

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners

REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, July 25, 2023 -- 7:00 PM

Zoom Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85646551688>

Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 8564 655 1688

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Glen Traverse, Bob Richards, Chadd Viger, Jason Coupal, Rich Greenough

Others Present: Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Steven Wilson, PEGTV, Town Accountant Liz Ambuhl (on zoom), NormVadnais, Kimberly Lemois, Jimmy Lemois, Josh Markie, Bob Almeida, Jesse Kyhill, E. Longly.

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

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to add** "*Ruby Bistro Water/Sewer Allocation Request*" to NEW BUSINESS; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed.

Mr. Coupal **made a motion to add** "*Personnel*" to EXECUTIVE SESSION; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed.

Meeting With Renters Regarding Water Shutoff: No one attended. Mr. Coupal inquired, do folks normally bring these issues to the Town Manager? No, water shut off issues are brought directly to the Select Board. Water bills went out two weeks ago; shut offs start August 1st.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Coupal **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the July 11, 2023, meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Viger. CORRECTION. Pg. 2, 9th point. Change (MURF) to (MERP) Municipal Energy Resilience Program. The motion carried.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: The Board heard from Mr. Norm Vadnais who wanted to continue the discussion started at the last meeting with his son Luke about issues with supporting kids and the Rec Dept. He noted other Towns have issues too and have figured out ways to support kids. Parents should not have to buy equipment, but no equipment, not sport. It was a bad decision to close the bathroom trailer -- had to tell a woman she needed to go to Dunkin for bathroom use. Parents should not have to mow fields before play. There has to be a greater commitment. The lack of support shows how little we care about kids' activities. There was no basketball program planned, so Luke took it upon himself to lead a basketball program. Mr. Coupal noted that at the last meeting, Luke gave us an education. I apologize that I did not know how many kids were involved in the Rec program(s). We have to do better. It is not only budget issues; we need to prioritize for Rec. He also noted the need to make sure the Board is informed of needs. Manager Gunter stated he takes full responsibility for closing

the bathrooms. There was vandalism as well as difficulty in getting parts to repair the toilets. Mr. Greenough asked what parts; these are specialized toilets. Mr. Josh Markie remarked that other Towns have “stuff” where they are able to make money from sales. There used to be nice bathrooms and concession. This is an embarrassment to the Town. Chairman Richards said, the first this Board heard was from Luke at the last meeting. After the fire, we bought the bathroom trailer and investigated buying a cook shack -- outrageously expensive. We work to not raise taxes. You guys need to be here during budget season (begins in October). Mr. Vadnais stated that this is a priority issue. Mr. Traverse said he offers no excuses; agrees that the Board needs to do better; these are different times than earlier when there was a very active Rec committee. We dropped the ball on the bathroom; we’ll do better; could use a Rec committee to help us. Mr. Vadnais stated this Board does not need frequent individual complaints; this Board needs to form a Rec committee to oversee kids recreation activities. One gentleman suggested the Board do some research with other Towns to determine ideas of how they do it. This is not going to be fixed today. We know Rec is cost prohibitive, but if fields are in use, there will be less vandalism, and funds can be raised. Mr. Markie noted the large advertising boards along the little league field are no longer being paid for and could again be a source of revenue. Fund raising ideas including grants and soliciting donations were discussed. Mr. Coupal stated that this Board does not know what is needed. He also said that he has the time and is willing to take this on and do research, but needs guidance from parents and coaches. At Mr. Vadnais’ inquiry, yes, the Town insurance does cover all Town sponsored activities. Mr. Viger said this is a quality-of-life issue. The key is to hire a high level Recreation /Economic Development Director overseeing activities and searching for grants and corporate sponsorships. We appreciate you coming tonight since folks have not been communicating needs like this for an investment in quality-of-life. Chairman Richards assured those present that “your efforts are not falling on deaf ears”; that the Town does support their kids; and to please attend Town Meeting. Mr. Coupal noted the need to investigate is now and not to delay until October budget season. Mr. Markie said there is need for major improvements now and then maintenance only. GMP is ready to donate poles and lights; we have guys willing to help with work; willing to raise money. It would be nice to have things ready to go; however, there is need for the Town to be committed to see what improvements can be accomplished.

Members took a moment to go outside to take a look at the new dump truck

Town Manager Report & Communication: Manager Gunter reported:

- * **Police Dept.** reported 57 municipal violations; 2 car crashes; 14 finger printings
- * The Town Office begins budget work the end of August
- * Spoke with Bruce Meacham re: a new Town Garage; will meet with him tomorrow at the Air Park.
- * The Request for Proposal (RFP) is out for the leaking Water Plant roof.
- * Danny Reid, Avalanche Truck Repair will check out the Playground trailer for repairs of the bathrooms. The problem is vandalism. There followed discussion re: ideas for mitigation.
- * The 2022 audit is complete. Auditor will report at a future Select Board meeting
- * Dept. Of Public Works (DPW) is cutting brush; are doing a good job maintaining equipment

- * The Transfer Station is working with a daily check list. Did a spot check on Friday. Mr. Greenough reported the Transfer Station was immaculate on Thursday when he was there
- * Met with the Probate Judge yesterday re: the Green Mountain Mobil Home Park. This is a slow process with the new Administrator gathering information

OLD BUSINESS

Downtown Sidewalk Grant Discussion: Examples of color, herringbone stamped cement are in members' packets. There is approximately \$15,000 increase to that section of the project if color, stamped cement is used. After lengthy discussion, Mr. Coupal **made a motion to decline** the use of stamped, colored cement; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Urban plaza/mini park examples are in members' packets. There was lengthy discussion re: how best to use the (green) space; maintenance; design; use of trees, memorial plaques, plantings, seating area; renderings are very expensive. Manager Gunter will reach out to Dubois and King (D&K); inquire of Castleton University (CU) for student ideas. The matter was tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

Mower Purchase for Cemetery: Mower is 2009 Scag with 3600 hours of work; this would be the third hydraulic drive replacement @ \$900. DPW and Manager Gunter request to purchase a new one rather than another repair. Mr. Greenough **made a motion to purchase** a new mower for cemetery mowing as recommended by DPW and Manager Gunter; seconded by Mr. Traverse. Mr. Coupal **moved to amend the motion** to include the mower to be paid (\$5200) from the DPW Equipment Reserve fund; seconded by Mr. Traverse. The motion and amendment carried unanimously.

Planning Commission Member Reduction: The Planning Commission lost two members with the recent death of Mr. Dave Eighmey; Ms. Deborah Laiacona has resigned (The Board thanks her for her service). Mr. Coupal recommends to take two weeks and advertise to see if there is interest in the open position(s) before reducing the number of members. Manager Gunter will advertise and include the open positions on the website.

Dog Report: The Town Clerk reports 227 unlicensed dogs this year, a larger number than usual. The list will go to the Animal Control Officer -- he will start doing door to door checks. Mr. Traverse suggests using the website to remind folks to register their pet.

Ruby Bistro Water/Sewer Allocation Request: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to grant** a 675 gallon per day water and sewer allocation as requested by Ruby Bistro; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Policy Update: Two residents recently inquired re: a 50%/50% split between a homeowner and the Town for payment of replacing sidewalk. No mention of this was found in any policy. Manager Gunter amended the Sidewalk Policy including language (Sidewalk Improvement

Incentive) to codify the 50%/50% split. Mr. Traverse discussed how was this split to be applied and does not support it. Mr. Greenough said it is the way to go. Mr. Viger said, since there is a caveat that the Town reserves the right to not fund, he is OK with it. Mr. Coupal **made a motion to leave the Sidewalk Policy as is with no further additions at this time.** The motion was seconded by Mr. Traverse and carried unanimously.

Parking Lot:

Chairman Richards stated that **Zoning Regulations** are done, waiting to be transcribed. One of the significant changes is, there are to be no street level apartments in the front sections of downtown buildings.

Board Round Table: At Mr. Greenough thanked whoever trimmed the bush obstructing vision at the intersection of Allen Ave. and Caernarvon Street. * He expressed appreciation for DPW that is doing a great job catching up on work. * Also, appreciation for the cleanup done at the Transfer Station. * Mr. Greenough noted there are a couple limbs hanging low in the Park where folks need to slump to get by -- could DPW get to them before Thursday evening. * There is brush on the side of the hill going down from the Auto Supply store. Chairman Richards reported he was told that would be taken care of tomorrow. * He inquired re: getting the ceiling tiles done in the office area of the Municipal Building. Manager Gunter reported the contractor said the project would be completed in August.

Mr. Coupal reported he was involved in an accident while in Florida; will be in the hospital tomorrow. * He understood there was an incident with Concerts in the Park last week re: Johnny Cash did not appear. Mr. Greenough explained that last year, at the last minute, the Band leader (Spirit of Johnny Cash) was taken ill and did not appear -- another band replaced them to the delight of the audience. Last Thursday, the same band leader resigned and was replaced, again to the delight of the audience. * Mr. Coupal reported that Dani Roberts is a recent Grandmother.

Mr. Viger commented that at the last meeting Chief Humphries reported being called out to miscellaneous occurrences, such as bats in the attic. He suggests perhaps the Health Officer or the Assistant Officer could take some of these calls. Manager Gunter reported this week the Police received a call to pick up a baby bird in someone's driveway.

Mr. Traverse reported someone called asking to clean up the tree that was taken down in the south section of the West Street cemetery.

Chairman Richards received a letter from the Grade School stating Applefest will be Sept. 23rd – rain date the 24th.

Manager Gunter reported the Auditor sent a letter requesting the Town Staff to copy a large number of documents for them. The request was denied stating they may have access to any documents needed, but this office will not make copies for them.

Review of Financial Reports: The checkbook status is **\$656,479.25**.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$40,463.13**; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$124,921.91** seconded by Mr. Coupal. This amount includes a BC/BS payment. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Mr. Viger **moved the Board and Town Manager Gunter into executive session** at 9:36 pm to discuss Personnel 1 VSA 313 (a)(3); seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:58 pm

Mr. Viger motioned to **adjourn**; Mr. Coupal seconded; meeting adjourned at 9:59 pm

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk