

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING  
6:00 P.M. Thursday, January 21, 2021  
VIA ZOOM MEETING PLATFORM**

**Select Board**

Eric Remick, Chair  
Elizabeth Dow, Vice Chair  
Lucian Avery  
Shari Cornish  
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane

**Others Present**

Shaun Fielder, Town Manager  
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator  
Aaron Cochran, Police Chief  
Alberta Miller, Town Clerk  
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman

**Others Present**

Doug McClure  
Geoffrey Sewake  
Emily Lanxner  
Mike Sullivan  
David O' Brien  
Jessica Bickford  
Jim Kelty  
Judith Ruskin

**6:03 P.M.** –Select Board Chair, Eric Remick, called the regular meeting to order

**6:03 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda** – Eric reported that there needs an executive session to discuss Greensboro Police Contract pursuant to Chapter 5 V.S.A § 313; to include Town Manager and Police Chief.

*Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the adjusted agenda as stated.*

**6:05 P.M. – Select Board to approve minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of January 7, 2021**

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2021 regular meeting, as written.*

**6:06 P.M. – 6:08 P.M. Communication from the Audience – None**

**6:08 P.M. – 6:12 P.M. - Town Manager’s Report– Given by Shaun Fielder**

Shaun reported that he is continuing to keep track of the State’s guidance regarding the Pandemic.

Next, he reported that he is continuing to gather information on the Wastewater Bond project. He wants to make sure the public & customers are aware of what the project is and how much it will cost.

There is a task force that is working on the Pedestrian Bridge. Shaun will speak further about this later in the meeting.

Lastly, Shaun reported that a survey firm has been contacted and they are moving forward on review of land records for various properties adjacent to River Street in East Hardwick.

**6:12 P.M. – 6:16 P.M. Road Foreman Report– Given by Tom Fadden**

Tom reported that they have been busy plowing and cutting back trees on Bayley Hazen Road & Dimick Road.

He reported that all of the trucks are running well so far, although a new truck needs to be ordered soon. Eric suggested that Tom provide options by next meeting.

Shaun reported that there's work being done on two of the water system wells. One is already complete. The next one should be completed in the next couple weeks.

Lastly, Shaun reported that the Ice Rink is scheduled to be set up on or about January 30. He wants to remind volunteers to mask up.

**6:17 P.M. – 6:26 P.M. Police Report– Given by Aaron Cochran**

Aaron reported that the Officers are eligible to get the vaccine, and many of them have signed up to get the first round. Shaun reported that the Town is working with Northern Counties Health Care to see if there can be a spot to receive the vaccine in Hardwick. The Fire Station has worked really well for a testing sight. Nothing is set in stone; however, if it moves forward, there will be specific days for testing, and specific days to receive the vaccines. They will not be on the same day due to space.

Next, Aaron stated that next week there is a send-off for the National Guard. Most years the families gather to say their goodbyes. However, due to COVID, things are different. There is an Officer that is getting deployed, so Aaron; including other agencies around the state, will go to the Williston Base and escort the bus. We Thank Officer Cimmino, and the other men and women for serving for our country.

HPD will start a new procedure called Business Checks. Business checks will occur at night, and the Officers will go around and check to make sure the door(s) are locked. Once the visit occurs, the corresponding Officer will slide a note under the door letting the business know that they were there. Elizabeth asked if there had been a recent issue in order to promote this. Aaron said yes and no. They used to do this in the past, and want to start doing it again. However, Lamoille Valley Ford has had a lot of catalytic converters stolen recently. Ceilidh asked if this will occur just in Hardwick. Aaron said that no it will occur in the areas that they respond to.

**6:32 P.M. - 6:41 P.M. HED Report- Mike Sullivan-**

Mike reported that revenues were 2.4% over budget, and expenses were 5.8% under budget. Expenses are down because capital projects were pushed back due to the unknowns of COVID. The Purchase Power Performance was 2% under budget, and the overall cover ratio was 102%, which is excellent. The SQRP, which is the outage frequency and duration of outage, both came in at a 50% reduction for 2020. The H-11 project has had some equipment delays. The completion date has been pushed back to May 2021. This project will be online 12/31/2021. There is a capital project that HED has been working on recently, which is building a circuit between the Wolcott and Hardwick substations. This will secure customers better in the future.

There is a Special Select Board meeting to include HED on February 8 at 5:00 P.M. via zoom. This is a follow up meeting from their last meeting as a regularly scheduled check-in.

Eric asked what the crew has been doing on Vermont Ave. recently. Mike said that they had to upgrade the wires for the H-11 project.

**6:28 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Item #1, Select Board to approve the Annual AOT Highway Mileage Certification**

*Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted the Annual AOT Highway Mileage Certification with no changes.*

**6:30 P.M. – 6:32 P.M. & 6:41 P.M. – 6:50 P.M Item #2 Select Board to review & appoint Equity Committee Candidates**

*\*Please note that this conversation had started, and then Mike Sullivan was able to join the meeting, therefore we went to HED's report, and then came back to this item afterwards.\**

There are five open seats; however, the Board has received two letters of interest for this meeting.

Ceilidh wanted to thank Daryl Abraham who was part of the committee, but has recently stepped down. She appreciates his time and efforts.

David O' Brien, one of the candidates who expressed interest spoke, and stated that he was interested in becoming part of this committee due to recent movement that has personally impacted him. He also wanted to make the community a safe place for people to enjoy.

*Upon motion by Lucian Avery, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to appoint David O' Brien and Alexandra Jump to the Equity Committee. Ceilidh abstained from voting.*

**6:50 P.M. – 6:54 P.M. Item #3. Select Board to discuss & approve Class 1, 3 & outside permit Liquor License for the American Legion, Class 2 for Tops Market, and Class 2 for Walgreens**

Alberta and Aaron reported that there haven't been any issues with the above businesses.

*Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the Class 1, Class 3, and the outside permit for the American Legion.*

*Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve both the Class 2 liquor licenses for both Tops Market, and Walgreens.*

**6:54 P.M. – 7:25 P.M. Item #4, Select Board to discuss Cannabis retailers & Licensees and to approve whether or not to put specific questions on the Town Meeting Warning**

There has been conversation about Cannabis all throughout the state whether or not Cities/Towns should approve of retail cannabis operations within given municipalities. The first step that has been talked about to possibly have Towns put it on their Town Meeting warning.

Jessica Bickford, Coordinator of Healthy Lamoille Valley, stated that there have been recent changes to the Legislature, so she warned the Board that if they were to vote on having it on the warning, things may shift within the next year.

Lucian stated that some of this could be considered agricultural, so there might not be as much control over it.

Tonight's potential vote is to allow specific questions on the Town Warning for the public to have input. It does not mean that Cannabis retail sales would be implemented without some additional input from the local level. Jessica suggested a few different options. One option is to create a commission or task force. Another option is for the Select Board to discuss and approve applications like they do for the liquor licenses. The third option is to have the Town delay a vote and wait until Town Meeting of 2022.

Ceilidh asked what the timeline was before applications started coming in. Lucian stated that applications would not start coming in until at least Spring of 2022.

Alberta pointed out that since ballots are being mailed out to all registered voters, there might be more of a say in all of the items this year compared to other years. On the flip side, Aaron stated that he would prefer other Town's to do it first.

After some discussion, the Select Board has generally agreed to not put it on the Town Meeting Warning. The Town Manager will bring it back mid to late March to create a commission, or task force.

**7:25 P.M. – 7:34 P.M. Item #5, Wastewater Facility and Collection System Improvement(s) Bond Warning – Select Board to authorize.**

Further information will be in the annual report so that the citizens can be informed on the project, and how it will be paid for.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to authorize a warned Australian ballot vote on Town Meeting for the general obligation bonds & notes in the amount not to exceed of \$2,200,000 subject to reduction by the application of federal & state grant and aid, and reserve funds for the purpose of financing the cost of upgrading & replacing components of the Town's Sewer collection and its Wastewater Treatment Facility. The estimate cost of completion of improvements is \$2,200,000.*

**7:34 P.M. – 8:06 P.M. Item #6, Town Manager to give an update on the Pedestrian Bridge Task Force Report**

Shaun reported that back in August there was an assessment on the Pedestrian Bridge and this included options and costs.

In the last few weeks, there has been additional information that was provided to the Town, and the task force has worked diligently to come up with a recommendation.

The removal of the bridge is about \$25,000. A repair estimate is about \$60,000. A total replacement is around \$300,000 plus \$100,000 for abutment work.

The Community Development Coordinator, Geoff Sewake, is currently working on an application for a USDA grant. He has also created a Google survey to get the public's input about the bridge. So far the Town has received 87 responses. The results are showing that the bridge being shut down is causing a significant impact. The survey will close at the end of the month.

The task force is recommending a total replacement. However, the USDA grant is a maximum of \$250,000, and so the remaining cost might be a hurdle and would need to be further discussed.

Shari read the following statement from the Task Force Report:

*"The Task Force's preferred alternative, in line with the assessment by Engineering Ventures, is a replacement bridge. A replacement bridge would provide the longest lasting bridge alternative (repairs would have a lifespan of approximately five to ten years). Further, a replacement bridge would improve accessibility and bring the structure up to code. While the current bridge does have historical and cultural value, after*

*discussions with the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation and the Preservation Trust of Vermont, it is the historic use by pedestrians to traverse the Lamoille River for well over 100 years that is perhaps the most valuable asset to retain when considering history. A new bridge may become historic in its own right, one hundred years from now. But, beyond the historical value of the bridge's use, it is the current economic and community value that rests on the restoration of this route that encourages the Task Force to recommend a replacement to the existing bridge."*

Geoff talked about the options for replacing the bridge which are:

- a) The Town could apply for grant funding and utilize municipal funds to close the gap, thereby replacing the bridge as soon as possible. There are several benefits to replacing the bridge quickly, one, restoration of the pathway and restoring the economic and community value to the businesses and residents who utilize the bridge for everyday use. Second, the replacement would be more accessible, safe, and up to code. The project cost is estimated around \$315,000 to \$425,000.
- b) B) The Town could repair the existing bridge, with limits applied as directed by engineers and state regulators. This repair would provide an additional five to ten years of life to the existing bridge, and give the community time to identify the preferred bridge type and allow for a public engagement, such as a design charrette. This path would provide a temporary solution to the bridge, but add additional costs onto the project. It is possible additional grants may be available in the future and the project may be more competitive, but does not guarantee an award. Project cost is estimated around \$355,000 to \$485,000 plus an average annual inflation rate 4%.
- c) C) The Town could conduct a public engagement process, again, like a design charrette, which would give the community an opportunity to identify the preferred bridge type. Again, it is possible additional grants may be available in the future and the project may be more competitive, but it does not guarantee an award. This option would not provide a quick solution to reactivating the pedestrian pathway across the Lamoille River and would likely result in permanent and long term negative economic and social impacts.

Elizabeth asked how long it would take to replace the bridge. Shaun answered that it would depend on when the Town receives all the funding, but within the next couple years.

Select Board will revisit this at the Special Select Board meeting on January 26 2021.

**8:06 P.M. – 8:32 P.M. Item #7, Select Board to have a discussion about the Town Meeting Warning**

Alberta would like to have a special meeting next week to finalize & approve the warning.

Emily Lanxner talked to the Board about coming up with better resources when it comes to big projects around Town, such as the cell tower.

Lucian stated that the Public Utility Commission was a good resource for notifications regarding the cell tower. On top of that, the Town posts a lot of information on the Town's website about various items. Ceilidh stated that the Town could have done a better job communicating the steps for the cell tower. Elizabeth stated that notifying everyone about every issue will be very time consuming. Eric agreed with Elizabeth that it's not in the Town's best interest to push a particular issue and to communicate every issue that some citizens have a concern with. Emily states that people get busy, and some don't have the ability to check various websites. She would like to come up with a better, easier strategy to have to Town communicate with the public. Judith Ruskin stated that other towns are taking steps to get citizens involved.

Ceilidh asked what the harm would be to have a public vote. Elizabeth asked what the language would be. Emily said “shall the Town of Hardwick be required to inform its residents within ten business days of the receipt of proposed cell tower or small-cell antennas within its town limits format shall be clearly and labeled, specific to this announcement, and include post-office and Municipal Building fliers, printed newspaper announcement, digital town website and Front Porch Forum announcement, and verbal announcement made at the beginning of next available select board and planning commission meetings.”

*Ceilidh made a motion to have the above statement added to the warning. There was not a second to the motion, and therefore the Select Board has generally agreed not to add this to the Town Meeting warning.*

Eric asked if there was further information about the overall warning that needed to be discussed. Alberta said no, she is all set, and the Select Board will have the warning tomorrow morning for review.

**Select Board Reports:** Elizabeth asked Alberta how many candidates there were for the Select Board. Alberta said that she has 1 candidate for a one year seat. The Town is still looking for a candidate for another 1-year seat, and for a 3-year seat. Deadline is Monday, January 25, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. Please visit the Town’s website for further information. You can email the Town Clerk your information, and then drop the hard copy of the paperwork off in the drop box.

**New Business:** Ceilidh mentioned that the East Hardwick Grange has started to do community dinners every Wednesday. It’s free to everyone, and pick up will be at the Grange.

**Old Business:** None

*8:35 P. M.: Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to move into Executive Session to discuss the Greensboro Police Contract pursuant to Chapter 5 V.S.A § 313; to include Town Manager and Police Chief.*

**9:05 P. M.:** Out of Executive Session. No action taken.

**9:06 P.M.** Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair

Minutes taken by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator