

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**6:00 P.M. Thursday, November 18, 2021**  
**MEMORIAL BUILDING**  
**20 CHURCH ST. 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

**Select Board**

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

**Others Present**

David Upson, Jr. Town Manager  
Casey Rowell, Business Manager  
Tonia Chase, Assistant Town Clerk  
Aaron Cochran, Police Chief  
David Gross, HPC Chair

**Others Present**

Michael Haveson (Zoom)  
Kristen Leahy (Zoom)  
Bob Linck  
Tracy Martin

**Regular Meeting**

**6:12 P.M.** – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

**6:12 P.M.** – Set/Adjust Agenda – We need to add an Item #7 to consider approving an amendment to the Yellow Barn Railroad Lease with the State of Vermont and add Item #8 to consider approval of a sewer connection application for Hardwick Electric Department’s Power Plant Dr. property.

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the adjustments to the agenda as stated.*

**6:12 P.M.** – Communication from the audience - none

**6:13 P.M.** – Select Board to approve minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of November 4, 2021, the Public Hearing minutes of November 4, 2021, and the two (2) Special meetings of November 9, 2021

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the Regular meeting minutes of November 4, 2021, the Public Hearing minutes of November 4, 2021, and the two (2) Special meetings of November 9, 2021, as written.*

**6:13 P.M. – 6:21 P.M.** Town Manager’s Report– Given by David Upson

David gave an update on tasks and projects that he has been working on. See attachments to the minutes. He talked about using Front Porch Forum as a means for posting agendas and minutes. The consensus was that it would be a good idea to add this in addition to the places we already post.

There was no Road Foreman report this evening. David did mention that one truck is still down at Clark’s waiting on a transmission cooler and the Business Manager said that they are still waiting for the new dump truck to be completed and that should be any day now. We are going to be getting the new Bobcat soon.

**6:21 P.M. – 6:38 P.M.** Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Aaron Cochran

Aaron is planning to start reporting 2-week periods of activity instead of sending the Board the incidents from the entire previous month. He reported on incidents from Nov 1- 15 this evening. There were sixty-nine incidents. The top five types of calls during this period included suspicious events, traffic stops, alarms, motor vehicle complaints, and agency assists.

Aaron shared the “hotspot” areas over the last 2 weeks. They included So. Main St., Glenside, High St., etc.

There was discussion about the portable radar speed signs. They are being moved around about every 2 weeks with input from the public and other known areas in the community.

Ceilidh asked about quarterly reports on what incidents are frequent, such as theft or vandalism, etc. Eric gave an example of how it compares to the previous quarter or the same period last year. Aaron will investigate his reporting system to see if these types of reports can be generated. He believes the capability is there - he just needs to figure out how to produce them.

Aaron reminded everyone about the winter parking ban in effect from November 15- April 15 between midnight and 6 a.m.

The memorial bench has been set for Lisa Fecteau at the Police Station. The flagpole will be put up soon. He would like to see a dedication ceremony, but not likely until Spring since it is late in the year.

Aaron serves on a committee regarding mental health services for first responders. He reported on what they have been working on. Aaron also mentioned that the Dodge police cruiser that was ordered several months ago is going to be a 2022 car instead of 2021 model, since it didn't get built prior to the '22 models coming out.

Hardwick Electric Department Report – No report this evening

There was a special meeting with HED Commissioners last week and they will continue to meet regularly.

**6:38 P.M. – 6:57 P.M.** Item #1 Hardwick Planning Commission Chair David Gross to share results of two walkability studies of the Town with the Select Board

David Gross, the Chair of the Hardwick Planning Commission came to share walkability studies that were performed in September and October by AARP. The streets that were evaluated included West Church St., Main St., and Mill St. to No. Main St.

This was a study of the walkability of these three areas. Main Street came out as “fair” and the others were considered “poor” The full reports will be available in the attachments to the minutes.

Ceilidh asked if there might be sections that could be replaced while VTrans is coming through paving next year. There was discussion about what the next steps should be.

David G. would like to see more sidewalk from the old Bank building towards the service station.

The Town Manager mentioned that the VTrans contract for next year's paving specifically states that no additional work can be performed when they are coming through, so it is not an option as Ceilidh questioned earlier.

Ceilidh suggested that it would be helpful to separate out the various recommendations and what they might cost. This would allow us to determine what items might need major funding such as grants and other smaller tasks that the Town highway crew might be able to perform.

The Board generally agreed that the Planning Commission could coordinate with the Town Manager's office about Ceilidh's suggestion.

**6:57 P.M. – 7:01 P.M.** Item #2 Select Board to consider participating in the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Equipment Purchase Program – Sign Letter of Intent if answer is yes

The Business Manager explained that this is a new program where we could get 80% of a piece of equipment paid for. There are specific pieces that we can choose from for this program. She and Tom discussed this, and the first choice would be a roller for the grader and a stone screener would be the second choice. These are smaller purchases around \$6-8,000, but we would only need to produce 20%.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to sign the Letter of Intent for the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Equipment Purchase Program.*

**7:01 P.M. – 7:02 P.M.** Item #3 Select Board to review and consider approval of a Liquor License

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the Second-Class Liquor license for Buffalo Mountain Co-op.*

**7:02 P.M. – 7:19 P.M.** Item #4 Bob Linck, Conservation Director, to discuss Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve

Bob shared that he has worked for Northeast Wilderness Trust since February and worked at VT Land Trust previously. This Trust has been around for 20 years. He gave background about the Trust. See attachments for more detailed information on the Trust and what is planned for 5400+ acres to be purchased by the Trust from EB Hyde Company.

They have raised \$4.5 million towards the purchase to date. They need \$6.5M in total. They are seeking support of the project from Town Select Boards that the land resides in. The portion that is in Hardwick is sixty-nine acres.

He talked about the access for the public in terms of the existing trails and roads after the sale is final. Hunting is done through a permit process. Only certain species are allowed, and no trapping is allowed.

Ceilidh asked about trails being accessible in the winter for skiing. Bob mentioned that there is an existing corridor from VAST and they are allowing that to be maintained through the property. They would not entertain any new trails or cutting to create new trails. This includes not creating additional trails for bikes or ATV's. Any public roads that go through the property now, bikes can go through those areas; otherwise, bikes are not allowed.

He is here seeking a letter of support from the Select Board to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to support their project grant application with that agency. They have applied for a \$1M grant with this agency.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Elizabeth Dow. voted to have the Town Manager write letter of support on behalf of the Select Board in support of the Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve's grant application.*

**7:19 P.M. – 8:05 P.M.** Item #5 Business Manager to present DRAFT budgets of Buildings, Police Department, Revenue & Budget Summary, Tax Rate Example

The Business Manager presented drafts of these areas. See attachments for the details. The line items were also included because they had the biggest increase in the budget summary, so it was important to have those items to refer to. One of the discussion points was about using a portion of the Town's healthy fund balance to inject back into the FY 23 budget. At the same time, we would increase the capital contributions significantly for the year and then drop the general capital fund down next year. This would help us to add to our capital funds that are needed for buildings and road projects and to assist with the loss of revenue from the Greensboro contract and the water/sewer transfers that are gradually being reduced. In addition, this would also help to keep the taxes stable with only a minor increase. As of now, the DRAFT shows approximately a \$20 increase per \$100,000 of property value with appropriations.

We are being cautious with this because we want to avoid a significant increase the following year. In general, people can manage a slight increase each year, but it is harder to plan if there is suddenly a big jump.

**8:05 P.M. – 8:10 P.M.** Item #6 Discussion about grant opportunity for 25% subsidy on equipment purchase (considering excavator scheduled for replacement in 2024), but subsidy available now.

There is a program called the Vermont Diesel Emissions Reduction Financial Assistance Program that offers subsidies for upgrading to newer equipment with less emissions. Our excavator is a 2009 and scheduled to be upgraded in FY2024. It would mean we have to upgrade it early but could get up to 25% in grant funds. There are specific requirements that need to be met and we would make sure that we met them. The excavator is estimated to be between \$130,000 and \$135,000 which would be about \$32,000 grant subsidized with the grant. Casey and Tom just wanted to know if the Board wants to pursue this now. There would be funds in the equipment fund to make the purchase.

The Board agreed that it is worth pursuing. The Business Manager and Tom will work on this. We will not move forward with this unless we can get the 25% subsidy. If we were not able to get it, we would just wait until FY24 to replace it.

**8:10 P.M. – 8:12 P.M.** Item #7 Select Board to consider approving an amendment to the Yellow Barn Railroad Lease with the State of Vermont

There is an existing lease now, and this is just an amendment to the footprint that it currently covers.

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the lease amendment.*

**8:12 P.M. – 8:13 P.M.** Item #8 to consider approval of a sewer connection application for Hardwick Electric Department's Power Plant Dr. property

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the sewer connection application for Hardwick Electric on Power Plant Drive.*

**Select Board Reports:** Shari reported that the Downtown Commission applied for an AARP Winter Placemaking Micro Grant of \$4,000 to pay for an electrician to make the 15 pole lights have a plug to power being wrapped with lights. We will hear about the AARP grant on or around November 29.

**New Business:** None

**Old Business:** The Business Manager mentioned the Montgomery parcel in East Hardwick that was talked about at the last meeting. She went and viewed the property with Ceilidh since the last meeting. It is close to the spot where the East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization is planning a little park area along the LVRT. It does not have much flat usable space. It was mentioned he could put a Montgomery bench like he wanted to put on the parcel he wants to donate to the Town. Ceilidh wants to call Mr. Montgomery before the Town makes any decisions about whether they want to change their mind about accepting the donation of that parcel that they voted on in August.

Ceilidh brought up that community members have been asking about ARPA funds. She suggested that we put something up on the website and Front Porch Forum about the specific ways it can be spent. The Town Manager's office will take care of this.

Eric brought up the Wastewater Treatment Plant project and that we are working on ways to move forward with it. Sludge removal is the biggest barrier right now. He and David met with Aldrich and Elliot this week to talk about how they can move forward. The project will need to be re-bid. More to come on this in future meetings.

*Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.*

**8:24 P.M.** Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

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

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