

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, December 12, 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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Health Officer John Lulek, Josh Markie, Erika Notte, Bonnie Rosati, Ryan Lawrence, Kerry Steves, Luke Vadnais, Tory Luther, Eric Ramey, Raven Goodspeed, Shane Beayon, Lyle Jepson, Gary Jamieson, Joe Dayton, Donald Proctor.

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.

Public Hearing -- Zoning Ordinance Update: Chairman Richards reported the Committee had worked to make the document more business and housing friendly. Also, State mandates are included in the document. Ms. Bonnie Rosati said she had three pages of questions and concerns (copies to members) including unclear language re: “accessory apartment” vs “duplex”, that the property owner must live on the premises, or the building is a duplex; also, language for “conditional use” applying to unique issues is vague to the public. Chairman Richards said the document can be adopted, that it is a living document and changes can be made at the committee level when the final copy is received from Rutland Regional. It is the first time in a long time that all copies of the Zoning Regulations are the same. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to adopt the New Zoning By-Laws with recommended changes**; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to close the Public Hearing** at 7:22 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed unanimously.

Lyle Jepson from CEDRR: Mr. Jepson noted that Fair Haven is a member of Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) contributing \$500. He reported that CEDRR does regional marketing, working to attract families to the area with activities such as Weekend Get-Away. There are serious employing needs in the region and families are invited, paid for by CEDRR, through the internet then randomly selected to visit the region and stay. Also offer a program where a family visiting Vermont, takes at least 20 photos of different Towns visited to receive a small Vermont made prize. He gave customized brochures to members that include specific activities and programs available. Mr. Jepson spoke briefly about The Mint Maker Place, a building owned by CEDRR that offers a fully tooled space where students can build robotics, do metal work, woodworking and share knowledge, experience, and ideas. Mr. Viger asked, how does CEDRR work to connect with Fair Haven? CEDRR offers The Hub in downtown Rutland where folks can develop start-up businesses to build wealth in the area. CEDRR offers small grants, up to \$4000 to small businesses and try to connect people with programs. There are a lot of positives going on. Fair Haven is located favorably near the highway, and close to NY. People see Vermont

as a safe place and come to visit from places like Arizona where the temperature is hot year-round and from places where they feel unsafe. CEDRR is supported by several businesses and 14 Towns. Mr. Jepson reported that CEDRR has written three letters to Vermont University stating their disapproval of the direction the University has taken. Members are invited to attend monthly meetings and to join the marketing team. Members thanked Mr. Jepson for his time and work.

Mike Stannard -- Ash Tree Survey Report: Mr. Stannard did not attend.

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to add to New Business:** *“Tobacco/Liquor Licenses” and “Planning Committee Appointment”*; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Viger **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the November 28, 2023, meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed with Mr. Traverse abstaining.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: None

Mr. Coupal suggested moving the **Rec/Baseball budget discussion** to accommodate those in attendance. All members agreed.

Mr. Viger suggested incorporating Rec and Baseball into one budget line item. Mr. Vadnais said it is confusing for them to know what is available; Mr. Markie noted there are plans to add activities such as pickle ball, frisbee golf and a walking path that would add many line items. Mr. Markie said these activities would attract more people resulting in less vandalism; that Rec is not just for kids, but for families and older people as well. Mr. Greenough noted a full-time Rec Director could write grants easing the financial burden. Mr. Ramey stated that Rec is a year-round thing; can schedule year-round activities; are trying to attract people; for that, the space needs to be appealing; young families would move here to stay; right now, there is nothing to do. Mr. Vadnais stated that eventually, Rec could be self-sufficient, it just needs help getting started; that most of the work noted on the list presented would be done by the Rec Director. Some things that need to be done include removing the pine trees, installing lights and cameras around the playground to increase safety, repairing neglected equipment and fences. Mowing and trimming can be done by parents to reduce the burden on the Town. There is very little sports equipment (balls, bats, nets, etc.); have started doing fund raising; the basketball program has so far been going with hand-me-down equipment from the school(s). The Rec Program will never improve without a full time Rec Director that can bring in money and grow the program with activities for all ages -- more people, less vandalism. Mr. Viger said the Rec Director item should be in the budget; Mr. Traverse said, if it was a separate item (appropriation) it would be approved; Mr. Coupal said to put it in the budget and sell it. Chairman Richards noted this is a new concept for voters. Mr. Markie noted it has been neglected for so long. Mr. Ramey said we should draw attention to the position. He noted the Committee can raise money to support the entire sports program, the Director position should be funded by the Town. Mr. Traverse noted the budget will be increased this year. Mr. Greenough noted that many Towns show budget increases up to 20%. Mr. Greenough also noted that members are already talking about lights and cameras in the playground (Manager Gunter said discussed not funded); a director can get grants; a good working Rec program would improve the community. Whitehall has raised \$50,000 in a short fundraising campaign. The Committee expects to be able to raise like amounts yearly, have not yet advertised for donations. There was brief conversation re: the role of a Rec Director vs Committee. Manager Gunter stated that a full-time Rec Director adds a huge burden to the existing office staff. He thought the position was to be 60/40 split with

office help. If this is not the case, a part-time person needs to be added to the office staff, to manage Rec activities paperwork, as they are already overburdened. It is felt that the Rec Director position will have downtime that can be spent as finance manager. Chairman Richards asked that manager Gunter re-do the Rec section of the budget for later review.

The Board **tabled** “Dept. Head Reports” and “Town Manager Report & Communications

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Liquor and Tobacco Licenses Approval: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the Tobacco license** as requested by S. W. Wolk Corporation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the Tobacco Substitute endorsement** as requested by S. W. Wolk Corporation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the 2nd class liquor license** as requested by S.W Wolk Corporation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed unanimously.

Planning Commission Appointment: Mr. Coupal **made a motion to appoint Cindy Pritchard** to a two (2) year term on the Planning Commission; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed.

FY 2025 Budget Review: Members reviewed selected sections of the budget line by line beginning with adding \$2000 to the **auditor** line; Municipal Building and Grounds **Delinquent taxes** was raised by \$2000; **Technical Services** was reduced to \$10,000; **fuel and propane** reduced by \$3000; **Constable’s salary** increased to \$2500; **Cemetery** budget increased to just under \$4000. Mr. Jamieson and Mr. Dayton reported they propose to take over care of the West Street cemeteries. There was no change made to the **Air Park** line; no change made to the **Health Inspector** line. Members welcomed Mr. Lulek back to fill this position, he is very much appreciated. The **Transfer Station** budget is reduced by 1.77%, \$4,471. The **Special Events** line was discussed, Re: **Christmas** add \$500; **Memorial Day** add \$2500. The entire budget will be reviewed again.

Mr. Greenough stated that the Board must address Insurance for Special Events. The School provides an insurance rider for **Applefest**; and the Chamber provides an insurance rider for the **Car Show**. However, the **Lumberjack Show** was not able to secure insurance (cost prohibitive).

Local Accomplishments: Mr. Traverse provided a list including: Town Hall refurbishment, phase I completed; elevator installed, 1st floor facelift, add bathrooms on 2nd floor, Historical Society museum space identified; Park improvements, fence painting by volunteers, new picnic table installed, started construction for lighting -- expect completion in the spring, major equipment upgrade in DPW & Water/Sewer, chemical tanks replaced and roof repair at water plant; Economic Development -- new businesses attracted to Fair Haven. Container company at site of Young’s Farm Equipment, Ruby’s Bistro opened downtown, new Dunkin (Doughnuts). Zoning by-laws updated and approved. Events and Celebrations back to pre-Covid levels; Memorial Day parade, Spring Fling, Concerts in the Park, IBC . . . Touch a Truck, Fair Haven Friday’s (wine

tasting, etc.), Santa in the Park, Applefest, Library events, Historical Society events, Fair Haven Concerned transition to "Slate Valley Cares".

Parking Lot: No discussion

Board Round Table: Mr. Greenough reported that some DPW employees are using their own private vehicle (pickup) to do small jobs like checking roads, carrying gas to mowing sites. He suggests getting a small truck for them to use -- trade in the 550 for a used pickup. He noted this is something he noticed himself -- no one at DPW discussed this with him.

Mr. Viger said he wants to focus the next year studying privatizing the Transfer Station to generate revenue. Also to study data looking into options tax for Fair Haven.

Mr. Traverse noted that the Fire Dept. was looking at options to buy new or re-furbish the fire truck. He wants to look into loaning money to ourselves to get that done. Fire protection is absolutely necessary.

Chairman Richards reported that Rutland Regional will write an enhanced energy program for Fair Haven looking for ways to reduce the carbon footprint. They are interested in the Hydro project. Also looking for grants to purchase more charging stations (\$15,000 each), \$1500 cost to the Town.

Review of Financial Reports: The checkbook status is **\$1,654,937.33**.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$34,446.68**; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$667,961.95**; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously. This amount included a school payment.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay a corrected warrant, \$319.09**; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed.

Executive Session: Mr. Coupal **made a motion to go into executive** session, including the Town Manager at 10:11 p.m. to discuss Real Estate Sale, 1 V.S.A. ¶ 313 (a)(2); seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

The recording secretary was excused at this time.

Board came out of executive session at 10:45 p.m.

Mr. Viger motion to **adjourn** at 10:46 p.m. seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed.

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk