

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

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

REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, June 11, 2024 -- 6:00 PM

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

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

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Glen Traverse, Bob Richards, Chadd Viger, Michael Doran, Rich Greenough

Others Present: Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Steven Wilson, Peg TV, Rose Anne Vanlew, Johnathan J. Billewicz, Lillian E. Billewicz, Jason Lee, Ron Crawley, Carol Crawley, Tom Fucile, Victoria Angis, Judy Sheldon, Donald Proctor, FHPD Asst. Chief, Janis Kelleher, A.E. Helm, Police Chief William Humphries, Cindy Pritchard, Josh Markie, Don Howard, Ann Ellis, Rebecca Stockwell, Deborah Laiacona, Sean Galvin, Carrie LaFond, Mike LaDuke, Mary Durfee, Eric Ramey.

Call to Order: Chairman Richards called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Town Hall Room Discussion: Manager Gunter explained that this is a second meeting to discuss use of the upstairs space and re-assigning current downstairs space. The Town voted to hire a full-time Rec Director who will need space; the Town Accountant needs private space. The plan is to move the Historical Society upstairs and re-locate the accountant to that space. Ms. Angis inquired who made decisions. Chairman Richards noted no firm decisions have been made and suggests we all go upstairs and take a look at available space to determine best use. Mr. Traverse said this building houses several groups, Historical Society, Fire, Police, Town offices, Itty Bitty Committee that all need space. Upstairs, several conversations were going on at once as people toured the facility seeing firsthand the newly installed bathrooms and other improvements, offering suggestions. Back downstairs, Chairman Richards said the entire building is in need of a major revamp; it has been used as a repository for many years. Mr. Viger inquired how can the Board support the Historical Society display that needs to be accessible to the public. A suggestion was that hallways can be used for displays. Manager Gunter noted he has reached out to procure heat pumps to heat public display areas. The Town Hall grant funds were used for the new furnace, elevator, bathrooms and all the work done downstairs including painting, hallway carpeting. \$9,000 is left. Asst. Fire Chief Don Proctor briefly commented on what space they need and how it would be used -- for storage and training and noted no one will be completely happy with any decision made; everybody needs room. He offered the services of young folks that are willing to work; anything they can do to help Historical Society with heavy lifting, moving after pre-sorting is done -- they are willing to work. Sort out the room housing paper. Judy Sheldon asked, what will this room we are in now be used for. It is currently in use "all the time". Ms. Kelleher thanked Mr. Proctor for his compromising spirit. Manager Gunter recommends that Fire and Historical Society make

decisions. Ms. Sheldon said “everybody needs to do some housecleaning”. Chairman Richards noted that many good ideas have been suggested tonight. Will get a summary of the discussion and make decisions. Mr. Proctor stated the Fire Dept. and Historical Society will meet and present a report for the Board one month out, you pick a date. Manager Gunter said there are no funds to finish any more rooms; can make rooms secure (locks, etc.).

Fair Haven Rescue Squad (FHRS) Board Appointment: Mr. Greenough **made a motion to appoint Rebecca Stockwell** as Fair Haven’s Representative on the Rescue Squad Board; seconded by Mr. Traverse. Ms. Stockwell stated she is a registered nurse, is married to a “local boy” and has two children; she volunteered to serve in this position. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Richards said the Board would like to have frequent updates.

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse **moved to add *Roadside Mower Proposal*** to New Business; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to add *Real Estate Negotiation*** to Executive Session; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the May 28, 2024, regular meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Ms. Vanlew recognized the graduating Fair Haven High School Class of 2024 including her daughter who graduated from Stafford Technical School winning 3 awards. Ms. Van Lew stated she is very proud of her daughter.

Ms. Deborah Laiacona thanked the EDC for their newsletter that lists upcoming events. She notes that events affect her business; asks for dates of events. Manager Gunter noted that the Park and Ride and West Park Place paving will be done next week. He will provide dates to her.

Mr. Galvin inquired would it be helpful to get out a petition stating that the Town can sell any approved properties, without having to vote. No taxes are received until properties are sold. Manager Gunter noted that the Billewicz’ have cost the Town an extreme amount of money with property issues. However, it is unusual to have petitions for vote on property sales.

Department Head Reports: Water Dept. Chief Mike LaDuke reported:

- * Are in the process of installing a new roof. Lack of help is causing delays
- * The Plant is performing well -- no issues
- * Plan to start valve exercising next week
- * Unknown if our intern has received his certification test results

Police Chief Humphries reported:

- * 2 arrests (32 for 2024)
- * 93 traffic/municipal violations (776 in 2024)
- * 36 written warnings (287 in 2024)

- * 0 parking violations (26 in 2024)
 - * 4 car crashes (35 in 2024)
 - * Completed 4 sets of fingerprints (93 for 2024)
 - * There were 175 calls for service
- Chief Humphries began his 27th year with Fair Haven Police Dept.
 Ptl. Tyler Duel began his 9th year with Fair Haven Police Dept.
 Cpl. Dan Pennington began his 2nd year with Fair Haven Police Dept.

Town Manager Report & Communication: Manager Gunter reported:

- * A Special thank you to Jim Heller who has been managing the Park and Ride project. There are many different tasks going on at once -- Jim has done/is doing a great job organizing the work.
- * Security cameras bids are out
- * The auditors are finishing the 2023 audit and starting the 2024 audit
- * The Scotch Hill plan is out to the permit specialist
- * Have finally found a person to treat the playground ash tree -- will be here Thursday -- it is a multi-year treatment
- * Doing some pavement patching on Scotch Hill
- * Will be starting crack sealing
- * Ed continues to do clean-up in Town
- * Received an excellent report from the OSHA Work Safe Program inspection
- * The Paving on West Park Place and Park and Ride is paid with last year's budget; will start this year's paving after July 1st
- * Brief discussion re: 7th year of not receiving the State paving grant. The Adams Street grant was "woefully" short of meeting the needs, was sent back; then re-issued to do the water problem work on Scotch Hill. Mr. Doran asked, can our State representative be asked to come and explain why Fair Haven continues to not receive the paving grant. Chairman Richards reported, he has spent hours talking with Montpelier and that Mr. Canfield reported to him that we are 21st on the list for a paving grant.

OLD BUSINESS

Warning for 16 River Street: Manager Gunter reported the earliest possible schedule date is July 16, 2024, with an informational meeting at the Town Hall 7:00 pm July 15th. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve** the Warning for vote for the sale of 16 River Street; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Final Approval of Town Plan: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve** the Town Plan with the change: include 2023 Sewer Rehab Project on page 14. The motion was seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Downtown Sidewalk Project: Manager Gunter reported that Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) provided feedback from earlier meetings. The engineer and RRPC are looking for guidance on how to move forward. Mr. Traverse stated, if businesses don't want it; and there is still funding shortfall; as much as it pains me to give back \$85,000, I cannot support

the project. Let folks get used to Lights in the Park and the new Park and Ride; perhaps can do smaller projects. Mr. Doran agrees. He stated that he was elected by voters, and they said no. Cindy Pritchard said she came to this meeting to ask the Board to please kill this project; do smaller improvement projects. Mr. Viger stated that to do only the sidewalk is at a high cost of \$200,000 of Town money; and that Fair Haven is notorious for kicking projects down the road and later paying way more to get the same job done; if the design is the problem, re-design it. Ms. Laiacona said there is a loss of parking spaces; with the current Park and Ride project going on she is doing only half of the usual business. Appreciates that the town is trying to make improvements, but this can be done without tearing up the whole downtown. Ms. Van Lew inquired, what is the State going to do when they pave downtown; will lose 3 parking spaces then anyway; and can anything be done to remove the trees as they are infested with stinging insects. Mr. Greenough said we need to repair the sidewalks; it cannot be done without grants from projects like this; we are held to design that the State would approve. Mr. Markie noted that to get businesses support, need to add parking spaces. Manager Gunter reported one person told him to “kick the can and let the next guy pay for it”. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to end the Sidewalk project**; seconded by Mr. Doran. The motion carried with Mr. Viger and Chairman Richards opposed.

NEW BUSINESS

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Spending: Manager Gunter read the Resolution 01-24 aloud noting that to be in federal compliance, an account of how the \$763,756 ARPA funds was spent then sent to the federal government. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to accept** Resolution 01-24 for American Rescue Plan Act Allocation; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Forest Fire Warden Appointment: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to appoint** Mike Proventure as Forest Fire Warden for a term commencing July 1, 2024, ending June 30, 2029; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Ball Field Fence: Mr. Markie explained the proposed fence changes. Mr. Viger **made a motion** to spend \$3900 to pay for changes to the playground ballfield fence; seconded by Mr. Greenough. This to be paid from the Rec Groundskeeping account. The motion carried unanimously.

Manager Gunter noted the plumber will be repairing the playground bathroom this week.

Pickle Ball Courts: Mr. Markie noted that the tennis courts are not being used. Pickle Ball is a fast growing sport; could convert the tennis courts into 3 pickle ball courts. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to spend not more than \$7400** to prepare 3 pickle ball courts paid from the Parks and Rec fund; seconded by Mr. Doran. There is \$11,500 in the account. The motion carried unanimously.

Roadside Mower Proposal: Mr. Greenough reported that DPW is made aware of a roadside mower that can be bought for \$33,000. He has seen it; it has been used at the Albany airport; has been well maintained; has no oil or hydraulic leaks; the rubber and A/C in good shape. Mr.

Greenough thinks it is a steal at that price and highly recommends it. DPW Nate Saxon is on board with the purchase. Mr. Greenough **made a motion to purchase a roadside mower** using \$33,000 from the DPW reserve fund; seconded by Mr. Traverse. Manager Gunter agrees the mower is needed; there is \$55,000 in the account; reserve accounts have not been funded lately; need to replenish reserve accounts. Mr. Greenough noted this machine can be used for playgrounds, cemeteries as well as roadsides; it can be used in rainy and colder weather conditions; there are many years left in this machine. The motion carried unanimously.

Water/Sewer Budget Review: Members reviewed budget items line by line with Water Dept. Chief Mr. LaDuke providing clarifications, including allocating purchases to correct budget lines; need to fund the meter account for anticipated use after 20 year warrantee runs out; purchase of a valve exerciser software package and utility trailer for the exerciser; purchased a mower, chemical and backwater pumps. Spent \$130,000 of reserve; \$152,000 left. The plant is structurally sound; lines are most likely the next project. Mr. Viger asked to have ways the Board can be proactive in making repairs prepared by the next budget cycle. The consensus was to reduce the Capital Improvement fund to \$20,000, bringing the budget to 4.33% increase.

There were no questions for Sewer Dept. Chief Carrie LaFond. The Sewer budget came in at 1.16% decrease. Ms. LaFond explained flow charts showing differences between days with or without rain. There are many rainy days that show flow over plant capacity and all of it needs to be treated (at a cost). There is need to start making repairs to at least one failing manhole each year.

Manager Gunter reported reaching out to the company that digitizes Town tax maps posted online. Water and sewer lines can be overlaid on those maps. Would then know the exact location of all water/sewer lines. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to spend \$19,750 from water and sewer reserve funds** to digitize and overlay onto tax maps all water and sewer lines; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Board Round Table: Mr. Greenough stated that he continues to become more proud of DPW doing a great job. Mr. Doran and Mr. Viger agreed.

Review of Financial Reports: The **checkbook status is \$349,758.21.**

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$37,176.31;** seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund Warrant, \$271,788.88;** seconded by Mr. Greenough passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to enter executive session,** including the Town Manager at 9:24 p.m. for a Legal discussion, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(1); Personnel, 1 V.S.A. ¶ 313 (a)(3); Real Estate Negotiation, 1 VSA ¶ 313 (a)(2); seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

The recording secretary was excused at this time.

- The Board came out of executive session at 10pm
- Mr. Traverse **motioned to approve** the Police Chief's contract; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.
- Mr. Traverse **motioned to approve** the sale of town property located on Munger Rd, parcel # 07-01-06 to Sharon and Bruce Kendall for the amount of \$3,750; and passed unanimously
- Mr. Viger motioned to **adjourn** at 10:10pm

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk