

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

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

REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, October 1, 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, Keith Whitcomb, Linda Sienkiewicz, Deborah Laiacona, Paul Jardine, Bennie Shaw, Rose Anne VanLew, John T. Williams, Judi Sutherland, S. Mike Pavelec, Laura Pedroni, Paul Patten, Johnathan J. Billewicz, Lillian E. Billewicz, Mary Tomasko, Ed Tomasko, Roy Newton, Jessica Stannard, Steven Brown, Doug Wood, Lisa Wood, Alexis Kendrick, David Cousens, Cassandra Campbell, James Rooker, Carl Scott, Alyssa Scott, Jeremy W. Shaw, Michael Martelle, Nancy Hay, Joshua Foley, Lisa and Gary Cook, Chas Lawrence, Monnie Patten, Todd Ferguson, Kelley Ferguson, Glen Heitsmith, Police Chief William Humphries, Ptl. Tyler Duel.

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.

Recovery Home Discussion -- Jeremy Shaw -- House of Hope: Chairman Richards introduced Mr. Jeremy Shaw who stated that he had met with the Economic Development Committee to request a letter of support. He is looking to establish transitional housing at 400 River Street to support men in alcohol recovery to permanent homes. He thanked folks for coming and spoke about the misinformation in the community. This will not be unsupervised housing; it is not a home for addicts or pedophiles; this house will be supervised at all times. This home is strictly for recovering alcoholics. Mr. Shaw stated that he is not asking for money from the Town, State or Feds; there are no kickbacks. After an angry outburst, Chairman Richards asked that everyone please be polite and respectful; that he will allow all questions and comments. Mr. Shaw noted that the intense application/contract to join is 18 pages; there are serious background checks made; Mr. Shaw reported statistics show that property values have not decreased, and crime rates do not increase where this housing exists; feels there is a need for recovery housing and strongly believes in the program. He is requesting a letter of support to provide a structured, sober living home for eight (8) men who would be supervised; have video surveillance in a monitored home; alcohol testing by a certified professional; the contract states the person cannot stay if test is positive; must either have a job or have 60 days to get employment. Mr. Shaw said he is in process of seeking level 2 certification; Chairman Richards noted he does not support the project if not certified. Mr. Traverse asked, if community does not want this, will you do it given the proximity of the school and liquor store. Mr. Shaw noted the two marijuana businesses established much closer to the school. Mr. Scott said, instead of requesting support from the Board (5 men only), to poll the room. Mr. Viger, CEO of Recovery House, Inc. reported the State is presently short 1200 recovery beds. If not living in

transitional housing, where are they living. How do we as a community support these folks. There are guidebooks/information available offering best practice to lower alcohol abuse rates by providing recovery opportunities. This program offers a safe home where residents must be employed. Mr. Gary Clark said the program works only for people who want to make it work. Lisa Wood said this is not wanted at 400 River Street; what is the attraction; not near transportation or resources; small outside area; does not provide any economic development value to the Town. Mr. Greenough noted it takes a lot of people to man the place 24/7 and does not support without further information; Mr. Doran agrees. Mr. Traverse said he is not ready to go yea or nay; hears citizens loud and clear; Chairman Richards said he expected to hear more specific information and have certification in place before requesting support. Mr. Viger noted there are experts out there that can provide more objective information for a future discussion. Mr. Shaw gave members a handout "Building a Strong Recovery Community in Rural Areas". Mr. Traverse **made a motion to not support** the request for transitional housing; seconded by Mr. Greenough. Mr. Viger abstained because he feels a need for support for people who are struggling. Mr. Traverse said to come back after Planning Commission decision. Mr. Doran said this is all new to him. The motion failed.

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Traverse **made a motion** to add "*Water Plant Roof*" to Old Business; "*Slate Tile Donation*" and "*Manufactured Housing Contract*" to New Business; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve the minutes** of the September 17, 2024, regular meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Doran. CORRECTION. Mr. Josh Markie was in attendance. The motion carried with Mr. Viger abstaining.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Ms. Deborah Laiacona, of Ruby's Bistro spoke re: the comments made by Mr. Billewicz at the last meeting. She said she applied for an outside permit that was granted; requires roping off. She noted the 36" passageway is in compliance with ADA requirements. Ms. Stanley noted she has walked past Ruby's Bistro many times and has found no issues with the outside roped off seating. Mr. Greenough said he has checked it out himself and found the outside seating a beautiful addition, nice job.

Department Head Reports: Police Chief Humphries reported:

- * He was off for a couple days last week
- * 6 arrests (59 yr. to date)
- * 37 Traffic/Municipal violations (1252 yr. to date)
- * 4 written warnings (470 yr. to date)
- * 1 Car crash (56 yr. to date)
- * 8 sets of civilian fingerprints for employment (199 yr. to date)
- * 100 calls for service (2849 yr. to date)
- * The new carpeting is here; installation expected soon
- * The newest pole-mounted speed sign is received, paid for by the VT Governors Highway Safety Program
- * Ptl. Cheri McDermott is starting her 7th year with the Dept.
- * Ptl. Craig Watrous Sr. begins his 4th year with the Dept.

A brief overview of activities is included in the report.

Chairman Richards commented re: the recent Officer assault involving Ptl. Duel. Chief Humphries noted it was an obvious mental health issue; he was no threat to anyone; and no one was hurt. Chairman Richards noted a much different outcome except for the outstanding work done by the officers involved, to de-escalate the situation and gain control. Mr. Greenough said all the police work done is greatly appreciated.

Town Manager Report & Communication:

- * DPW continues roadside mowing and picking up
- * The Pelky Avenue One-way sign is in place; the anchor was replaced; pole not harmed
- * The new backhoe is here
- * Half of the Veterans' Memorial sidewalk was poured today; next pour is Thursday
- * The Scotch Hill Road project is going well; the culvert is installed; doing potholes as well
- * Working on the Hazard Mitigation Program -- This enhances any FEMA disaster re-imbusement
- * Manager Gunter participated in the Applefest "Mario Cart Race"
- * Surveillance cameras are still scheduled for the 14th of this month

OLD BUSINESS

Traffic Ordinance – Adding Stop Sign in the Park and Ride: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to accept** the Traffic Ordinance including the change of adding stop signs in the Park and Ride; seconded by Mr. Greenough. The ordinance will take effect November 30, 2024 if there is no action taken. The motion carried unanimously.

Water Plant Roof: Manager Gunter reported that when making facia repair, it was found that the lumber behind the facia needs replacing. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve \$7,406.** for lumber to finish repair of the Water Treatment Plant facia; paid from the Water Capitol Reserve fund; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 25 Highway Safety Grant Approval: Chief Humphries reported the grant funding ended yesterday; new grant starts October 1st. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to allow** the Police Dept. to work the Highway Safety Grant until the new grant takes effect; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Cemetery Deed: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to sell** 1 grave in Lot number 97N; section 17 in Cedar Grove Cemetery to Janet Nicholas for the sum of \$545. The motion was seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Slate Tile Donation: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to donate** a 10' x 10' slate as requested by the Orwell Library to repair the walkway; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Manufactured Home Contract: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to offer the consultant contract** to IOSC for \$46,800; seconded by Mr. Doran. There were three applicants. The motion carried unanimously.

Budget Review Begins -- Board's First Look: Copies of the FY 26 budget were prepared and given to members. Chairman Richards said for members to take them home to review for next meeting discussion. Manager Gunter said it is kept at 2.5% increase as requested by the Board. Healthcare shows increase of 23%; insurance increase of 12%; Library and Rescue show increase.

Parking Lot: Chairman Richards reported there is a meeting tomorrow to work on Subdivision and Neighborhood regulation with the Regional Zoning Commission helping. He said it is a fairly straightforward checklist and expect to have it done before the end of the year.

Board Round Table: Mr. Greenough commented that something must be done soon re: the salt shed. To at least shore up what is there so a tarp can be used to cover. He cautioned that there will be a funeral on Thursday, the same time as the Veterans' Memorial sidewalk cement pour is expected.

Mr. Doran commented that there are places where street signage cannot be seen for brush and/or tree limbs obstruct the view.

It was noted that Cemetery Street needs shoulder work -- pavement is lost without shoulders. Mr. Greenough noted DPW does not have enough manpower or equipment to do this job.

Review of Financial Reports: The checkbook status is **\$449,760.31**.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the Payroll Warrant, \$38,984.79**; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the General Fund warrant for \$153,505.26**; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to enter Executive Session** at 9:05 p.m. to discuss personnel (1 VSA 313 (a)(1)); seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

The Recording Secretary was excused at this time.

The board came out of executive session at 9:27, no actions taken.

Mr. Traverse **motioned to adjourn** at 9:28 seconded by Mr. Greenough.

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk