

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor Commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners
REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, December 10, 2024 -- 7:00 PM
Zoom Meeting Link: <http://us02web.zoom.us/j/85646551688>
Phone: 1 929 205 6099 | Meeting ID: 8564 655 688

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

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

Others Present: Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Peg TV, Mary McNeil, Keith Hier, Sean Galvin, Greg McCormack, Rose Anne VanLew, Laura Pedroni, Johnathan J. Billewicz, Lillian E. Billewicz, Kevin Hoyt, Wayne Charlton, Jim Heller, Donny Proctor

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.

Meeting with Steffanie Bourque LHMP Update: Not in attendance

Amendments to the Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes of: Mr. Traverse **made a motion** to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2024 minutes as written; seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Mr. Galvin heard that a water leak was detected on the private side at the Green Mountain Mobile Home Park and the Town paid for and did the repair work. Is that true? He said he researched the ordinance and noticed the language that allows it. He said it is time for this Board to review that ordinance and make some changes. Also, are there delinquent taxes due on the property? How much? Manager Gunter reported yes DPW made the repair; \$1500 is the most the Town can charge; the bill was sent to the State today. \$21,000 due for water; \$16,000 in back taxes. Chairman Richards noted, the Green Mountain Mobile Home Park is in Probate, and everything is in Limbo. Mr. Traverse said "you are being heard"; Board feels the same. Mr. Greenough noted the ordinance will be reviewed soon.

Ms. VanLew reported that on the way home from Rutland last night the roads were bad all the way until we reached Fair Haven where roads/streets had been cleaned of snow. She gave the Fair Haven Dept of Public Works a shout out -- they are the best.

Kevin Hoyt wanted this Board to know that Fair Haven has a Police Chief that was appointed by a two time convicted cop.

Ms. Mary McNeil said there are tree problems in cemeteries but finds it is difficult to get work done, noting there is a dead tree at the West Street cemetery and a limb hanging over some gravestones. Chairman Richards said tree removal is expensive noting \$11,000 to remove one large pine tree in

Cedar Grove Cemetery last summer. The \$10,000 tree budget is for the whole Town. The Board is in the finishing process of the first round of the budget; they will go back and make adjustments.

Mr. Johnathan Billewicz noted the upstairs lights are on. Chairman Richards reported the Fire Dept is having training there this evening.

Mr. Kevin Hier asked where does the sewer line cut off on South Main Street. His home is connected to water, and he wants to connect to sewer if possible. Chairman Richards said the sewer line stops at 47 South Main Street; that he should come in and talk with the Town Manager for direction. Mr. Hier thanked Police Chief Humphries for the phenomenal parade he organized for the football team winning the State championship. He commented that he has no issues with Chief Humphries.

Ms. Lillian Billewicz inquired who has the original audio tape of the personnel hearing. Manager Gunter said that the matter is in layers' hands.

Department Head Reports: Manager Gunter reported:

Police:

- * 6 arrests (87 yr. to date)
- * 81 Traffic/Municipal violations (1560 yr. to date)
- * 15 Written warnings (583 Yr. to date)
- * 6 Parking violations (41 yr. to date)
- * 1 Car crash (64 yr. to date)
- * 19 sets of fingerprints (248 yr. to date)
- * 179 calls for service (3629 yr. to date)

Town Manager Report & Communications:

- * Whitehall is experiencing water problems. We have offered assistance; so far, they have not needed our help.
- * Mr. Bob Helm donated a Christmas tree to the Town. It is installed in the park
- * Need to have a study done for the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) to ensure we are not damaging the building. MERP is the energy efficiency grant program for heat in this building that is listed on the National Register of Historical sites.
- * Have sent the repair bill for the waterline repair at the Gr. Mtn. Mobile Home Park to the State.
- * There is approximately \$100,000 in delinquent taxes; \$60,000 is Trailer Park
- * Still working on the document for the Skyline project. Mr. Doran asked what is the holdup -- is he not interested anymore. Work is on-going.
- * Have tried to get help from the State to move folks from the Trailer Park; so far, no response
- * VLCT replied re: insurance for Lumberjack Show. As long as workers are volunteers, they are covered by the Town insurance. They must sign the paperwork as volunteers.
- * There will be no meeting on Dec. 24th; Jan. 7th, the budget comes back to Board for approval; Jan. 16th is the deadline to sign the Warning
- * The lead line inventory is done. The State will loan funds (to be repaid) that the Town can loan to residents to replace lead lines. Found one lead line; 200 unknown due to residents not responding. On-going

OLD BUSINESS

Purchase Option -- Skyline Grant: No update. The grant is to study what needs to be done to manufacture homes including the viability of the building.

NEW BUSINESS

Crosswalk Signage: Manager Gunter provided handouts -- photo examples, and cost details; the cost would be approximately \$40,000 for 3 crossings in question (at Cloud Nine, at Laundromat, at Dollar General). Mr. Hier commented that the Cloud Nine crosswalk would be much safer, without the one parking space that obscures the view going south. The plan is to have DPW do the installation work. Mr. Greenough noted DPW has so much on their plate and are short handed, it might be best to outsource the work. Manager Gunter said, what problem are we solving? There have been close calls, but no accidents downtown. Ms. Pedroni reported most businesses are on board with this project as well as many citizens she has talked with. Mr. Viger said it needs to be done sooner than later. Mr. Doran **made a motion to use not to exceed \$42,000 from the Streets and Sidewalks reserve account for the purchase of crosswalk lighting.** The motion was seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Downtown Designation: Chairman Richards explained the process started by the Planning Commission where he feels the biggest hurdle may be forming a designated committee. He has suggested the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to act as this group, and is waiting to see if the State will approve the EDC for the work. The Commission is working on rules for Downtown Designation. Subdivision is formed from a downtown central starting point to achieve Act 250 relief for developers. Lengthy discussion followed. Ms. Pedroni noted the charm, beauty and focal point is the Park. Work continues.

Budget Review Continues: Ms. Pedroni said as a user of the Transfer Station, she is not opposed to increasing charges. She noted home pickup costs more than using the Transfer Station service and most places have higher charges than Fair Haven. Chairman Richards said that the process here is to get the budget to bare bones to keep the Town going and then go back and make adjustments.

Members discussed selected budget sections, at length including: **accounting** is increased by \$2000 reflecting salaries. **Debt Management:** Fuel tank loan is decreased by \$4000. The sewer bond is a 30-year bond. **Benefits:** Covers 22 full-time employees; **health insurance** is decreased \$10,000 due to some employees opting out; workers Comp decreased \$4,000; **Property Casualty** General decreased \$8,000. Members discussed allocations to **Reserve Accounts** at length, allocating temporary amounts until the 2nd round of budget review in an effort to keep the budget below 4% increase. Mr. Viger noted reserve accounts are to not have to pay huge amounts all at once when a service is required. Ms. VanLew said reserve accounts make sense so bond amounts can be lower.

Chairman Richards said it would be beneficial to point out to the public that we are paying the **Regional Ambulance** unnecessarily in **appropriations** when the Fair Haven Rescue does the work. Mr. Greenough noted that many people believe the Rescue Squad is part of the Town and is manned by volunteers. Ms. VanLew reported that several surrounding Towns' Rescue are going defunct and Fair Haven is picking up the slack. Fair Haven Rescue is a viable Squad.

A-La-Carte: Manager Gunter said it would be nice to have items that would improve the Town though they are expensive. He cited an example of a beautiful 30' Christmas tree costing \$15,000. * Mr. Viger said the **playground's** long term goal/hope is to have a multi-purpose building. A suggestion is a water-proof storage container. Mr. Doran commented that those are very versatile and can be converted even to concession use. All agreed and Manager Gunter will research the cost of a 40' container. * DPW needs a van for tool storage for water/sewer work. Discussion included that if the tools are for water/sewer work, then water and sewer budgets should pay for the van.

Revenue: Manager Gunter reported that revenue shows an increase over the last budget of \$60,000. The error in the **Town Clerk recording fees** line item was corrected from \$1,900 to \$19,000. The increase is from non-tax items (licenses, recording, interest, etc.).

The **Fire Dept** has been pricing secondhand brush trucks (run anywhere \$65,000 to \$85,000). They feel an adequate one can be purchased for \$80,000. Discussion included the option of including it on the ballot as a line item for vote or use the reserve fund. If it is a line item for vote, the suggested language is to replace the truck, not to buy new. Manager Gunter suggests a ballot line item be for \$90,000 deposited into the reserve account so funds are available when needed.

Parking Lot: No discussion

Board Roundtable: Mr. Greenough wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Review of Financial Reports: Checkbook Status: **\$1,113,671.44**

Mr. Traverse **made a motion** to pay the Payroll warrant for **\$40,239.03**; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **made a motion** to pay the General Fund warrant for **\$139,000.04**; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Mr. Greenough **made a motion to enter** into executive session at 9:45 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 10:00 pm

Mr. Viger motion to adjourn; Mr. Doran seconded; meeting **adjourned** at 10:01

Respectfully submitted: Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk