

**TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT**  
**Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners**  
**Tuesday, December 27, 2022 -- 7:00 PM**  
**Zoom Meeting Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88965629139>

**Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 8896 5629 139**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Glen Traverse (on phone), Chadd Viger, Rich Greenough

**Members Absent:** Bob Richards, Jay Brown

**Others Present:** Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Peg TV, Town Bookkeeper Liz Ambuhl, Accountant Ron Smith (on phone)

**Call to Order:** Acting Chairman Chadd Viger called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Meeting with Auditor Ron Smith:** Mr. Smith reported this was a team effort noting Fair Haven had a very busy year including transition of Bookkeeper and Treasurer. The general fund carry over is spot on at \$235,000, very near the same as last year. We like to see a minimum of 30 to 60 days of operating funds in reserve; Fair Haven is slightly less than 30 days; are lean with carry over. Your revenue was \$50,000 more than expected; expenses will end on budget. Highway will also end very close to budget; are running a very tight budget. Build Back Better funds are not yet received -- expect that in 2024. It is time to revisit the Capital Plan; Water/ Wastewater is a good place to focus. Mr. Traverse asked for ways to take advantage of Federal funds as they become available that would free up the general fund working towards \$30,000 minimum operating expenses. Mr. Smith urges support for bookkeeper Liz Ambuhl as the job is very busy and entails a great deal of time, work and learning new programs. Mr. Viger thanked Mr. Smith for the report and noted the Board appreciates the time.

**Amendments to the Agenda:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** Tabled; there is no quorum this evening as Mr. Viger was absent at that meeting

**Five Minutes for Public Comment:** None

**Department Head Reports: Manager Joe Gunter Reported:**

- \* **Dept. of Public Works** has been busy with fallen trees and limbs. Any left are tangled in electric wires; Green Mountain Power has to remove these
- \* Have received good comments about how well the DPW handled the storm. Supt. Kerber commented our roads are in better shape than in New York
- \* The Water Plant bypass pipe repair is in progress
- \* **Police** dealt with retail thefts and petty larceny

- \* Two arrests
- \* Focusing on downtown parking
- \* Two car crashes

**Town Manager Report and Communication:**

- \* Received the equalization study; OK right now at 93.04%. It is expected that reappraisal will need to be done sooner than later to remain under the 20% equalization guideline
- \* The Union Street properties are now completely cleaned out; Eleven (11) dumpster loads were removed from the two properties; exterminator will be trapping to eradicate remaining vermin.
- \* All zoning updates are done
- \* The Town will receive \$200,000. of the recently approved Federal Omnibus Appropriations Bill. The funds will go a long way toward the completion of the Town Hall upgrade project. Mr. Viger thanked Manager Gunter for the time and effort to prepare the necessary information to Vermont Senators. This effort will lead down the road to 60 day operating budget. Manager Gunter explained that the Town Hall project has not gone as smoothly as was hoped, but after completion, this and the Park and Ride project as well as the Lights in the Park project are items that future Boards will not have to contend with.
- \* Vermont is not currently eligible for Carbon Credit projects. Mr. Greenough inquired, is there anything we can do to get a head start for these when they become available
- \* Manager Gunter reached out to the Forester re: the Town's large stand of trees in the North Woods. He reported no work has been done there for several years and will check if any logging is warranted
- \* Manager Gunter reached out to surrounding Towns re: budget increases. Proctor is looking at a 6% increase; Castleton, 5%; Poultney, around 8%. Fair Haven is looking good at 3.9% increase

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Poultney Mettowee Natural Resource Conservation District (PMNRCD):** Ms. Soloman presented this project at the last meeting; it is a Stormwater Phosphorous removal project outside of the North Park fence. Received answers to questions raised at that time. After the project is complete, could the space be used for an ice rink? yes; will the project impact the Park fence? no; Not sure if cars could be parked there. Received a letter from Selectman Jay Brown (attached) who is not able to attend this meeting. He states he is against this project; there is no funding attached for future maintenance; they seem to have money and are looking for projects to spend it; he would vote no on this item. Mr. Traverse stated the vote is not to approve or deny the project, but to move forward with plan and design. Mr. Greenough said he would like to have more discussion; it looks like a big filtering system that will need regular maintenance; who cares for it 20/30 years down the road. Mr. Viger said he would like to move forward to gather more information. Manager Gunter stated the State has allocated funds for phosphorous removal projects; he will invite Ms. Soloman to the next meeting to discuss maintenance.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Revenue -- West Haven Transfer Station Fees:** Manager Gunter's per capita calculations for Transfer Station use are: Fair Haven = \$87./per person; West Haven = \$67./per person. West Haven presently pays \$16,000./year. To be equal, West Haven should be paying a minimum of \$20,826.

There are hidden administrative costs not in the calculation. His recommendation is to increase West Haven's Transfer Station use rate to \$21,000 this year and increase by \$1,500 for the next four years to ease them into the new rate, noting that West Haven works with a calendar budget; ours is fiscal. Manager Gunter will reach out to West Haven as the budget is due January 10th. There is only one regular meeting for vote before the budget is due.

**Budget Review:** Tabled to when all members are in attendance

**Around Town:** Things Happening -- \* On January 15th at 2:00 p.m. the Legion will host an Architectural Historian who will speak about the **Little Red House**. \* Scheduling Park cleanup time for May 6, 12, 20, for fence cleaning/painting, branch and limb pickup, etc. If you or anyone you know is interested, please contact the office. Mr. Greenough stated there is need to budget for Park fence maintenance yearly to do a section at a time, as well as maintenance of lights. Mr. Traverse also includes funding for tree replacement. Mr. Viger stated it is a good idea to save incrementally for Park maintenance to avoid one large expense. He suggests rolling some American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds into some operational budget items.

**Parking Lot:** No changes

**Board Roundtable:** Mr. Greenough reported the steel building cost is \$50./square foot = \$250,000 before cement pad. Mr. Viger noting Mr. Greenough's work to determine sidewalk needs, finding ways to set aside funds looking ahead to determine which roads need improvement. There is a lot that folks want; it will take time to improve Fair Haven; we can get there.

**Review of Financial Reports:** The **checkbook status** is, \$1,087,309.25.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$34,517.37**; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$141,644.89**; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed

**Executive Session:** Mr. Traverse **moved the Board and Town Manager Gunter, into executive session** at 7:55 pm to discuss Personnel 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(3). The motion was seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 8:25pm

Mr. Traverse moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Greenough, meeting **adjourned** at 8:26

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

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Glen Traverse, Board Clerk