

**TOWN OF FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT  
SELECTBOARD  
WATER AND SEWER COMMISSIONERS  
LIQUOR COMMISSIONERS-CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS  
Special Select Board Meeting  
October 6, 2015**

**Members Present:** Robert Richards, Dick Frazier, Jeff Sheldon, Rod Holzworth II, Sean Galvin.

**Others Present:** Town Manager Herb Durfee, Minute Taker Claire Stanley, John Lulek, Neil Robinson, Vicky Stannard, Carl Scott, Bridget Stockwell.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Bob Richards called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Five Minutes for Public Comment:** Mr. Lulek provided his recollection of how the current rate structure was established.

**Work Session FYE 2016 Water & Sewer Rate Structure:** Handouts were prepared and distributed.

- 2016/2017 Water & Sewer Budget (Rate Structure) Proposal
- Sewer & Water Rate Comparison
- Summary Info
- Custom Budget FYE 2016 Revenues – Water & Waste Water
- Page 23, Town of Fair Haven – Water Ordinance – **ARTICLE 8, Water Charges**
- Schedule of Rates and Fees – Sewer
- Schedule of Rates and Fees – Water
- 2012 Vermont Municipal Water and Sewer Rate Information (April 2013) from:  
Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT)

There was lengthy discussion:

- Staying the same does not solve problems
- Using 41 million gallons less than five years ago that causes stagnation, resulting in over chemicalization
- The State has confirmed that Fair Haven's is a great water source
- The (draft) proposal addresses residential users only
- The goal is to improve the water quality (use less chemicals) by promoting some increased consumption
- There are 897 water users, some commercial, most residential
- Still working to address commercial rates
- The proposal would determine average home consumption, and bill for usage over 120% of average consumption at a rate to be determined
- There is a finite amount of water and capping the usage is prudent
- Most costs are fixed, (debt, plant, salaries, infrastructure)
- Need to find ways of saving administrative expenses
- Fixed base rate is predictable for home budgeting

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- Flow issues are part of a trend of problems seen (boil water, stagnation, more line flushing, freeze ups = abatement requests, excessive chemical use, water quality)
- The current variable/usage rate is carrying much of the base rate items
- Because of flow/boil water issues, more testing is required
- Billing instrument is yet to be determined – perhaps, like tax bills – once a year with coupons
- Quarterly meter readings sometimes find household problems – undetected leaks
- There are benefits with water accessibility that include fire protection, home value and reduced insurance rates
- Determine how to bill overages; can there be a credit adjustment for very low consumption
- Perhaps phase in changed charges
- The numbers in the (draft) proposal are arbitrary and subject to change

Manager Durfee acknowledged and commended Mr. Holzworth for putting in the time and effort to prepare the proposal and challenged guests to come up with other options to be considered. Whatever is done, it is a change no matter the structure. The current variable rate includes much of the fixed costs. There is need to maintain the system and quality of water considering equitable way for rate payers to meet the cost.

There will be a special work session meeting November 3, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. Members tasked Town Manager to prepare examples of tiered suggestions, 70/30 breakdown, flat rate and existing billing options.

Mr. Frazier moved the Board to **adjourn** at 8:30; seconded by Mr. Sheldon and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Claire Stanley

  
Richard Frazier, Board Clerk