

TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

Selectboard, Water & Sewer Commissioners, Liquor commissioners, Cemetery Commissioners
REGULAR Meeting -- Tuesday, December 23 2025, 2025 -- 7:00 P.M.

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

Phone: 1 929 2005 6099 | Meeting ID: 8564 655 1688

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Glen Traverse, Rich Greenough, Keith Hier, Sam Lucci

Members Absent: Chadd Viger

Others Present: Town Manager Joe Gunter, Recording Secretary Claire Stanley, Accountant Teresa Perry; Police Chief William Humphries

Because of an equipment malfunction, Peg TV left the meeting.

Call to Order: Chairman Traverse called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the assembly in reciting the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Amendments to the Agenda: Mr. Lucci **made a motion** to remove “*Allowing Other Towns to Use Fair Havens Transfer Station*” from New Business; seconded by Mr. Hier and passed.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Lucci **made a motion** to approve the Minutes of the December 9, 2025, meeting as written; seconded by Mr. Greenough and passed.

Department Head Reports: Police Chief Humphries reported:

- * 3 arrests (117 yr. to date)
- * 68 Traffic/Municipal violations (2218 yr. to date)
- * 33 Written warnings (1068 yr. to date)
- * 1 Parking violation (25 yr. to date)
- * 5 Car crashes (60 yr. to date)
- * Completed 10 sets of fingerprints (340 yr. to date)
- * 225 calls for service (5476 yr. to date)

Chief Humphries noted the Dept. participates in the Governors Highway Safety Program Holiday Enforcement program that runs from December 15, 2025 to January 2, 2026. This program pays the Dept for equipment. * He thanked Ptl. Tyler Duel for taking on the “Stuff a Cruiser” that collected food, toys, pet food, clothes, cash and gift cards that were turned over to Slate Valley Cares and Dept of Children and Families (DCF) helping to provide a better holiday for those less fortunate. * Over the course of the last year, Chief Humphries, Ptl. Duel, Manager Gunter and the Police Dept were subject to a lawsuit for false arrest by a local resident both in our personal and professional capacity. On Dec. 15, 2025, the Vermont Courts ruled in favor of all named defendants and the civil suit was closed. * The Dept. continues to make every effort to be highly visible with increased foot and vehicle patrols in high areas of concern.

Town Manager Report & Communication: Manager Gunter reported:

- * The problem with the light at the Dutton Ave. intersection was repaired (\$4200).
 - * Class 1 paving is scheduled for next summer
 - * The downtown will be paved at night
 - * The “slip” lane will be removed at the Stewarts intersection; it will be a 4-way stop
 - * There was vandalism at the playground bathroom trailer. Police are working on it.
 - * Mike LaDuke is working with engineers about the water leak in the dam
 - * Mike LaDuke has requested qualifications to replace sand filters
 - * Manager Gunter mistakenly had the wrong playground MOU draft at the last meeting; he has made corrections, sent to attorneys for review and will have it for this Board next meeting
 - * Expect to have the upstairs ceiling painted tomorrow
 - * There will be a Probate Court hearing on January 14, 2026, about the Trailer Park
- At Mr. Hier’s inquiry, the upstairs large room is a public space; can be used for meetings, small group activities. Chairman Traverse said it could be used for Town Meeting, trainings.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Control Checklist: Copies were in members’ packets. It was noted that it is an internal control and required by the Bond Bank for the new DPW building bond. Mr. Greenough **made a motion** to accept the Financial Control Checklist; seconded by Mr. Luci and passed.

Budget Review: Members reviewed remaining items of the proposed budget. There was no change in the **accounting** section. **Debt Management:** Manager Gunter noted the fuel tank is paid off; The fire truck payment is made to the Town as that loan was borrowed from the Town; also a Sewer Bond payment. Ms. Perry explained and clarified the **Benefits** section – health/life insurance, unemployment, workers compensation, etc. Manager Gunter recognized Accountant Teresa Perry for her good job transitioning to new health insurance carrier, saving \$28,000. There was lengthy discussion re: **Reserve Allocations** about the continuing high and rising cost and availability of equipment and police vehicles. \$5,000 was allocated to DPW and \$20,000 added to Police allowing the Chief to replace one vehicle now. Mr. Greenough said he would like to keep the budget low, but the country is not cooperating -- the cost of everything is going up. Manager Gunter said this was the fiscally responsible thing to do. Mr. Traverse noted that if the 1% Option tax goes through, those revenues could be used for allocations and help with Rec projects. At Mr. Hier’s question, playground lights could be installed at the bathroom area -- cameras are not good at night. There was lengthy discussion re: prioritizing ex. playground, maintenance, infrastructure public safety (sidewalks). Chairman Traverse suggested reducing the paving line by \$50,000 and adding \$50,000 as an **Appropriation** for vote. Manager Gunter noted that to get to 4% budget increase, \$75,000 needs to be cut from this budget. There followed more discussion about ways to reduce the budget, worry about budget passing, that the 1% Option Tax could be used to get more paving done. Mr. Greenough noted that in his view, if the 1% Option Tax does not go through, “we’re dead in the water”. Manager Gunter noted this budget needs to be finalized at the next meeting. The budget goes to the printer January 16, 2026. At Mr. Lucci’s inquiry, Manager Gunter said he will have examples of language for **Ballot Questions** -- Options Tax,

\$50,000 paving and \$450,000 for replacing the sidewalk from Liberty Street to Fair Haven Grade School. Manager Gunter explained that **Current Real Property Tax** is the only line item raised by property owners; all other line items are raised by the Town ex. permits, interest, licenses, vendor fees, transfer station and cemetery fees, etc. PILOT is reduced by \$21,000 because the State no longer owns the Armory. Mr. Lucci suggested there are income opportunities at the Transfer Station ex. separating metals. At Mr. Hier's inquiry, the Benson contract was for 3 hrs./week coverage in Benson. Chief Humphries noted Benson has contacted him and the Dept could start tomorrow if approved; that it does not impact Fair Haven coverage. Manager Gunter said he will bring a finalized budget (with proposed cuts) and a draft warrant to the next meeting.

Two Minutes for Public Comment: None

Parking Lot: No discussion

Board Roundtable: Mr. Lucci thanked Chief Humphries for his Dept work to "Stuff a Cruiser".

Mr. Hier noted reading in the Rutland Herald that Carrie Lafond has received an award for Outstanding Waste-Water Management. He thanked Chief for their good work.

Mr. Greenough also thanked Chief Humphries for keeping us safe. He commented that DPW seems to be keeping equipment clean. He received good reports about the new salt shed.

Review of Financial Reports: The **checkbook status** is \$-845,071.65. Manager Gunter said that he is nervous with this number; that most Towns would have to take out a loan to pay bills. He noted that the State still owes Fair Haven \$1.34 million.

Mr. Greenough **made a motion** to pay the Accounts Payable (general) \$812,506.35; seconded by Mr. Hier. This amount included: Cassella, \$14,659.21; Ferguson, \$16,520.72; VMEERS, \$18,266.24; Appropriations, \$89,454.75; Slate Valley SD \$585,474.46. The motion carried

Mr. Greenough **made a motion** to pay the Payroll warrant \$40,562.58; seconded by Mr. Lucci and passed.

Executive Session: Mr. Lucci **made a motion** to enter into Executive Session at 8:58 p.m. to discuss contracts 1VSA 313 (a)(1); seconded by Mr. Hier and passed.

Adjourn: The board came out of executive session at 9:39
Mr. Greenough motioned to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Lucci. Meeting **adjourned** at 9:40

Respectfully submitted, Claire Stanley

Board Clerk