

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

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

REGULAR MEETING -- Tuesday, January 7, 2025 -- 7:00 PM

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

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

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

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

Others Present: Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Decorah Laiacona, Lillian E. Billewicz, Johnathan Billewicz, Kerry Fowler, Nathan Eagan, Neil Robinson, Roy Newton, Rose Anne VanLew, Kevin Hoyt.

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.

Amendments to the Agenda: None

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to approve** the minutes of the December 10, 2024, meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Five Minutes for Public Comment: Johnathan Billewicz questioned Mr. Doran re: sale of the 16 – 18 River Street property. Mr. Doran had no comment.

Lillian Billewicz questioned the Board re: readiness of the upstairs space for public activities. Chairman Richards noted the Welch funds were incorporated with the overall Municipal Building renovation.

Neil Robinson asked for reason why his tax refund was paid spread over all four quarters of the year. He contacted the State and was told refund allocation is at the discretion of each Town. The matter needs to be taken up by the Board of Civil Authority.

Kevin Hoyt said he had reported capital crimes to Police Officer Kerber. The Town should brace for impact as crimes are going on in “your Town”.

Nathan Eagan reported that his grandmother feels it is not right for the Town to use the cheapest crosswalk paint available to save money. Also, it is not right that people complain about the one parking space that blocks view at the Cloud Nine crosswalk location, and nothing is done about the problem. He noted there are 25 mph signs at both school locations -- why not in the entire Town.

Department Head Reports: Manager Gunter reported:

Police report:

- * 71 Traffic/Municipal violations (1656 yr. to date)
- * 15 Written warnings (623 yr. to date)
- * 1 Parking violation (47 yr. to date)
- * 3 Car crashes (70 yr. to date)
- * 2 Fingerprint completions (260 yr. to date)
- * 130 Calls for service (3973 yr. to date)

Town Manager Report & Communication:

- * The Equalization Study is received -- will have to do a reappraisal. The Town COD is at 23% -- the State requires reappraisal at 20%
- * Received a nice letter from a lady who was cited a speeding ticket on Rte. 22A. She thanked the Officer who was very kind and polite and appreciates that he explained what needs to be done.
- * Manager Gunter thanked DPW workers that helped move heavy partitions upstairs and helped with the clean-up.
- * Teresa Perry, new accountant is doing a good job -- has brought all checkbooks up to date.
- * Thanks to Mike LaDuke who took over for me last week for Dr. appt.
- * The Main Street water line upgrade bids are due January 22nd
- * All the boxes upstairs have been reviewed -- recycled and/or re-boxed. Chairman Richards suggested that paper shredding be offered to the public when they are working in the area.
- * The new sign board is received.
- * The Junk Ordinance is with VLCT for review
- * Auditors will be here the 9th and 10th
- * Manager Gunter will attend a conference in St. Albans on January 15th
- * Got initial estimates for upstairs heat and A/C; work due late winter/early spring
- * January 16th is the last day to accept petitions -- 5:00 Selectboard meeting to review petitions.

OLD BUSINESS

Park Fee Discussion: Manager Gunter reviewed past discussions noting the Board is looking for ways to raise funds to offset event expenses (garbage removal, electricity, water), and park maintenance. He estimates the cost at \$300 each event. Chairman Richards said people are wanted in the Park, events draw people to Town that benefits local businesses, but it is incumbent upon this Board to cover costs. Mr. Fowler, Chamber of Commerce said, last year the Car Show earned \$1025 -- cost was \$700+ (supplies, advertising, etc.) -- really cannot afford a site fee. He noted that the Chamber built the gazebo for the Town's use. Discussion included: events are getting smaller; vendor income is much higher at larger venues; events would move to another location that does not charge fees; the High School has a community service component -- could use them instead of DPW workers for cleanup. Mr. Greenough said, this is just an idea, it is not cast in stone, we need to work together. Mr. Traverse said not to "rock the boat". It is the consensus of the Board to make no changes for events use of the Park.

Local Hazard Mitigation Planning (LHMP) Approval to Move to Phase 2: Manager Gunter reported the LHMP Phase 1 is released with no comments received for their report. A handout was available to members. Mr. Traverse **made a motion to** acknowledge the completion of Phase 1 and authorize the

Rutland Regional Planning Commission to move forward with Phase 2 of the LHMP update. The motion was seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

Purchase Agreement -- "Skyline Building": Working with the property owner and the State doing a study toward building purchase.

NEW BUSINESS

Water Ordinance Review: Mr. Traverse **made a motion to modify the Water Ordinance -- on page 25, section I a, to strike the language** (or if the property owner prefers allow the Town repair the line at the current service line repair rate.), seconded by Mr. Doran. Discussion was that the water would be shut off at the curb; Town is not responsible for emergencies on the homeowner side; liability if Town repairs; have to draw the line of Town responsibility. The motion carried unanimously.

Creation of a Fair Haven Housing Authority -- Discussion: Manager Gunter provided handouts of Vermont Statutes (online) as pertain to Housing Authority. Statutes provide for each Town to have their own Housing Authority. A Housing Authority is good for the Town and infrastructure working with property owner, Town and developer. Mr. Traverse said it would be beneficial to have several Towns working together -- it would attract more volunteers with knowledge and expertise in this area. Chairman Richards said the Zoning Board is working on subdivision and downtown designation now and it is maybe too early for a Housing authority. Mr. Greenough noted the Housing Authority could be a bridge between private and public factions. Mr. Viger questions how would the Authority work within the greater system. Rutland goals are different than ours; they focus on low-income housing -- not our goal -- we need middle income housing. Board members want to keep the discussion going as there are still questions.

Choosing a new Paper of Record: Manager Gunter reported that the Lakes Region Free Press will no longer be printing their newspaper, only online editions. Mr. Roy Newton said costs would be much less with his publication than the Rutland Herald. He said his paper prints 2000 copies and is at present the official paper for Castleton. Ms. VanLew noted that people look more to the Lakeside News rather than the Rutland Herald because there is much more local news, especially sports and school events. Mr. Greenough **made a motion to use the Lakeside News and Rutland Sun** as the Fair Haven Paper of Record; seconded by Mr. Doran and passed unanimously.

FY 26 Budget Review and Approval: Mr. Viger **made a motion to approve the budget, \$2,789,632.00 minus \$634,705 anticipated revenue of which \$2,154,927.00 is to be raised by taxes;** seconded by Mr. Traverse. It is noted that the budget increase is 3.75%. Revenue is increased by 15% (\$51,000) mostly interest from CDs. The motion carried unanimously.

<Parking Lot: Chairman Richards reported the Zoning Board January 22nd meeting will be working on subdivision regulations and downtown designation.

Mr. Viger noted there is a new person interested in joining the Economic Development and Downtown Partnership Board.

Board Roundtable: Mr. Greenough said he would like to see DPW have quicker response on sidewalk snow removal. He suggested using summer help part time, as DPW workers are on snowplows. Sidewalks should not be the last thing to get done.

Mr. Doran noted the road problem on Bolger Road. That repair is scheduled for spring/early summer. The Transfer Station cardboard container issue is resolved.

Mr. Viger said EDC is looking for a website administrator. Mr. Traverse suggested using a student.

Review of Financial Reports: The **checkbook status is \$1,830,019.62**

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the 12/24/24 Payroll warrant, \$36,316.04;** seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the 12/24/24 General Fund warrant, \$750,220.67;** seconded by Mr. Viger. This includes school payments (\$597,573.58). The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the 1/7/25 Payroll warrant, \$33,486.40;** seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed unanimously.

Mr. Traverse **moved to pay the 1/7/25 General Fund warrant, \$68,128.99;** seconded by Mr. Viger. This includes payment for pump systems, sludge and salt. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Mr. Traverse **made a motion** to enter Executive Session at 8:47 p.m. to discuss labor negotiations (1 VSA 313 (a)(1)); seconded by Mr. Viger and passed unanimously.

The recording secretary was excused at this time.

Board came out of executive session at 9:35 p.m.; no action taken

Mr. Viger motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Traverse

Meeting **adjourned** at 9:36pm

Respectfully submitted, Claire Stanley

Glen Traverse, Board Clerk