

## TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

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

**REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, April 30, 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, Michael Doran, Rich Greenough

**Others Present:** Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Tucker Babcock, Peg TV, Rose Anne VanLew, Sean Galvin, Ceil Hunt, Eric Phaneuf, Christopher Stanton, Josh Markie, Allen Bowen, Troy Luther, Tom Fucile, Wayne Charlton, Dept. of Public Works (DPW) Foreman Nate Saxton, Buddy Bowen, Mike Finnegan, Jim Heller, Chief William Humphrey, Luke Vadnais, Peter Schneider (on phone).

**Call to Order:** Chairman 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 -- VCDP Grant for Skyline Project:** Manager Gunter introduced Peter Schneider who has been working on the Vermont Community Development Program Grant (VCDP). He approached the Board two months ago proposing to re-operationalize the former Skyline building for manufacturing homes. Mr. Schneider said they are researching the condition of the building to bring it up to code, evaluating the equipment left by Skyline to optimize the factory for production. They expect 100+ jobs when production starts. Currently are seeking funding for a feasibility study; start coordinating with future owner in 2025; start production in 2026. 10% of the \$60,000 grant match will be paid by Efficiency Vermont; The Vermont Low Income Trust has been invited to participate in funding the grant match. It is not known if the current renters will be displaced. The Town will be involved securing building contractor(s) and cooperating to seek an owner operator. Skyline has no involvement with this project. It was noted that this is a long process; that there will not be 100 new jobs “next year”, but this will be an asset to Fair Haven; there is no money yet to do the feasibility study.

The **Public Hearing** adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

**Meeting with Renters -- Water Shutoffs:** No one was in attendance

**Meeting with Eric Phaneuf -- Tax Stabilization Request:** Mr. Phaneuf reported on his beginning stages of building a 5 mega-watt solar project on Airport Road. He has made arrangements with landowner Bishoff, is in the process of securing financing and will then start the permitting process. He is requesting a tax stabilization agreement for the solar project, in person, since the Board previously denied his request. A Subject Property Data sheet was provided along with copies of the Tax Stabilization Policy. Mr. Phaneuf notes that the policy addresses

commercial and industrial buildings, not solar. He requests to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town to be warned for voters. He noted that the landowner would continue to pay property taxes and his project would generate approximately \$15,000 in additional property taxes. Green Mountain Power is expected to go online in December of 2025 and this project most likely will not be ready before that time. Chairman Richards said the Board will have to do more research, getting input from the Listers, noting that they have to be fair to another proposed solar project. At Mr. Traverse's inquiry, Mr. Phaneuf's request is for 20-year tax stabilization.

**Amendments to the Agenda:** Mr. Greenough **made a motion** to add "*Appointment to Economic Development Committee*" to New Business; and "*Real Estate 1 VSA 313 (a)(2)*" to Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the April 2, 2024, meeting; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the April 16, 2024, meeting; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the April 23, 2024 Special meeting; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed with Mr. Viger abstaining.

**Five Minutes for Public Comment:** Ms. Ceil Hunt reported that the Itty Bitty Committee gathered last week and cleaned approximately 100 of the Park Marble Posts. Members thanked them for the work and also for Mr. Scott and Manager Gunter for painting the rails.

Mrs. Stanley reported being contacted by someone who had been told that the proposed sidewalk project would remove the sidewalk at the corner where the Insurance Co. and Brewery are located, and the fire trucks would not be able to get there. This will not happen. A flier, News from the Economic Development Committee of Fair Haven, Vermont is being circulated that includes 4 dates for Community Meetings for Downtown Improvement Project. Meetings are at the Municipal Building: Date are 5/9/24, at 6:30 p.m.; 5/11/24, at 2:00 p.m.; 5/14/24, at 7:00 p.m. and 5/23/24, at 6:30 p.m.

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

- \* Report in members' packets
- \* 1 arrest (24 yr. to date)
- \* 4 driving with license suspended
- \* 52 traffic/municipal violations (554 yr. to date)
- \* 20 written warnings (208 yr. to date)
- \* 1 parking violation (23 yr. to date)
- \* 2 car crashes (26 yr. to date)
- \* 2 overweight permits (40 yr. to date)
- \* Completed 8 civilian fingerprints for employment (74 yr. to date)

**Department of Public Works: Foreman Nate Saxon reported:**

- \* Have been sweeping roads
- \* Blacktop companies start production on Wednesday
- \* Cleaned up, spread hay on Union Street property
- \* Worked cemetery burials
- \* Congratulations were extended for Mr. Saxon's new baby

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

- \* Nearing the end of the budget year. General fund is 80% spent; water, 88% spent; sewer 76% spent; highway at 84% spent.
- \* Hydrant flushing has been pushed back a week
- \* The Rec Committee has a storage shed at the playground
- \* Are way behind on the audit; hope to present to the Board at the May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting
- \* Water facility new roof material is delivered; no date for installation
- \* Started cemetery work on the 15<sup>th</sup>
- \* The Scotch Hill wetland study is in progress

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Ladder on South Tank -- update:** 2 quotes are received. However, an e-mail from OSHA states that using an extension ladder is not a violation. Action on this matter will wait until after a scheduled Project WorkSafe evaluation, good information meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Appointment to the Listers Office:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to appoint Jack Adams** for the open Listers' position; seconded by Mr. Viger. There is one more open position. The motion carried unanimously.

**Emergency Management Plan:** Mr. Jim Heller, Emergency Management Plan coordinator thanked the Board for approving the plan last week as they were in a time crunch. The changes were updating personal information and adding Ashley Bride as Shelter Coordinator.

**Road and Bridge Standards:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to adopt** the 2024 Road and Bridge Standards; seconded by Mr. Viger. This is necessary to be eligible for grant applications. The motion carried unanimously.

**Grant Match/ ARPA Funding Distribution:** Manager Gunter reported the Town received \$350,000 in additional grant funding for the "lights in the Park" and "Park and Ride" projects freeing up that amount that previously was "borrowed" from the "Sidewalk" project and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. It was noted that the cost of the two combined projects is \$1.1 million, and because of the grants, the work cost the Town \$85,000.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to move** \$100,000 from the Park and Ride project back to the Sidewalk project; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to return** \$150,000 of ARPA funding back to the Sidewalk project; seconded by Mr. Viger. Mr. Doran asked, are there other projects in Town where the money could be better spent followed by brief discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

Manager Gunter noted that \$50,000 of ARPA funds are left and need to be allocated by December this year.

**Recreation Director Hiring -- Job description:** Draft copies of the job description were handed out; the job starts July 1st; the summer programs are funded. There was discussion including that the Board is committed to the Rec Program; Mr. Vadnais said the committee has a pretty good feel for what is needed; many changes/improvements have been made, including the dugouts are painted (mostly by kids); girls cleaned out their own dugout; boys are coming around; kids are taking ownership; kids were observed playing down there over the weekend; committee members have put in many hours of work; and they need a 60", zero-turn mower, and a storage container is in place (for a few months). Committee members reported that the Town and businesses have been awesome with support and both monetary and equipment donations; that people are excited that the playground is getting cleaned up; homerun fencing is on order; and fences are repaired. Mr. Traverse **made a motion** to use \$10,000 from the DPW Reserve fund to purchase a 60" mower for Playground use; seconded by Mr. Viger. There was discussion of work yet to be done and what funds are available. Manager Gunter cautioned to coordinate with DPW and his office as there are strict rules re: getting bids before purchase of higher price equipment. The motion carried unanimously. Members thanked and praised the committee, who are doing a great job.

**Fire Truck Purchase:** Mr. Heller reported the Truck committee has been working with Lakes Region Apparatus designing a suitable truck to replace a piece that is not road worthy. Showing a PowerPoint display, he detailed the truck capabilities, noting size restrictions to accommodate the Dept. door. This is a time sensitive request as there are major cost increases coming down the pipe (\$50 to \$80,000); are expecting 1 ½ years from order to delivery. Mr. Finnegan said the committee has put in at least 100 hours determining the needs, arriving at a cost of \$597,834. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to authorize** Town Manager Gunter to single source the funds (\$597,834) for the purchase of a new fire engine; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

**Backhoe Purchase Discussion:** Manager Gunter stated he has been in contact with State Emissions, and they are offering grants that pay 25% of purchase price for equipment no older than 2021 manufacture. The backhoe is 26 years old; parts are obsolete; it has been red tagged and taken out of service. The cost is \$125 to \$135,000 for a new backhoe. Lengthy discussion followed including: do we need to spend \$120,000 for a backhoe to work at the transfer station? Mr. Greenough said it would be used for more than that -- as back up for snow and ice removal; it is more efficient; in the long term better off with new. It would be used by all

departments and so could be funded using money from each Dept. Mr. Traverse said to try hard to get a used one; if one cannot be found, then buy new. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to purchase** a backhoe using Town funds not to exceed \$125,000 -- \$50,000 ARPA; \$30,000 from DPW; \$23,000 from sewer reserves; \$22,000 from water reserves; seconded by Mr. Doran. Following further discussion, Mr. Traverse **withdrew the motion** and Mr. Doran **withdrew the second**. Further discussion was to use \$125,000 as a target price.

**Coin Drop**: Manager Gunter reported receiving 5 social services requests for coin drop; the policy allows 4 chosen by lottery. New Board member Mr. Doran picked #4, the Dog Park that would not participate.

**Appointment to the Economic Development Committee (EDC)**: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to appoint** Mike Pavelec to the EDC; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

**Mower purchase for Rec Dept**: Addressed earlier in the meeting.

**Property Tax Stabilization Efforts -- Discussion**: It is suggested to get some items ready to put in place next year. New suggestions are to have a carnival; and a rubber duck race on the river. Ms. Rose Anne VanLew feels this is a job for the Rec Director. The matter will be kept on the agenda; need to be moving on this.

**Parking Lot**: Chairman Richards reported the **Town Plan** needs to be done by June to be eligible for grant applications.

**Local Accomplishments**: \* The Rec Committee is doing a great job; the playground looks good.  
\* Sewer Dept. Chief Carrie LaFond and Manager Gunter visited the high school Career Center.  
\* Members thanked the volunteers for their work painting and cleaning the Park fence

**Board Round Table**: Mr. Greenough reported that there will be drainage work done at the Airport Road underpass. \* It is essential to continue with ditching and brush cutting.

Mr. Doran reported \* There continues to be a problem with the light on the Veterans' Memorial Park flagpole. \* The lettering on one of the stones is fading. Manager Gunter said that the Town is over budget; repairs can be made after the July 1st start of the new budget.  
\* The playground light by the bathroom is not working; Manager Gunter stated the Board removed playground lighting from the budget.

Mr. Viger noted the Rec Committee is doing great things. \* Can a schedule of events be done so folks can see and appreciate just how busy DPW is. Mr. Viger and Mr. Doran both will post such activities on social media pages.

Mr. Greenough noted that DPW is short staffed, and people do not realize that.

**Review of Financial Reports**: The **checkbook status is \$772,239.69**.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$32,916.06**; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$146,792.57**; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$34,580.90**; seconded by Mr. Viger. This is a correction from a previous warrant. The motion passed unanimously.

**Executive Session:** Mr. Traverse **made a motion to enter executive session**, including the Town Manager at 9:52 p.m. to discuss Personnel, 1 V.S.A. ¶ 313 (a)(3); and Real Estate, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(2); seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

The recording secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 10:04 pm

Mr. Traverse **motioned to sell property**, Parcel ID number 04-01-15 located at Inman Pond and TH 69 to Mr. Bria DeAngelo and Ms. Cara DeAngelo for \$10,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Greenough; unanimously passed.

Meeting **adjourned** at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

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Glen Traverse, Board Clerk