

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, February 20, 2024 -- 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, Tucker Babcock, Peg TV, Police Chief William Humphries, Lillian E. Billewicz, Johnathan Billewicz, Rose Anne VanLew, Ceil Hunt, Glen Roberts, Anthony Chambers, Keith Whitcomb (on phone).

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. Greenough **made a motion to add** to NEW BUSINESS, *Liquor Licenses, and Economic Development Committee (EDC) Appointment*; seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the February 6, 2024, meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed with Mr. Viger abstaining.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: A letter of awareness was given to Board members by Mr. Anthony Chambers.

Mr. Glen Roberts reported that the culvert by his driveway on Scotch Hill is beginning to plug up. He also inquired re: how many trees will be removed at the playground. Chairman Richards said the shade Ash tree will be treated and saved. The Rec Committee recommended and the Board approved removal of large trees that interfere with playground safety.

Ms. Lillian Billewicz inquired, was the sale of the property at 16/18 River Street posted in 3 public places. Mr. Coupal asked is there a law stating that. Manager Gunter said yes, it is required.

Mr. Johnathan Billewicz asked are any of the Board members aware of how asbestos was disposed of. Chairman Richards said that the Engineer and the Contractor took some responsibility and paid half of the fine. Manager Gunter said that OSHA stated the Town did what it was supposed to do.

Mr. Coupal asked to clarify "five Minutes for Public Comment". Is it each person, each issue -- he feels people should feel they can come in and make their comments. Chairman Richards said he

thinks it is each person and should be stopped when there is repetition. Ms. Billewicz said the statute in question is 24 VSA 1051.

Ms. Ceil Hunt reminded that "Meet the Candidates" event is scheduled at the Library for Saturday, March 2nd, at 1:00.

Mr. Johnathan Billewicz said the Town did not bid on the 5/7 Union Street properties, how can they legally now demolish them. Mr. Coupal noted that this matter has been adjudicated.

Department Head Reports: Police Chief Humphries reported: Detailed reports are in members' packets. There were: 2 arrests; wrote 43 tickets, 5 overweight citations, completed 13 sets of civilian fingerprints, and responded to 109 calls for service. Chief Humphries reported that Chris Devito, part time officer, in the US Army deployed has been promoted to Captain.

Town Manager Report & Communication: Manager Gunter reported:

- * Re: the lead line inventory, funded by the State; folks will be receiving a letter asking for information about lead pipes inside their homes. Can get information about the survey by contacting the Town office.
- * Attended a Housing Development meeting and was surprised at how many developers were there aggressively looking for locations to build. We should have representation at these events.
- * There was a sewer backup on Fourth Street. Mr. Viger offered praise to the folks that found and reported the leak, and to the Dept. of Public Works for their timely repair job.
- * The Park fence painting will be finished by Friday. Mr. Carl Scott has done 250 rails and Manager Gunter has done 82. Would like to start a yearly maintenance of the fence, scheduled in May.

Dept. of Public Works (DPW) have been working fire hydrants to be ready for flushing.

- * Have been doing equipment maintenance, patching holes, taken down trees on dump road
- * There was displeasure on Facebook re: water rates. Manager Gunter randomly selected 10 water accounts and compared them to last year. 3 showed an increase; most were flat.
- * Ms. Hunt reported that the Historical Society will no longer wrap the Park fence rails with patriotic banner for Memorial Day as it will leave color on the newly painted rails. She offered special thanks to Mr. Carl Scott and Manager Gunter for their work painting the rails.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Economic Development Committee (EDC) Appointment: Mr. Greenough reported that Ms. Ceil Hunt has volunteered to serve on the EDC Board. Ms. Hunt said she wants to be part of how we move forward toward the Board's vision; that she hates to see empty downtown storefronts though it is not unique to Fair Haven. Mr. Coupal **made a motion to appoint** Ms. Ceil Hunt to the Economic Development Committee; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Small Business Revolving Loan Application: Mr. Greenough reported that the EDC has approved and recommends this Board approve a \$7250 Revolving Loan for a Yoga studio startup. A brief history of the loan fund that started with \$41,000 was given. Some monies have been loaned on a contract drafted by attorneys; this loan depletes the fund. It was noted that there have been no loan defaults and that the program is a success since the fund is depleted. Mr. Viger **made a motion to approve** a \$7250 Revolving Loan as requested by Aleksandra Martin for a Yoga Studio as recommended by EDC. The motion was seconded by Mr. Coupal and passed unanimously.

Fireworks Permit Approval: Mr. Greenough **made a motion to approve** a Fireworks permit as requested by C & C Fireworks; seconded by Mr. Traverse. This is their 3rd year; the \$1000 permit fee has been paid; a permit from the Fire Dept. is required to set off fireworks in Fair Haven. The motion carried unanimously.

Listers Form PVR-4155: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve** the Listers form PVR-4155; seconded by Mr. Viger. The form shows there are no suits or appeals pending to recover paid taxes. The motion carried unanimously.

Demo Bids – 5/7 Union Street: Manager Gunter reported 3 bids were received: We Dig It Excavation, \$19,910; Fabian, \$52,390; Wood, \$30,250. The bids do not include tree removal -- that is to be done by DPW. The demo materials would be put into containers for removal; work to start as soon as possible; backfilled with clean materials on hand. Mr. Greenough expressed concern re: backfill, that it is sandy soil in that whole area and like fill should be used for continued good drainage. Mr. Coupal expressed concern re: with the large discrepancy in bid amounts, he would like to examine more closely to make sure all is in compliance. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to accept** the \$30,250 bid from Doug Wood, a local contractor; seconded by Mr. Greenough. The motion carried with Mr. Coupal abstaining.

Liquor and Tobacco Licenses: Mr. Coupal **made a motion to approve** a second-class liquor license as requested by **Midway Oil Corporation**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Coupal **made a motion to approve** a second-class liquor license as requested by **Walgreen Eastern Co. Inc.**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Coupal **made a motion to approve** a Tobacco license as requested by **Midway Oil Corporation**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Coupal **made a motion to approve** a Tobacco license as requested by **Walgreen Eastern Co. Inc.**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Coupal **made a motion to approve** a Tobacco Substitute Endorsement as requested by **Midway Oil Corporation**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Coupal **made a motion to approve an Outside Consumption Permit** as requested by **Ruby's Bistro & Bakery LLC**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Coupal **made a motion to approve an Outside Consumption Permit** as requested by **Fall Mountain Wines LLC**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

It was noted that an area is cordoned off for outside consumption.

Mr. Coupal **made a motion** to approve a **Vinous Manufacturer License for Fall Mountain Wines LLC**; seconded by Mr. Traverse and passed unanimously.

Mr. Coupal noted that there are very few winemakers in Vermont and that there is one in Fair Haven is an asset to the Town.

Policy Review -- Social Services Policy: The policy establishes procedures for managing appropriations requests for vote at Town meetings. After some discussion including, can the Town deny a request/petition if the agency does not present a report of expenditure. The policy discussion was tabled for further review.

Property Tax Stabilization Efforts -- Discussion: New dump punch cards are being printed; will be the same size, cost is \$20. not \$24, with 20 \$1.00 increments. Are reviewing local options tax. Have spoken to the schools and Chamber re: a Town \$5.00 booth fee at events in the Park.

Parking Lot: Chairman Richards reported the **Town Plan** is moving along; the **Village Designation** is not due for another one or two years.

Local Accomplishments: Manager Gunter extended special thanks to Mr. Carl Scott who has been committed to painting the Park fence rails. Mr. Gunter calculated the work is about 3 weeks full time equivalent, all done as a volunteer. Members feel there should be some recognition.

Board Round Table: Mr. Greenough commended the Dept of Public Works for their diligent attention to care of equipment. He noticed that trucks were clean even when his own was not. He expressed concern that we are behind on ditching and road maintenance (ditching, cutting shoulders, etc.). He suggests designating 2 days a week for this task, considering emergencies.

Mr. Coupal reported he attended a Legislative Conference and visited with representatives. He noted there were a lot of Towns including Killington in attendance aggressively vying for attention from representatives. It is important that we have a presence at these events. He attended his first Transit Board meeting finding that Rutland City is the only consistent presence. They were very glad to see me and said they are committed to Fair Haven. Mr. Coupal said he is new to the area, trying to increase his knowledge. There is need to consistently remind representatives that we are here. He will be serving on a Chamber and Economic Development of Rutland Region (CEDRR) committee, yet to be determined.

At Chairman Richards inquiry, Manager Gunter said all Social Service agencies have tendered a letter requesting appropriation. He reported Better Roads and Rutland Regional will be doing surveys on Scotch Hill. His conversations with Legislature have fallen on deaf ears. He said that Rutland Regional told him they don't know why Fair Haven has not received class 2 appropriation(s).

Review of Financial Reports: The **checkbook status is \$1,035,385.05.**

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$31,050.00;** seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$183,519.89;** seconded by Mr. Coupal. This amount includes a sewer bond payment and a truck payment. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Mr. Coupal **made a motion to enter executive session,** including the Town Manager at 8:42 p.m. to discuss Personnel, 1 V.S.A. ¶ 313 (a)(3); seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

The recording secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:09pm.

Mr. Viger motioned to **adjourn** at 9:10; seconded by Mr. Traverse

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk