Minutes of the Selectboard Meeting
Town of Fayston, Vermont
Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 6:00 pm
At Robert Vasseur Town Hall

Attendees:

Select Board Members: Chuck Martel (Chuck), Ron Graves (Ron), Michael Jordan (Mike)
Town Clerk /Selectboard Assistant: Madi Vasseur
Minutes Taker: Eve Silverman
Guests: Sarah Stavraky (Town Treasurer), Doug Mosle (Lister), Rick Rayfield (Moderator), Lisa Estler(HUUSD Director of Finance and Operations), Mike Bishop (Fayston HUUSD Representative).

Chuck called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

1. Approve Selectboard Budget Meeting Minutes – February 11th, 2025

Mike moved to approve. Ron seconded, all in favor, motion carried, minutes approved.

2. Additions/Deletions to Agenda

Road Foreman update is deleted from the agenda

3. Public Comments

None

4. Tax Increase Due to CLA – Representatives from HHUSD

Mike Bishop provided an overview: Fayston has two outspoken reps (Mike and Daniell Dukette). The schools have a lot of expenses. When you take into consideration the CLA and come up with the formula, Fayston now is facing a tax increase. The Governor is evaluating a plan for the schools, including changing the number of districts; it is likely that within the next two years, we will be seeing some major changes.

Chuck: We are having some difficulty being able to articulate how the CLA and the tax increase relate. Doug: I truly don't understand how these numbers work; it was Lisa Loomis who noticed the discrepancy. People often ask me questions about this. At the Town Meeting, I will try to explain how the CLA affects taxes. I'm seeing other towns where the CLA goes down and the tax rate is going down, when in Fayston the opposite is happening (CLA goes down and tax rate goes up). This is something that people will be asking: why we have a double digit increase when everyone else has a decrease.

Lisa Estler: Fayston's CLA dropped 23% (unadjusted rate); the other towns dropped about 14.3%; if Fayston's CLA had dropped this much, the tax rate would have dropped as well. The State has reviewed my numbers and assured me that they are correct. Doug: We are at the mercy of the State regarding verifying sales. Last year, we had the smallest decrease in CLA compared to the other towns, yet all our rates went up. Lisa: The yield must be factored in as well. The yield this year was lower than the prior year. We start with the projected budget to come up with an educational spend amount; voters will be voting on spending net $41.4MM. Ron: What is the average cost per pupil (unweighted)? Lisa: $27,293. Ron: What about weighted cost? Lisa: $15,488. Enrollment is 1803. Fayston is among the highest

weighted cost per pupil. Sarah: This is not a new concept, but there are recent changes. Lisa: With Act 127, there have been changes to the weighting, and they have added more categories. Doug: You can't really compare last year to this year. Lisa: You can use the interactive spreadsheet to see how it works. Mike: Most towns want to see a separation between the town and school districts. Doug, you don't really need to feel like you need to answer the questions about the school budget, which is very complicated. Some towns are even trying to separate the tax bills.

Mike Bishop: There could be more dialog between school board reps and the Selectboard. I think it would be helpful. I'm happy to come in to talk with the Selectboard or with individual taxpayers. Chuck: As much as you try to separate the school and municipal taxes, if there's a year that the school taxes are going up, we try even harder to keep municipal taxes down. Mike Bishop: That may be actually doing a disservice, because you then might defer problems.

Rick: What is the spike that Lisa referred to? Doug: Real estate sales. The change in CLA is due to the price of homes increasing dramatically, two and three times their assessed value. Sarah: An increase in the grand list doesn't affect our education tax rate. Doug: The only way to lower our tax rate is to have CLA increase, to eliminate sales in the calculation, though the State ultimately has the say on this.

Chuck: Doug, will you be talking at Town meeting? Doug: Yes.

5. Review Warning for Town Meeting with Rick Rayfield

Rick ran through each article on the Warning. Rick: On Article 1, someone should take the chair for that so I'm not moderating my own selection. Chuck: I'll do that. Rick: You might want to suggest someone move to cast a single ballot.

Chuck: I'll do Selectboard report, Mike is doing the budget (Article 15).

Rick: Regarding 3 & 4 is Patti elected to two-year term? Madi: Three year. Rick: I'll remind everyone of this. Has she resigned already? And you have been appointed by the Selectboard? Madi: Yes.

Rick: Are you running again Chuck? Chuck: Yes. Rick: Kim for lister? All: No. I will tell folks that we will need certain offices filled. It would be good to put the open spots in the Valley Reporter. Chuck: It would be a good idea to post in Mailchimp the open spots. The group discussed the other roles where there might be openings.

Rick: Will voting be by Australian ballot for Article 11? Madi: Yes. The Board discussed how the Australian ballot would work for this Article 11. Rick: I will say that you may want to wait to vote until after you hear from the candidates. We will offer them the chance to speak if they are present. Mike: Can someone be nominated from the floor? Ron: No, but there can be a write in.

Eve: Can you please ask people to state their names and speak clearly? Rick: Yes.

6. Ratify Liquor Licenses

Vermont Hard Cider, LLC, Event on 2/14/25 at Mad River, ratified by the Board

7. Excess Weight Permits

McCullough Crushing, Inc

Chuck signed the permits.

8. Other Business: None

Ron: There may be some overlap with our funding of some organizations; in next year's budget process we might want to ensure they come in throughout the year to make presentations and understand this better.

9. Read Mail and Sign Warrant

10. Executive Session – Employee Reviews

Chuck moved to go into executive session, Mike seconded. All in favor, none opposed.
Mike moved to exit executive session, Ron Second. All in favor, none opposed.

Action Taken: None

11. Adjourn

Mike moved to adjourn the meeting, Ron seconded, all in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eve Silverman

Approved: Chuck Martel