

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**6:00 P.M. Thursday, October 7, 2021**  
**MEMORIAL BUILDING**  
**20 CHURCH ST. 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

**Select Board**

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

**Others Present**

David Upson, Jr. Town Manager  
Casey Rowell, Business Manager  
Alberta Miller, Town Clerk  
Aaron Cochran, Police Chief  
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman  
Ruth Marquette, NEKHS (Zoom)  
Carol Boucher, NEKHS (Zoom)

**Others Present**

Josh Allen  
Doug McClure (Zoom)  
Amy Obenauf, RCT (Zoom)

**Regular Meeting**

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

**6:01 P.M. – 6:03 P.M.** Set/Adjust Agenda – Add an Item #7 for the Select Board to formerly reject the bids for the Wastewater Treatment Facility upgrade project, and Add an Item #8 for the Select Board to authorize the new Town Manager as the Administrator for the Town’s credit card account.

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

**6:03 P.M. – 6:05 P.M.** Communication from the Audience – Carol Boucher with Northeast Kingdom Human Services wanted to ask about waiving appropriations petitions for their entity, and a couple of others as well. This is item #3 on agenda, so she will wait.

**6:05 P.M. – 6:06 P.M.** Select Board to approve minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of September 16, 2021

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 16, 2021, as written.*

**6:06 P.M. – 6:18 P.M.** Town Manager’s Report– Given by David Upson, Jr.

David updated us on what he has been working on during his first week and a half on the job. See his full report in the meeting attachments.

One of the items discussed was the AOT paving project scheduled for next year, specifically the Town’s opinion of the work being performed at night vs. day. Working at night will allow them to get it done faster. People will be upset about the noise at night, but it is best for the downtown area. Tom mentioned that doing the downtown area at night would be easier, but parts like So. Main St. can be done during the day. The Board also agreed that night work for the downtown area would be best, but for areas like Wolcott St. and So. Main St, they could be worked on during the day since traffic could move through one lane easily.

There was also a question about the “bump-outs” and if we want grass, concrete, or another surface. They want us to respond about what we would like to see. Shari mentioned that Sally Anstey and Jane Johns would be willing to do flowers in there for beautification. The consensus was that concrete or similar solid surface would be best and then some planted pots could be added to improve the look. The Town Manager will inquire about a visually appealing surface that we could add flowers to.

**6:18 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Road Foreman Report– Given by Tom Fadden**

Tom reported that they have been finishing grading and hauling gravel from our pit. The hauling from the pit is complete.

Maintenance on the trucks is happening now to prepare to put plows on. The replacement for Truck 1 is not complete yet and we are unsure of exactly when it will be ready, but it should be soon so we can have it by the time we need it for plowing.

Tom mentioned that there was a sewer line issue at Hideaway Acres. They had to do minor digging and replaced pipe. Richardson Rd. also had a sewer issue, and they took care of that as well.

They completed two (2) meter pits recently and are waiting for more parts/supplies to come in before more can be done.

Tom shared that we still do not have any news on salt bids. Typically, we have those figures by now, so we are anxiously awaiting to hear the new prices.

The State does the line striping on Class 2 roads. We received notice from the State that there is a national paint shortage for the paint used to do line striping. Considering this, Cedar St. and Belfry Rd. will not be able to be line striped this year.

Tom gave notice that Bunker Hill Rd. will be closed between 8:00 A. M. & 2:00 P. M. next Wednesday for digging (near the glass house).

**6:24 P.M. – 6:32 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Aaron Cochran**

Aaron reported that they had 186 incidents during the month of September. They have been doing directed patrol due to increased cemetery vandalism and thefts in the Town. Aaron talked about what types of activities they have been seeing.

Aaron shared that he has been reviewing alarm ordinances from other Towns. He would like to see the Town consider adopting an alarm ordinance. They responded to seven false alarms for September. There were 82 in 2020, which included Greensboro. There have already been sixty this year. Some ordinances had a fee for repeated false alarms. There was discussion about how the Vermont State Police handles responding to alarms. Residents and businesses are required to register their alarm and pay an annual fee for VSP to respond. After a certain number of false alarms, VSP will not respond until the issue is resolved.

Aaron mentioned that residents in East Hardwick contacted him because they are creating a Neighborhood Watch. They are going to meet with Aaron to discuss this.

Aaron mentioned that the new cruiser that we ordered may be several months out due to supply chain issues.

**6:32 P.M. – 6:35 P.M.** Item #1 Select Board to discuss Halloween celebrations in Town

The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) is planning to do a Trunk or Treat on October 30. They had asked if the Town had planned to do the normal Halloween celebrations. Aaron asked about if the Board wants to see the normal Halloween activities with street closures, etc. The consensus was that the pre-COVID tradition of closing the streets (with PD's help) to allow for safe trick or treating would be fine. Parents, children, and houses giving out treats can all choose on their own if they want to participate.

Aaron left the meeting since he was on shift duty for the Police Department this evening.

**6:35 P.M. – 6:59 P.M.** Item #2 Josh Allen to discuss Depot St. access to his property

Elizabeth Dow recused herself from this discussion and sat in the audience because this has to do with the Historical Society of which she is the President.

Josh Allen wants access to 42 Depot St. The previous owner had crossed Town property without a legal claim to it, but in 2017, the Historical Society placed the old railroad Section House on that piece of property, leaving only a narrow strip between the building and the property line of 26 Depot Street.

There is an 1874 right of way to the property that goes through Mary Piper's backyard at 73 Maple Street, but it belongs to the State, not to Josh.

Josh wants the Town to allow him legal access across its adjacent property on Depot St. on which the old railroad Section House sits.

Eric was sympathetic with the situation but feels that this is not really a Town issue because Town property, bridges or roads did not fail.

Eric reminded the group that previously the Board discussed giving an easement next to the Section House, but the State, which has the right to refuse a use of the property, does not want the driveway so close to the Section House, because winter plowing could cause damage to it.

Josh indicated that VTrans is fine with his moving the Section House so he can access his property across the area where it now sits, but the issue of how to move it and where to put it remains a problem. VTrans has not indicated how wide a space it wants between an access road and the building. Josh also suggested permission to park on Depot Street might serve his needs, but not as well as a driveway would.

Elizabeth rejoined the Select Board table after this discussion.

**6:59 P.M. – 7:09 P.M.** Item #3 Select Board to discuss appropriations petitions for Town meeting 2022

There was some discussion about if it would be appropriate to waive the petition requirements for appropriations again this year. Last year it was three organizations but this year there would be ten of them.

Alberta mentioned that there are 2-3 organizations that have already started and are almost finished. She sent out letters in early August to give organizations plenty of time.

Carol Boucher from Northeast Kingdom Human Services indicated that they have started, but with staff shortages, it would be difficult for them to get this accomplished.

Eric also heard from Kathy Hemmens on behalf of the Craftsbury Community Care Center and the volunteers there are older folks and not comfortable going out to collect signatures with the continued risk of COVID.

Alberta suggested that if the Board decided to waive the petitions again, that we would need to redo the schedule so that all of them do not come due in the same year.

Any new organizations ~~about~~ must get signatures regardless.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to waive the required petitions for existing organizations on our appropriations list. This does not apply to elected officials.*

**7:09 P.M. – 7:16 P.M.** Item #4 Business Manager to provide quarterly budget update for first quarter FY22

The Business Manager reviewed the YTD budget for Fiscal Year 2022. See attachments for the summary.

**7:16 P.M. – 7:18 P.M.** Item #5 Select Board to consider signing the Loan Agreement for the planning loan for the Wastewater Upgrade project (50% subsidy on costs when project moves forward)

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to sign the Loan Agreement for the planning loan for the Wastewater Upgrade Project.*

**7:18 P.M. – 7:21 P.M.** Item #6 Update of Downtown Commission activity given by Shari Cornish

Shari reported that the Downtown Commission has received notification that the Town is a recipient of a \$3,575.00 grant award from NEK Funds – VT Community Foundation. The project will design and produce two new sets of fifteen banners for the poles downtown. One set will be a “Welcome to Hardwick” refreshed version of the Town sign/logo. The second set will carry through the same theme but with an area open for local non-profits, organizations and community committees, commissions, and historic assets to provide their logo. Shari is working on an information sheet for any groups who are interested in participating. There are fifteen banners so it will be first come first serve. The organization will need to work with Abrah Griggs at their own expense if they do not have ready artwork for their piece.

At their October 18 meeting they will be looking at the village center map and making any changes that will be the expanded designated downtown area. They have begun work on their application for non-profit status and working with Alison from NVDA on the Municipal Planning Grant to fund having her help with the full details of the application for downtown designation.

**7:21 P.M. – 7:31 P.M.** Item #7 Select Board to formally reject the bids received on the Wastewater Upgrade Project

The bids were overall high and due to the amount of sludge that was measured by PH Senesac, we are not able to move forward at this time. The sludge removal alone would cost close to \$2M. A good portion of the sludge removal needs to be completed before the other improvements can be done.

There was discussion about ways to get rid of the sludge. Michael will share information about what other municipalities in the country are doing. The Town Manager talked about the various outlets that we can get rid of sludge. He is in the process of researching options for this. It may have to go to Canada.

There was discussion about the chemicals that are used that might be able to reduce the creation of sludge.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to formally reject all bids received for the Wastewater upgrade project.*

**7:31 P.M. – 7:32 P.M.** Item #8 Select Board to authorize the new Town Manager as the Administrator for the Town’s credit card account.

*Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to authorize David Upson Jr. as the Administrator of the Town’s credit card.*

**Select Board Reports:**

Shari attended the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) Meeting. She reported that they are hiring. They have two openings: Facility Manager for the ARCC and Public Relations & Outreach Coordinator. Both job postings can be seen on the CVSWMD website. [www.cvswwmd.org](http://www.cvswwmd.org)

She also shared that NEKArts is looking for estimates from contractors for the Egress & Accessibility project at the Town House. In the meantime, they continue to work on fundraising and grant writing to add to the \$50K of grant funds from the Freeman Foundation. The pre-pandemic estimates were about \$234K. To date, they have secured about \$100K. They hope to see the project complete in 2022.

Eric reported that the Trails Committee had a scaled back Pumpkin Walk this past weekend that was just for the Hardwick Elementary School this year. The public was not invited to attend this year.

He also shared that Trails is looking to expand the single-track trail network north of Billings Rd. Eric has been communicating with HED and various others to work through this process since the pit is in Act 250.

Shari went to a retreat about Designated Downtowns. Transportation funds are available to downtown centers for sidewalks and safety.

**New Business/Old Business:** None

**7:39 P.M.** Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

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

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