

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

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

REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, October 17, 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, Jason Coupal, Rich Greenough

Members Absent: Chadd Viger

Others Present: Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, PEGTV, Rose Anne VanLew, Mike LaDuke, John Lulek, Brenda Bowen, Brian Bowen, Police Chief William Humphries, Rycle A. Morales, Small Business Assistant (SBA)

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.

Water Shut Off Meeting for Renters: No one was in attendance.

Water Bill Dispute -- Brian Bowen: Mr. Bowen disputes the water bill believing the meter malfunctioned -- there was one weekly meter reading showing 35,750 gallons. The building is unoccupied, there are no outside spigots and there was no evidence of water spillage on the property. Mr. LaDuke reported the meters are very reliable and explained the process of meter testing at Town cost if found defective, and at the customer cost if found to be accurate. The one-time spike in the meter reading cannot be explained. Mr. Coupal **made a motion to** reduce the water/sewer bill to a four-quarter average; seconded by Mr. Greenough. Mr. Greenough noted the possibility of electronic interference during that one-time meter reading. The motion carried unanimously.

Otter Creek Communication District Update: Ms. Tracey Richards presented a handout noting the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) has approved the Otter Creek Communications Union District (CUD) Construction Grant application for the first phase to bring high-speed broadband to rural communities including Fair Haven. Ms. Richards explained in detail the process so far, noting that each region is doing different things depending on the status of their infrastructure. Otter Creek is sending bids to all providers noting that Consolidated Communications provides most services to this area. The handout included a proposed budget. So far, no funds are requested or required from member Towns. Discussion followed re: (slow) process, timeline, expectation. Mr. Coupal noted that Consolidated Communications will most likely oust other providers as their service is better and cheaper. Members thanked Ms. Richards for her time and information.

Amendments to the Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the October 3, 2023, meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Ms. Rose Anne VanLew reported that Project Graduation is planning to affix banners with graduating Senior's photos on downtown utility poles. She noted that Manager Gunter was very helpful in her efforts. As a fundraiser, the class is selling Slater yard signs (\$20) available at her downtown place of employment. She hopes these will be very popular as all the school fall sports teams are in playoffs.

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

- * There were 134 calls for service
- * Unregistered vehicles in South Park Place parking lot will be towed.
- * Completed 10 civilian fingerprints
- * All local Law enforcement agencies participated in Active Shooter Training class. Chief Humphries thanked the Grade School for the use of their building
- * Responded to a tree cutting accident on the 9th where a man fell and was pinned by a limb; was transported to hospital
- * Cheri McDermott is starting her 6th year with the Department
- * Craig Watrus is starting his 3rd year with the Department
- * The speeding motorcycle reported on Fourth St. was identified

Water Dept. Chief Mike LaDuke reported: intern Blake Sheldrick has stepped up doing a good job. No further problems with the recent water main break. The electronic cabinet installation should be finished by the end of the month. Water quality is good; the plant is doing well.

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

- * **Dept. of Public Works (DPW)** is prepping for winter, preparing plows, etc.
- * Continue to do ditching and brush cutting; winterizing bathrooms
- * Concrete form is poured for the Park picnic table
- * GMP was contacted re: hanging banners; will be done by same organization that hangs flags.
- * GMP replied, yes one more light can be installed in the Park and Ride
- * GMP was contacted re: their "No Outage" program to see if they can bury cables during the Sidewalk and Park and Ride projects so disturbing paving later will not be necessary.
- * The new furnace is installed in the Municipal Building
- * Santa will visit Fair Haven on November 25th

OLD BUSINESS

Sand/Gravel Bids: Two bids were received, without samples. Mr. Greenough got samples from both Casella and Pike available for members' examination. Mr. Greenough **made a motion to offer the sand/gravel contract to Casella**, 1 ½ gravel, \$18.40; ¾ gravel, 17.10; winter sand, \$17.00; seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed unanimously.

Governor's Highway Safety Grant: The official document was sent. Chief Humphries stated it is the same as in past years except an education piece has been added. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to sign** the Governor's Highway Safety Grant document; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Truck Bids – Sale of F550: Seven (7) bids were received. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to accept the high bid (\$11,000)**; seconded by Mr. Greenough. Discussion was that all bids were too low. Chief Humphries suggests having a dealer appraise the 2010 F550 truck with plow and advertise to a larger area including the internet. The motion and second were withdrawn.

Deposit to Sewer Capital Improvement Fund: Mr. Greenough **made a motion to deposit the Insurance payment (\$7,610.16)** to the Sewer Capital Improvement Reserve Fund; seconded by Mr. Traverse. The motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Town Health Officer: The Health Officer has resigned; both the Town Clerk and State were notified. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to accept Mr. Lulek's offer** to serve as temporary Health Officer; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously. Chairman Richards welcomed Mr. Lulek back. It was noted that the Assistant Health Officer is attending school out of State.

FY 2025 Budget Review: --_First Look at the FY 25 Budget: Manager Gunter explained that it was necessary to cut \$237,000+ of requested items to arrive at the Board's target. The cuts include from: paving, equipment, overtime, all reserve accounts deposits. He presented detailed budget sheets for members to study, including the US Annual Inflation Rates (2013 – 2023); lengthy discussion followed about options. Mr. Greenough stated that the budget has been kept low, low for the last three years and this process is now catching up to us. Manager Gunter noted that the staff, people that work for the Town fully realize that they are working with tax money and take this responsibility seriously. They do everything in their power toward saving. He also noted that in the next few years, several payments will be paid off. Mr. Coupal said to take some time to study the proposed budget and make notations and suggestions for future discussion and decisions.

Parking Lot: No action

Board Round Table: Mr. Traverse was contacted re: gun shots heard at the Air Park, concerned because of dog park. Chairman Richards noted that at this time of year, people sight rifles at the Air Park -- has been going on for years.

Flood Assistance Report: The Board heard from Rycle A. Morales, Small Business Assistance (SBA) who reported that both FEMA and SBA have extended the window to apply for flood assistance until October 31 and are still working in the field. He presented written statements/ information to the Board and explained in detail the process for application. SBA assists in

application, provides information, links, forms, assists in finding grants, make recommendations etc. to anyone who applies. He urges to not get discouraged but to apply for assistance. Members thanked Mr. Morales for the information.

Review of Financial Reports: The **checkbook status is \$988,960.37**

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$34,767.57**; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$150,911.59**; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse **moved the Board into executive session** at 8:50 pm to discuss Personnel, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(3) / 1 VSA ¶ 313(a)(2); seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:45 pm.

Mr. Traverse **motioned to accept the bid of \$8,560** from Todd and Mary Ferguson for the purchase of lot 25-01-02 located East of the Public Works property and West of the D&JH railway. Mr. Greenough seconded. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **motioned to accept the bid of \$5,000** from Stephen and Tammy Taylor for lot 22-01-01 located Dutton Rd and Rt 4. Mr. Greenough seconded. Passed unanimously

Mr. Traverse motioned to **adjourn**; Mr. Coupal seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk