

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT
SELECTBOARD; Water and Sewer Commissioners; Liquor Commissioners;
Cemetery Commissioners
REGULAR Select Board Meeting
Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT -- December 15, 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., Sean Galvin, Joshua Ferguson, Dept. of Public Works Superintendent Aaron Kerber

Call to Order: Chairman Bob Richards called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse **moved** to add "Insurance Contract" to Executive Session; second by Mr. Brown and passed.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2020 meeting;** seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

Appointment Fair Haven Rescue Squad: Mr. Sean Galvin presented copies of the Fair Haven Rescue Squad operating budget noting the per capita calculation of \$48.00 (\$123,000 from Fair Haven) is correct. There was discussion that Castleton pays less, per capita, using Rutland Regional. Mr. Galvin explained that patient transfers are the most reliable source of income. Rutland City has four nursing homes that require doing transfers; Castleton benefits from that income to Rutland Regional. Mr. Brown noted it is a large amount of money; if it is voted down, the Squad gets nothing. Mr. Galvin said "this is what it costs"; the per capita has not changed in 20 years; the reserve was spent; we keep looking for grants; the Squad is losing money every month; can't speak to what happened in the past; are always open to ideas and suggestions. Mr. Sheldon inquired how confident are you that the budget will stay at this level. We are looking to work with transfer agencies; the requested amount would take care of expenses. There are two full time staff; working one vehicle. If necessary, can call on other staff to go on call using the second ambulance. Other Towns are hurting too, and mutual aid is not always available. Because of Covid-19 pandemic, stand by staff of teachers, students, military are not available to work; there are some in training. Mr. Brown noted miles are put on the ambulance when not on call. It is felt this is minimal and acceptable showing community presence. Mr. Traverse feels the budget is fluid; will we have to ask for increases again; feels that response time is not a good argument against using Rutland Regional. At Mr. Brown's inquiry, Mr. Galvin explained there was \$60,000 in CD's that allowed them to get going on improvements made and survive for the last 6 months and continue to July 1st. Chairman Richards noted this request is an appropriation, not a budget item. If passed, it adds 7¢/1000 to the tax rate. Mr. Galvin stated this is an accurate budget; it is the cost of operation. The Board thanked him for his time and effort.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Mr. Lulek reported the sewer pump at the Airport Road Mobile Home Park is not State inspected. There are 26 inoperable cars in the park. If the pump fails inspection, people will have to move. Mr. Sheldon asked, how can the Town help these folks. Manager Gunter reported he is in touch with the Housing Trust; will do whatever we can.

Joshua Ferguson reported he is in conversation with Kevin Durkee interested in painting a Vermont Veteran's Tribute mural on the building housing the Wooden Soldier, featuring hometown heroes and historical figures. In conjunction with current revitalization activities in the downtown, it is hoped to finish on Memorial Day, 2022. Mr. Brown suggested working together with the Itty Bitty Committee who is researching grants for such projects.

Department Head Reports: **Superintendent of Public Works Aaron Kerber** reported:

- * The salt and sand equipment is holding up: waiting to see the impact of tomorrows expected snow event
- * Experienced a couple clogged culverts during the recent rain storm: now taken care of
- * Mowers are prepped, serviced and put away
- * Have put in a drain and re-directed the tunnel water issue at the Water Treatment Plant that will prevent icing problem(s)
- * Continue to do weekly water meter readings
- * Are waiting for final information for the Adams and Academy Streets sewer pump stations
- * The sewer plant is working well; had a couple small issues that are corrected -- good job
- * Expect Ms. Greene back to work at end of month -- Mr. Bowen will then return to highway

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

- * Chief Humphries reported fortunately, it has been slow
- * They are focusing on traffic
- * Have stepped up junk ordinance work; the Grape Street property was issued a warning; the Airport Road Mobile Home Park has several warnings. Mr. Brown said it is a mess up there. The police are focusing time at the Trailer Park. The State is involved in the sewer run off and fuel tank bases. Chairman Richards noted we need the State to help with this issue
- * Received a Christmas card from Paul and Barbara Corby thanking the Town for the cleanup efforts of derelict properties citing a list of improvements such as brush cutting. Manager Gunter appreciates the kind words
- * Have received \$47,000 of Covid-19 funds to digitize records and update computer systems
- * The playground grant is submitted
- * Park lighting bids are back; waiting for approval from the State
- * Six people applied for the Covid-19 grant to pay outstanding water bills including \$10,000 paid to the Trailer Park leaving approximately \$11,000 outstanding
- * The Town has until 2024 to get the Town Plan done
- * Spoke with Aaron Kerber re: closing the Alley; will drop sand in there instead of salt; researching plans for use of the space if Alley is closed to traffic
- * The Town Hall is now open to the public for business; do not anticipate closing again
- * Negotiating with the Insurance Co. for more money to fix the Firehouse beam; Mr. Ferguson wants engineering before starting work.

OLD BUSINESS:

Solar Contract -- Approval: Mr. Traverse made a motion to accept the Solar Net Metering Credit agreement with MHG Solar LLC; seconded by Ms. Egan. This agreement allows 7 1/2% reduction in future Town electric bills. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Manager Gunter noted that Bonnie Rosati Should have been appointed in March and that Cindy Prichard was appointed instead of Cindy Adams. This is motion is to add Bonnie and correct the error in naming Ms. Prichard instead of Ms. Adams.

Appointment to Zoning Board of Adjustments: Mr. Traverse made a motion to appoint Bonnie Rosati to the ZBA and to correct the name of the previously appointed member from Cindy Pritchard to Cindy Adams; seconded by Ms. Egan. The motion carried with Mr. Brown dissenting saying he feels vacant positions should be advertised.

Budget Review: Members continued their review of the draft budget line by line commencing with **Elections** cut to \$3000. **Treasurer**, no change. **Town Clerk**, reduced by \$1500; no schedule change; expects to continue full time position. **Emergency Management**, no change; includes annual generator testing. **Fire Department**; salaries are paid the prevailing minimum wage; **Equipment** includes 3 sets of turnout gear @ \$3000 to be paid from Capital budget after this year; there are people ready to train when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. **Transfer Station.** Have extended the Casella contract by two years; their service has been "pretty good". Expect Ms. Greene back by end of month; Mr. Bowen will then return to highway.

Parking Lot: Discussed **tax stabilization**; need to get it on an agenda for discussion and apply to the brewery.

Board Roundtable: At Mr. Brown's inquiry, the outstanding water bill for the Airport Road Mobile Home Park after Covid-19 payment is approximately \$11,000. Mr. Brown remarked that the mess at the Trailer Park has to be taken care of; junk cars and all. Employ any/all State agencies that can help; families will be in distress

Mr. Traverse inquired if brine is being used on sidewalks. Mr. Kerber said he is analyzing the merits of brine use: cost savings vs performance to determine the best most cost effective way to go. Still working on a final plan; sidewalks will continue to be cleared as best possible.

Chairman Richards stated he has heard that the 1% tax will be re-introduced; voted down twice; no decision has been made to include on March ballot.

Review of Financial Reports: The checkbook status is \$49,206.31

Mr. Sheldon moved to approve payment of the Payroll warrant for \$30,396.34; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed.

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the General Fund Warrants of \$121,334.20;**
seconded by Mr. Traverse 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) to discuss insurance contract; and Manager contract under 1 VSA 313 (a) (3); seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The board came out of executive session at 9:42

The board discussed changing insurance companies from Hickok and Boardman to VLCT PACIF. Mr. Traverse **made a motion** to accept the PACIF Insurance contract for 1 year; seconded by Mr. Brown and pass unanimously

Mr. Brown moved to **adjourn** at 9:44pm

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,
Claire L. Stanley



Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk