Local Option Tax and Bond Payment -- Discussion:** People have asked if Local Option Tax will be on the March ballot; the deadline is mid-January. Manager Gunter prepared a handout of how the water bill and/or operating budget would be impacted by adding the Bond payment. There was discussion of option ideas; payments could start as early as January 2022, after significant construction completion; expect to start construction on the project in the Spring.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Communication District -- Discussion:** The Board heard from Amanda O'Connor who explained the function of a Communication District inquiring if Fair Haven wants to participate in the

Otter Creek Communication Union District (CUD). Much like the Solid Waste District, a CUD is a union of Towns allowing two or more Towns to bond together as a municipal entity for a means of building communication infrastructure together. It is at no cost to any of the Towns. CUD funding is via bonds, loans, grants, gifts or any source not generated by member's taxes. The goal is to build fiber optic infrastructure to expand broadband speed. A feasibility study will assess the area for population, geography, number of subscribers, roads and develop a business plan by January. Mr. Brown **made a motion to approve integrating into the Otter Creek Communication Union District (CUD)** under the provision of 30 V.S.A. Chapter 82. The motion was seconded by Ms. Egan and passed unanimously.

**Budget Review:** Members reviewed the draft budget line by line commencing with Police Department. **Salaries** -- the amount is higher to include late shift differential; part time line was reduced; the amount for **dispatch** is unknown at this time, is only a place holder at \$9,000; the **School Resource Officer (SRO)** is reimbursed by the school. **Training and Vehicles** unchanged. No change to Constable budget. **Select Board** -- Discussed Economic Development, marketing, the web site, clock in the Park and improvement to the "triangle" at Stewarts. **Legal** was unchanged. **Town Manager**, unchanged; **Municipal building** -- added \$5,000 to pay for anticipated boring to determine the extent of oil tank spillage. **Special Events** -- there was discussion re: unspent Concerts in the Park and Memorial Day Parade funds.

**Parking Lot:** Not discussed

**Board Roundtable:** Someone contacted Ms. Egan concerned about the downtown crosswalks not being painted causing potential danger. Manager Gunter stated that DPW plans to do more extensive work next summer. Mr. Sheldon suggested developing a summer work plan/schedule.

Mr. Brown said the Board was told the mower cost was \$16,000, but he was told by Youngs that it was \$13,000. He expressed concern that DPW was looking for extra budget funds. Manager Gunter will research this issue. Mr. Brown asked why the white cruiser was being used when it was not inspected. Manager Gunter noted the insurance company totaled the vehicle and towed it away. Mr. Brown stated \$6,000 was too much to pay to finish the street intersections; feels DPW could have done the work; the section in front of the Municipal building is still not done and dangerous; that nothing is getting done.

Manager Gunter stated there are only 3 full time guys at DPW; they work very hard and get criticized. To say that "nothing gets done" is an outright lie. We are prioritizing work to make the best use of personnel and time.

Mr. Richards reported that Mr. Rasmussen has a water question and asks that Manager Gunter reach out to him. \* Where are we re: collecting water and tax bills. We should be getting ready for anticipated Municipal stimulus. There is approximately \$250,000 in delinquent taxes. \* The water line at the water plant is not leaking; it is the tunnel.

**Review of Financial Reports:** The checkbook status is \$659,488.54.

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the Payroll warrant for \$30,493.20**; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed.

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the General Fund Warrants of \$74,368.93**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed.

**Executive Session:** Mr. Traverse **moved the Board and Town Manager into executive session** at 10:03 p.m. under 1 VSA 313 (a)(1) to discuss solar contract review; seconded by Ms. Egan and passed unanimously.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The board exited executive session at 10:38 pm; no actions taken

Jay Brown made a motion to **adjourn** at 10:38 pm; seconded by Glen Traverse and passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Claire L. Stanley

  
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Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk