

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

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

REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, September 17, 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, Peg TV, Rose Anne VanLew, Johnathan J. Billewicz, Lillian E. Billewicz, Joshua Foley, Anylia Slater, Chief William Humphrey, Deborah Laiacona, Lorraine Brown, Rick Wilson, Steven Wolk, Carrie LaFond,

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.

Traffic Ordinance Review -- Public Input: Chairman Richards said one item that came up during the discussion was, do we want Liberty Street to be one-way. Mr. Wilson noted the Chief is here, does he have any safety concerns. Chief Humphries said pedestrian safety. Discussion included: parking on both sides of the street; Ms. Slater suggested signs and painting lines in the street instead of one-way. School buses do not use Liberty Street because they cannot make the turn. Chief Humphries reported that several years ago, the school and the Town agreed not to use Liberty Street, instead drive to River Street, then make the turn onto Cottage. Mr. Wolk noted that deliveries are made mostly in the morning and trucks do not have to stay long for deliveries. Mr. Doran said, no decisions have been made -- why folks were invited here tonight. Mr. Wolk had a petition against one-way on Liberty St. given to members. Ms. VanLew noted it is difficult to see traffic from Liberty St. when pulling out from a parking space on Main St. Mr. Markie said parking on both sides of the Street causes congestion but understands that it is more convenient especially for physically challenged folks. He suggested a couple handicapped spaces on the North side. Mr. Viger said he keeps hearing from people -- mostly online, they are not here, complaining about the congestion, parked both side, doors opening into the Street. He does not want to block any businesses. Chief Humphries said he would like to see a sidewalk all the way -- that enforcing would be an all day, every day situation. Manager Gunter reported there have been no accidents and does not see any problems needing to be fixed. Sidewalks are very expensive, and he feels not necessary. Mr. Greenough agrees and noted the issues would be resolved if people just slowed down. Ms. Billewicz asked how much is left in the Streets and Sidewalks reserve. Mr. Traverse noted the ordinance was reviewed to make necessary changes re: stop signs at the Park and Ride. Discussion then turned to other issues including Liberty St. There will be at least one more discussion before finalizing. Ms. Laiacona said when investing in Ruby's Bistro, they encouraged building owners to work toward more downtown housing. Mandating tenants to park at the far end of the Park and Ride would be very difficult, especially in winter and would make renting downtown less

desirable. She asks that the Board consider the landlord point of view when making decisions. She said the current, two-hour ordinance/policy is not enforced. Ms. Brown said it is a problem and does not know what can be done. At Chairman Richards' inquiry, does the Board support Liberty St. one-way, Mr. Greenough said, don't fix what is not broke -- that Liberty St. folks have no issues; if people slowed down it would help. Mr. Viger said, "I've heard the people".

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse made a motion to add "Appointment to Economic Committee" to New Business; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2024, regular meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed with Mr. Viger abstaining.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Mr. Billewicz asked, when is the Town going to file for title against my family; this leaving potential buyer open for lawsuits.

He reported that Ruby's Bistro maintains an attractive storefront with flowers, etc. It leaves only two feet of sidewalk space -- is that ADA legal. Will be checked.

Ms. Billewicz asked, has Bill Nevins signed off on phase II of the Town Hall project. Manager Gunter thanked her for the comment. She asked, is there a set date for the upstairs Open House. No. Is the upstairs ready for the Rec Director office -- Chairman Richards noted the Welch funds were specific to augment the grant for this building renovation.

Ms. Vanlew said, Josh Markie's idea for handicapped parking spaces on Liberty St. is a marvelous idea. Mr. Greenough noted, if handicapped spaces are done on the North side, then would there need to be same on the other side? Mr. Viger said, if anything is done it has to be put out for public input. Chairman Richards said more research needs to be done; that the police monitor Liberty St. traffic.

Department Head Reports: Police Chief Humphries reported:

- * 2 arrests (53 yr. to date)
- * 67 Traffic/Municipal violations (1215 yr. to date)
- * 27 written warnings (466 yr. to date)
- * 3 Car crashes (55 yr. to date)
- * 22 sets of civilian fingerprints (191 yr. to date)
- * 176 calls for service (2749 yr. to date)

A brief overview of activities is included in the report.

Chief Humphries noted a personnel complaint brought by the Billewicz family. The Academy reviewed the complaint and found no offensive conduct. A home visit was made to deliver the Academy review report.

Mr. Traverse reported the flashing speed sign on Capitol Hill is doing its job. Chief Humphries said there will be two more purchased with the Highway Safety grant.

Town Manager Report & Communication:

- * Received a letter from the Labor Union notifying it is time to start negotiations again
- * Manager Gunter read a letter from Galen Seerup complimenting new Police Officer Duell for his caring and professionalism during a recent incident involving being hit by a deer.
- * **DPW** roadside mowing is in process -- should be finished next week.
- * The Veteran's Memorial sidewalk will be replaced starting Monday. Mr. Traverse noted it will be cement in compliance with the ordinance. Will notify folks on Facebook of periodic street closures starting today
- * The new backhoe should be here the end of this month
- * Scotch Hill project will begin this month; have received the Rutland permit
- * Have been exercising hydrant valves
- * 2024 audit is the last audit under the current contract; have released an RFP for audit firms
- * Will start reviewing budget numbers at the next meeting
- * The Bigelow Hill stormwater (culvert) project is done; will be paving that stretch
- * Expect one more invoice for the Park and Ride and Lights in the Park project
- * Have ordered the Police Dept carpeting
- * The petition for 15-16 River Street failed; The Town Attorney is working on that matter
- * Will be reviewing proposals on the Skyline project; meeting to follow
- * Security contract review starts October 14th
- * VLCT will conduct harassment training
- * Trucks are being undercoated as is done yearly
- * Cannot find a painter to paint the wood soffits on this building. Members offered suggestions
- * Mr. Greenough said to never wrap up roadside mowing -- to mow as long as you can

OLD BUSINESS

MOU With the School District: Chairman Richards noted the irony of this -- negotiating with ourselves. Members reviewed the very formal document sent over from the Town Council, making changes as they felt necessary, titled "Property License Agreement". The Town attorney added "and Memorandum of Understanding" to the title. Changes included length of time the document is valid, the need for language that allows access to the playground by the public while students are under supervision. Mr. Greenough wants to make sure people can use the space, such as pickle ball courts, take walks. Manager Gunter noted the need for language regulating the use of camera videos. He will meet with their representative later this week.

Signing the Reappraisal Order: Mr. Traverse **made a motion** that the Town has received the notification of reappraisal and to authorize Board Chairman Richards to sign the return document; seconded by Mr. Doran. The State notified the Town that Fair Have has reached the threshold triggering reappraisal but did not realize there was a return document for signature. Reappraisal may not happen for some time; Chairman Richards noted it is a long painful and expensive process. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Richards signed the document.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Expectations: Manager Gunter stated this is his annual request for guidance on expectations of percentage of increase, and what to focus on. Sidewalks was mentioned first. Mr. Traverse said he could not support anything over 3% increase -- with Dept. Heads coming in at less than 3% to allow funds to go into reserves. Mr. Viger agreed. Chairman Richards said 3% is unrealistic. Mr. Greenough noted budgeting will be tough this year; that level funding does not work down the road. General discussion included: Mr. Greenough said we should do some sidewalks every year. Manager Gunter noted sidewalks are not considered operating, but rather capitol improvements. It was noted that Dept. Heads should be ready for a hard sell.

Pump Station Upgrade: Ms. LaFond said she learned a lot from the research and infrastructure mapping done earlier this year. It was determined that the panel at the Welcome Center pump station is unusable. It was installed in 1999 and cannot be rebuilt. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to accept** the \$15,600 bid, not to exceed \$16,000 from PSI Pump Systems as recommended by Sewer Dept Chief Carrie LaFond; seconded by Mr. Doran. Ms. LaFond noted that a Vermont Electrician needs to install the panel as PSI is not licensed in Vermont. This will add to the amount of the bid. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to pay** the \$16,000 from the Wastewater Capitol Improvement fund; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion to appoint** Laura Pedroni to the Economic Committee; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Revenue Efforts -- Discussion: Manager Gunter explained that he had finally been able to work on the Transfer Station and Swap Shop (at the former dog pound) idea. The goal is to reduce the amount of trash into the compactor, to increase revenue, having monthly auctions of the "really good items" found, raising cash to train staff and improve services. He will write a policy for Board review noting this was done at the Town where he previously worked with great success. Mr. Doran noted some valuable items he has found at the Transfer Station.

Parking Lot: Mr. Traverse asked to add "Downtown Designation", "Subdivision Designation", and "neighborhood Designation" to the Parking Lot. Chairman Richards noted that the Regional Zoning Commission is helping with these projects with a goal of having it done by the end of the year. The State is looking for housing.

Board Round Table: Mr. Greenough asked when is the State going to finish street striping; some sections on 22A not done among others.

Mr. Doran commented that the baseball field used by the High School has not been mowed since the season's end. Mr. Viger noted that it is difficult to keep grass from growing in the infield. Manager Gunter will contact the High School; feels this maintenance is their responsibility.

Mr. Traverse noted Applefest is this Saturday; please support the school and Rec Committee.

Chairman Richards asked for an estimate of cost per foot to replace sidewalks

Review of Financial Reports: The **checkbook status is -\$229,332.23.**

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$36,513.35**; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund warrant for \$1,162,992.43**; seconded by Mr. Greenough. This amount includes payments to the school(s), \$597,573.00; Grant, \$87,773.86; Truck payment, \$70,006.97; Sewer, \$74,549.00; Water, \$49,119. The motion passed unanimously

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to enter Executive Session** at 8:52 p.m. to discuss personnel (1 VSA 313 (a)(1)); seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:20 pm with no actions taken.

Mr. Traverse motioned to **adjourn**; seconded by Mr. Viger; meeting was adjourned at 9:21pm

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk