

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. Thursday, September 2, 2021
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD FLOOR

Select Board

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

Others Present

Jon Jewett, Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Aaron Cochran, Police Chief
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman

Others Present

Amy Rosenthal
Larry Hamel
Ross Connelly
Aya Kaufmann
Elizabeth Rossano
Judith Levine
Steve Fortmann
Kathy Fortmann

Regular Meeting

6:00 P.M. – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Eric asked to delete Item number 3 from the agenda, and Shari asked to add an executive session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313; to include the Town Manager

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to adjust the agenda as stated.

6:02 P.M. – Select Board to approve minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of August 19, 2021, and the Special Meeting minutes of August 17, 2021, August 18, 2021 (2), August 20, 2021, August 23, 2021, and August 25, 2021, August 27, 2021, August 31, 2021, and September 1, 2021.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of August 19, 2021, and the Special Select Board meetings of August 17, two meetings of August 18, August 20, August 23, August 25, August 27, August 31, and September 1.

6:04 P.M. Communication from the Audience – None

6:04 P.M. – 6:17 P.M. Town Manager’s Report– Given by Jon Jewett

Jon reported that Sunwise Surveying will be surveying the proposed road changes to Bayley Hazen Road. Little River Surveying will be performing a topographical survey of the areas in and around the Pedestrian Bridge.

Paul Senesac will begin sludge measurement of the Wastewater lagoon next week.

Jon is working on USDA approved contracts for engineering and architectural services for the Pedestrian Bridge. He is waiting on more information from the Architects and Engineers.

Jon completed a narrative update for the USDA Communities Facilities Grant.

Next, Jon and Aaron looked into and responded to an issue relating to a blocked legal trail on Prospect Street.

Further investigation found that there is a legal trail through Prospect Street, Hillside Street, and Union Street and this is not for ATV use.

Finally, the Town Manager's office provided Aldrich & Elliot with cost for removal and disposal of sewage sludge at the Wastewater Treatment Facility. This cost included 120 dry tons of sludge and it was a "markup" price, however additional sludge removal may be needed and that would increase the final cost. Currently, the bids are coming in at \$2,861,536, which was \$749,711 over the estimated cost of the project. The Town can possibly lower the price if alternatives are not added.

6:17 P.M. – 6:23 P.M. Road Foreman Report– Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that the crew has been grading and recoating different areas with stamatt. He also mentioned that gravel and winter sand have been hauled in.

Next, Tom mentioned that there was a water line that was fixed on Elm Street.

He wanted to remind residents that Brickhouse Road, Cedar Street, and Belfry Road are on the schedule to be paved this year; however, the Town is waiting to hear an exact date from Gray's Paving.

There won't be any crosswalk paint this year, and Tom won't order it until after the State goes through and repaves their class one roads, which should happen next year.

Lastly, the trucks are getting maintained, inspected, and prepared for the winter. The new truck is still waiting for a body to be put on it.

6:23 P.M. – 6:45 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Aaron Cochran

Aaron reported that there were 134 incidents in the month of August. Incidents include transient calls, increase in mental health cases, citizen disputes, and motor vehicle crashes.

Aaron also mentioned that Zach Willey, which is currently a part-time officer, will be accepting a full-time position with HPD. Unfortunately, due to COVID, Zach won't be able to attend the academy until Fall of 2022. Officer Katie Cimmino will also be joining Zach in the Academy in the Fall of 2022. Ceilidh asked if there were limitations on officers that hadn't yet completed the Academy. Aaron stated that there are different levels in Police Departments. Level 1 doesn't pertain to Hardwick. Level 2 would be for officers such as Officer Willey & Officer Cimmino. Level 2E, which is an advanced Level 2, pertain to Officer Caldwell, and Officer Gagnon, and then Level 3 pertains to Chief Cochran, Sergeant Barber, and Officer Marcoux. Level 2 officers have limitations to the scope of authority and can't write a charging affidavit. Level 2E has limitations in which they can't investigate homicides; however, Level 3 is fully certified, can investigate more incidents, and write affidavits. Aaron believes within the next few weeks; the department potentially can go back to 24-hour coverage. Eric asked who was doing dispatching. Aaron stated currently Lamoille is doing the dispatch services, however it's easier to do dispatch services in house due to better radio coverage and Officer Gagnon is able to complete in house audits and reports.

Next, Aaron wants to make everyone aware that there is a scam going around Facebook that is asking people to buy gift cards. What happens is the scammers not only steal money, but steal personal information. If anything, looks strange please call HPD.

Aaron reported that the department has received more Narcan to assist with drug overdoses.

Finally, Act 37 has formed a commission to assist with first responder's wellness. The first meeting is in mid-September and Aaron will be a part of those upcoming meetings and will report back to the Selectboard with more information as it comes available.

6:45 P.M. – 6:58 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to discuss maintaining critical emergency services department and staffing levels which can accommodate the potential needs of the community

Eric explained that there was a Front Porch Forum post asking for community support in the Police Department. Unfortunately, the Board wasn't notified why or what the post was about. He asked if anyone was at the meeting to talk about the Police Department.

Larry Hamel stated that he is very interested in having a 24-hour Police Department within the Town. He not only lives in East Hardwick, but he has several businesses in the Village of Hardwick, and he's the Town Service Officer, in which he sometimes needs HPD's help.

Aya Kaufmann stated that she also wants to see the Police Department to be a 24-hour Police Department. She stated that Aaron answered most of her questions during his report.

Judith Levine asked why Greensboro left. Aaron stated that he wasn't part of the final decisions. Aya stated that Greensboro made a public post about it and stated they found another department to contract with. Judith also asked if the community meeting was to talk about the budget. Ceilidh responded that the details of the community meeting have not been discussed yet, and they are hoping to wait until the Town has a new Town Manager. Judith would like to talk about Community safety when that meeting occurs.

Steve Fortmann stated that he is a Hardwick resident, but he is also part of the Hardwick Rescue Squad (HRS), and a lot of the times HPD and HRS respond to the same call. Steve mentioned that HPD is always professional, and he would like to show support for HPD.

6:58 P.M. – 7:07 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to discuss the proposed Charter changes

Eric stated that the Listers are retiring in the Fall and this has necessitated some changes within the Charter.

Currently the Town has hired an Assessor to fulfill the Lister's job duties. Other changes that will occur include eliminating the Trustees of Public Funds, removing the auditors as we have external auditors, removing the fence viewer, change the agent to convey real estate, and to change the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk's position from elected to appointed. The change to the Clerk position is so that if changes were to occur within that office, the Select Board can hire someone with the appropriate accounting background.

Some of the changes are being made to have it align with State Statutes. After changes have been made, the Town will post it to the Town website. Please note for items being deleted they will be crossed out. For additions, the items will be underlined.

The Town is hopeful to do the Town Public hearings, to have a Town-wide vote in November and to have it go to the legislature for approval in January.

Select Board to discuss mandating the COVID vaccine for Town employees

This item was deleted from tonight's meeting.

7:07 P.M. – 7:20 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to discuss ARPA funds

The Town is receiving ARPA funds. Below is the amount that the Town will be getting:

Town Allocation from the State: \$299,512

County Portion- \$555,715

Grand Total \$855,227

Payments will be split up over 2 years. Half this year and half next year. The Town has already received the first half of \$299,512.

These are the only four areas of which funds can be used for:

1. To respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts;
2. To respond to workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency by providing premium pay to such eligible workers of the recipient, or by providing grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who performed essential work;
3. For the provision of government services, to the extent of the reduction in revenue of such recipient due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year of the recipient prior to the emergency; and
4. To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

Ceilidh requested to see a plan for what the Town of Hardwick has for funds that will go towards to Waste water project, what the ARPA money is going towards, and if there's anything left over what the Town will be using that money for.

Judith Levine stated that she would like to see the money go towards the broadband. Eric stated that VLCT has advised the Town to not spend money on broadband as there will be a separate fund to help with that.

7:20 P.M. – 7:22 P.M. Item #5 Select Board to execute quit-claim deed for LVRT easement

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to execute the quit-claim deed for the LVRT easement.

Select Board Reports: Shari mentioned that the VOREC grant as been submitted and wants to thank Helen Beattie and Alison Low for their assistance.

New/Old Business: None

7:23 P.M. Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313; to include the Town Manager

8:05 P.M. Exited Executive Session. *No action taken.*

8:05 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