

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT
SELECTBOARD; Water and Sewer Commissioners; Liquor Commissioners;
Cemetery Commissioners
REGULAR Select Board Meeting
Municipal Building, Fair Haven, VT -- December 29, 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, Rod Holzworth, II., Dept. of Public Works Superintendent Aaron Kerber, Police Chief William Humphries, Town Accountant Jenny Bertrum, Elisabeth Kulas, (on phone) Mary Cohan (on phone).

Call to Order: Chairman Bob Richards called the **Public Hearing** to order at 7:01 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing -- Appletree Public Hearing Closeout: The Board heard from Ms. Kulas, outgoing Housing Trust Director who introduced her successor Mary Cohan and gave an overview of the 18 month Appletree renovation project. The work included improvements to all 40 units in 11 buildings; roof repair as needed; replacing heating units with efficient heat/AC units; insulation; landscaping; roadway and walkway improvement; drainage, parking lot and play area improvement as needed; added a school bus shelter. Ms. Kulas stated the total cost was \$9 million (including purchase price) and said grants secured by the Town were helpful as was the help received from Town staff. She feels the project was successful and turned out beautifully. Board members thanked Ms. Kulas for her time, effort and hard work on this and other such beneficial projects.

The **Public Hearing** was closed at 7:10 P.M.

Chairman Richards called the **Regular Meeting** to order at 7:10 P.M

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

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2020 meeting;** seconded by Ms. Egan and passed unanimously.

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

- * Because of Covid-19, things are slow and numbers are down
- * We are trying to be pro-active -- out in public
- * Have contacted Department of Transportation (DOT) re: changing the right turn "YIELD" sign at the Stewarts intersection to a "STOP" sign. It is a very busy intersection -- plan to put the speed cart there in the spring
- * Have sent written 30 day "junk removal" notices to tenants and the owner of the Airport Road Mobil Home Park

- * The Grape Street homeowner came to the office to report he has been making an effort to work with us to remove debris

Superintendent of Public Works Aaron Kerber reported:

- * It has been busy, busy, busy
- * Managed to keep roads passable throughout the snow storm
- * Sidewalks took a little longer -- had them open by Saturday
- * One truck had issues -- was back on line the next day
- * Did haul some snow away before the rain
- * Culverts had been checked earlier and caused no problems
- * The Water Dept. has no problems
- * Prepped for the heavy rain slug of water at the sewer plant -- the plant worked well
- * A couple of trees came down with the wind -- damage

Town Manager Report & Communications: Manager Gunter reported:

- * The Equalization Study results came in. We are at about 110% -- no need for reassessment
- * Winter parking ban went into effect yesterday
- * The playground lights and cameras are installed, up and running
- * It has been slow
- * The Town Hall Request for Proposal (RFP) has been released. Have heard from a few contractors wanting to inspect the project
- * The Safety Committee is up and running again -- are taking safety seriously; they will meet monthly, on Wednesdays after the first Select Board meeting of each month
- * Have collected \$40,000 more taxes this year than at the same time last year
- * Chairman Richards inquired is there a paving plan list yet for the summer

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Traverse reported the Economic Development Committee, the Itty Bitty Committee and Historical Society met and approved a Better Places grant application. The beautification project is for 18 solar light fixtures in the downtown, replacing existing trees at a cost of approximately \$17,000; they request grant match funds. Mr. Brown **made a motion to allow an amount not to exceed \$10,000 from the Grant Match fund**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed. There was discussion re: sidewalk repair and other possible beautification projects.

Budget Review: Members continued their review of the draft budget line by line commencing with **Accounting Dept.** Manager Gunter noted he increased both the accountant and office assistant salaries over the 2.25% based on performance. There followed lengthy discussion re: if that is allowed in light of the Union contract. Manager Gunter stated there is language in the contract that allows him that discretion. Members will review the contract. No change in the **Town auditor** line-- they have not done any work and do not take the stipend. No change in the **delinquent tax collector** line; **debt** includes the fuel tank, sewer bond -- the fire truck is paid for. **Benefits** are not negotiable. The new insurance takes effect January 1st; HR is reduced based on utilization -- past 3 years, spent appx. 70% of allocation. There was lengthy discussion re: Reserve allocations; allocation of fund balance; that economic development is necessary; ballot questions; DPW final review -- that DPW Supt. Kerber commands a higher salary due to 3 certifications, in Water, Sewer and DPW. There is need to get a paving list with cost estimates. Manager Gunter reported many

calls from grateful citizens for the paving done last summer. The **Warning** and allocations will be addressed at the next meeting.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the 2021 – 2022 budget as written for \$2,295,147.00**; seconded by Ms. Egan. The amount is a 3.84% increase. It is noted to make sure that people understand it includes a \$76,000 sewer upgrade payment. The motion carried unanimously.

Parking Lot: Mr. Traverse stated the Zoning Regulation Updates should be discussed and brought to resolution

Board Roundtable: At Mr. Brown's inquiry, an appropriation that was voted at \$50,000 shows in the paperwork to have spent \$100,000 will be investigated. Ms. Bertrum noted something must have been coded wrong

Chairman Richards inquired re: a property supposedly donated to the Town. Listers need to know to include it on tax rolls? To collect rent? Manager Gunter stated he received that communication and has been looking into the property.

Chairman Richards heard of an agency that gave Mobil Home Park residents an ultimatum. He does not want to find these folks have no place to go.

Chairman Richards sent his Town Report Select Board report to members for review

Review of Financial Reports: The checkbook status is \$124,351.20

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the Payroll warrant for \$29,948.32**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed.

Mr. Sheldon **moved to approve payment of the General Fund Warrants of \$68,352.95**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed.

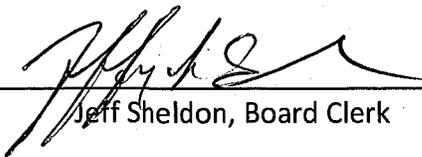
Executive Session: Mr. Traverse moved the Board into executive session at 9:20 p.m. under 1 VSA 313 (a)(3) to discuss the Town Manager contract; seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The board came out of executive session at 10 p.m.

Mr. Brown motioned to adjourn; Ms. Egan seconded. Adjourned at 10:01pm

Respectfully submitted,
Claire L. Stanley



Jeff Sheldon, Board Clerk