

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT
SELECTBOARD; Water and Sewer Commissioners; Liquor Commissioners; Cemetery Commissioners
Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT – December 14, 2021 -- 7:00 P.M. -- REGULAR Meeting
Zoom Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86402998610>
Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 864 02998 610

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Glen Traverse, Chris Cole, Jeff Sheldon, Rod Holzworth, II, Carol Egan

Others Present: Town Manager Joseph Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Jim Britt, Peg TV, Dani Roberts, Lister, Charles Greeno, Paul Corbiey. Aaron Kerber, DPW, Keith Whitcomb, and Karen were on ZOOM link. Due to technical problem, ZOOM connection was lost.

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.

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to add** Under Budget Review: Local Option Tax; Under Executive Session: 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(3) Town Manager Review; seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously.

Appointment with Energy Committee: Were not in attendance

Approval of the November 16, 2021 Minutes: Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve the November 16, 2021 Minutes as corrected.** CORRECTIONS: Pg.3, line 3 "Cove" corrected to Cole; Pg. 3; Ms. Billewicz did not present documents to Mr. Traverse as he was absent; the documents presented will not be on the ballot as they lack information necessary for inclusion on the Warrant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed with Mr. Traverse and Ms. Egan abstaining as they were absent at that meeting.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the November 30, 2021 meeting minutes** as written; seconded by Mr. Sheldon and passed with Mr. Holzworth abstaining as he was absent for that meeting.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: None

Department Head Reports: There was no report from Dept. of Public Works (DPW) as Mr. Kerber's ZOOM link was lost due to a computer malfunction.

Town Manager Gunter reported:

- * **Police** processed four (4) arrests
- * Picked up another person breaking into cars
- * Are changing to a new computer program, causing delays in information transfer
- * The published phone number 265-4531 is now ringing in the building; is not an emergency number

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

- * Received some dog park equipment today
- * Have put a lien on 10/12 Adams Street property; they owe \$5000. + in back taxes
- * A Probate Court hearing is scheduled for November 28th re: 12 South Main Street

- * Eileen Richards, Office Assistant is receiving cross training; she did the payroll this week
- * The digging on the north end of the Park was done by the State studying storm water runoff
- * There are 40 water meters yet to be installed
- * Have purchased MicroSoft Project to monitor outstanding and ongoing Town projects
- * Were denied the Rail refrigeration project grant; were competing with large entities such as San Francisco. None of these grants were awarded in Vermont; will try again

OLD BUSINESS

Fireworks Permit: Draft of contract in members' packets. Manager Gunter reported he had reached out to Mr. Greeno who requests removing article 5 of the contract included by the Town's Attorney to protect the Town from litigation. Without this section, the contract appears to treat Fair Haven residents differently than others. Lengthy discussion followed including: requiring permits from everyone without knowing if they need a permit in their State; most of Mr. Greeno's sales are out of State; Town can be co-insured on the vendor's policy; Ms. Egan stated if we consult a lawyer, his advice should be taken; Mr. Traverse stated he is satisfied with the contract as it stands; Mr. Holzworth said, requiring permits from out of states is ludicrous, since we don't know if their State requires a permit; other articles in the contract require following Vermont State Law -- we are governed by Vermont law that requires permits for Vermonters; Manager Gunter stated there is an expense every time this is reviewed by an attorney; Mr. Greeno stated if he cannot sell to out of State customers, he is not interested in locating here. The Board requests the attorney discuss (with Manager Gunter and Mr. Greeno) and render an opinion on removing articles 4 and 5 of the contract.

NEW BUSINESS

Grant Match for Town Hall Improvements: Manager Gunter reported trying to get this project underway. It was started in 2018-19 with a cost of \$600,000; today the cost is approximately \$600,000 for half the work. The Town has received \$517,000 of grant funding, and committed \$100,000 in match. Are now requesting an additional \$80,000 to secure a contract for the work that includes an elevator, fire suppression, American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant bathroom(s), electrical wiring. Have received two grant extensions; the current heating system can sustain the second floor; if there is further delay, the Town will lose (and have to pay back) the grant. There followed lengthy discussion re: how best to fund the grant match. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to earmark \$80,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the Town Hall Renovation Project grant match;** seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously.

Cemetery Deed: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to grant the sale of cemetery lot 65 in section 17** as requested by Abby Greene; seconded by Mr. Sheldon and passed unanimously

FY 23 Budget Review Continues: Manager Gunter reported the Town Clerk salary line is reduced to \$37,000; after serving 33 years, Suzanne Dechame is retiring; this amount is for the position at an entry level. The Board heard from Lister Dani Roberts who stated she is running for the Town Clerk position; has researched surrounding Towns' Clerk salaries and feels this amount is low. She went on to discuss the responsibilities of the position, and time necessary; she also explained that she has been the Assistant Clerk for many years. The slight increase in other categories reviewed is mostly for salaries. Mr. Sheldon expressed concern that the Public Works Vehicles & Equipment allocation is low. He feels the Town should be allocating larger amounts every year, saving for Capital purchase of equipment.

There was discussion re: loans/bonds vs. saving for capital purchases. Mr. Sheldon stated he would like to ask voters for \$100,000 grant match allocation in anticipation of available American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) grant(s).

Local Option Tax: Manager Gunter presented an information flyer and noted: The State estimates the 1% tax could realize \$160,000, collected by the State; of which Fair Haven would receive \$110,000 (70%) The State keeps 30% rolled into the PILOT program; Fair Haven received \$30,000 from the PILOT program last year. There was discussion that businesses might find this tax cumbersome; Mr. Holzworth noted the change requires only a slight adjustment to computer system / cash register. It is the consensus of the Board to include Local Option Tax on the March ballot.

Parking Lot: Mr. Traverse would like to discuss the **Munger Road** issues after the budget is finished.

Board Roundtable: Mr. Traverse reported getting a lot of feedback re: torn up lawns from sidewalk plowing. Members discussed reasons and that “we can do better”. Mr. Holzworth noted seeing the truck on Washington Street with the plow down, sparks flying and no snow; seems unnecessary.

Review of Financial Reports: Checkbook Status: \$1,078,279.62

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the Payroll warrant for \$34,139.01**; seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously.

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the General Fund Warrants of \$461,373.81**; seconded by Ms. Egan. Included are payments for Wastewater Treatment plant upgrade and the Adams Street Bridge water line repair (that came in under budget). The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to enter into executive session** at 9:15 p.m. to discuss labor relation agreement 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(1), and Town Manager review under 1 VSA ¶313 (a)(3); to include Manager Gunter. The motion was seconded by Mr. Holzworth and passed unanimously.

The recording secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:55

Motion by Mr. Traverse to adjourn

Adjourned at 9:57

Respectfully submitted,
Claire L. Stanley

Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk