

**MINUTES SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**5:00 P.M. Tuesday, May 11, 2021**  
**VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**Select Board**

Eric Remick, Chair  
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane  
Elizabeth Dow - *absent*  
Shari Cornish  
Michael Deering

**Others Present**

Shaun Fielder, Town Manager  
Casey Rowell, Business Manager  
Lynne Gedanken, HED Chair  
Mike Sullivan, HED General Manager  
Nat Smith, HED

**Others Present**

Michael Ambrosino, HED  
Roger Prevot, HED  
Vince O'Connell, HED  
Doug McClure

**Special Meeting:**

**5:01 P.M.** Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

**5:02 P.M.** Adjust Agenda - none, can be handled under new business and Board reports.

**5:06 P.M.** Communications from the Audience - none

**5:06 P.M. – 5:19 P.M.** Review of information covered at special meeting held October 12, 2020.

Regarding the Town and HED audit having different year end audit dates, the group questions why the audits need to be synced and why it is negative if they are not.

Lynne mentioned that the HED has separate revenue and it is entirely regulated and separate from the Town. There was some discussion about how other Towns handle their audits when they have an electric department.

Mike said that their accountant indicated that they are following their regulatory procedures and aligned with the dates that they need to be.

A question came up about what is the effect of having that adverse opinion in the audit? The group consensus was that no one there tonight could specifically answer that question. Eric proposed to table it and continue to communicate with the auditors about what the true negative effect is.

Mike indicated that their accountant said that if they can do the audits within 90 days of each other – they can be used together.

**5:19 P.M.** Ceilidh joined the meeting.

**5:19 P.M. – 5:55 P.M.** Old & New Business

Shaun reported that Lynne's seat (2-year) and Nat's seat (3-year) both expire on June 30, 2021. We would typically advertise these positions in our paper of record, FPF, websites, etc.

Lynne talked about the statute that outlines that the initial terms for the Commissioners would be 1, 2 & 3 and then each term thereafter should be 3 years. This was designed to create staggered terms. The Town decides within the parameters of the Town Charter. She encourages the Board to change the terms to be 3- years for everyone after the initial term because then they would still be staggered anyway. This would be in the best

interest of the Town and Commissioners due to the nature of the business. Mike pointed out that this would allow for renewals instead of having to seek out new people.

Eric spoke about the advantages of offering a 1, 2 and 3-year term in a Select Board situation.

Vince indicated that they have been working on developing some sort of manual for a new Commissioner.

Ceilidh met with Lynne a couple months ago to learn more about what HED and what the Commissioners do. She does agree that a 1-year seat might not make sense given all that the Commissioners need to learn and know during their term. Eric reviewed the statute online and it does not indicate that we need to have a 1-, 2- or 3-year term. It can be noted that after the initial terms, the Commissioner terms are then either a 2 or 3-year term.

Ceilidh brought up the letters of interest that we request when seats come up and that we could come up with something as a guideline for people to know what they are getting into. It should be consistent about what we ask from new or existing Commissioners who want to serve. Roger mentioned that he ran into this last year when he was asked to submit a letter of interest to remain on the Board and had already provided previous credentials.

Vince indicated that there are specific items that need to be learned on the Board or by researching. Ceilidh suggested that maybe HED can come up with some specific questions that the Select Board can ask about background, etc. for people interested in being on the Board. Lynne said that it would be helpful if interested people attended a Board meeting prior to submitting to be on the Board.

The HED meetings are now being recorded. Nat shared that he has some suggestions for what criteria candidates should meet. Shari suggested that it might be helpful if the Board made recommendations as to who the mix should be. Lynne suggested that a sample packet of meeting material be provided to people who express interest in serving. Their meeting packet is available upon request per open meeting laws, but they do not officially distribute it. The consensus is that it would be helpful to have questions to ask of interested applicants and if the Board puts forth some recommendations. A list of qualifications would also be helpful to the Select Board.

Shaun reported that we do need to advertise for a 10-day period and then the Select Board would announce the candidates at the June 3 or June 17 meeting. Since it is likely not feasible to get it done by June 30, the Commissioners can continue to act until they are reappointed, or a new person is appointed by the Board.

Eric said that it would be fine to push the appointments out to the July 15 meeting. This would also give interested candidates time to attend a meeting in June.

#### **5:55 P.M. – 6:19 P.M. Select Board/Commissioner Reports**

Eric mentioned that Gary Holloway from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development oversees a grant program for EV charging. A company would set up locations in 6 Towns, with Hardwick being one of them. There is currently an RFP out for these charging stations in 6 different locations. Mike is aware of the grant money and has had businesses reach out about this. At this point, HED is still working on a pilot project for an EV charger that would be at the HED building. HED customers would be allowed to utilize them at no charge to determine how much interest and need there is in the community. Mike indicated that he has learned from some other Towns that they are paying more in card fees for use than they are making on revenue, so he is unsure if this will make sense in Hardwick until there are more vehicles that are electric, such as trucks.

Ceilidh shared that there is a specific area that the EV charging station must be within a certain corridor in the downtown. Green Mountain Power also has a grant program.

There was some discussion about the logistics of the use of the test site at HED. Eric went back to the program and shared that the space must have at least 6 parking spaces. One potential spot is on Wolcott Street where the building burned. The group also discussed some of the specifications outlined in the RFP.

Doug McClure asked about the specific locations in the downtown area. Eric said that we can forward Doug the information.

The only role that the Town will have is that they can make suggestions for locations that they think would be good. The Town does not have the final say.

Mike shared that the Joyce Bellavance case has finally come to an end after a multi-year battle. HED was awarded \$960,000 against the auditors who provided services during the period when the money was stolen. HED previously received insurance funds from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) Part of the settlement includes shifting of payments from Joyce's pension to VLCT towards their loss. This makes the ratepayers whole and they are pleased with the result. Full details will be in the Hardwick Gazette tomorrow.

The next joint meeting will be November 9.

**6:20 P.M.** Eric Remick, Chair, adjourned the Special meeting.

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

Minutes taken by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Casey Rowell, Business Manager