

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. Thursday, December 2, 2021
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD 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
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Aaron Cochran, Police Chief
Lisa Sammet, Library Director
Daphne Kalmar, Library Treasurer
Jason Bahner, Recreation Coordinator
Norma Spaulding, Trails Treasurer

Others Present

John Bellavance
Lindsey O' Steen
Nancy Notterman
Judith Ruskin
Brenda Bolieu
Paul Fixx
Ann Wakeen
Jamie Welcome
Michelle Demers
Carol Schminke

Regular Meeting

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

6:01 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – We need to add the approval of the Public Hearing minutes from November 18, 2021, and an Executive Session to discuss police service contracts pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 A; to include the Town Manager.

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

6:04 P.M. – Communication from the audience - none

6:04 P.M. – Select Board to approve minutes for the Special Meeting of November 16, 2021, the Regular Select Board meeting of November 18, 2021, and the Public Hearing meeting of November 18, 2021.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve all three sets of minutes, as written. Michael abstained.

6:05 P.M. – 6:11 P.M. Town Manager's Report– Given by David Upson, Jr.

David reported that the VOREC grant was submitted on November 29 for the Pedestrian Bridge Park. He would like to thank everyone for working on this grant; especially Geoff Sewake and Helen Beattie. Shari asked when the Town would hear back from the administration. David stated they would get in touch with him by December 17 if they had questions.

David recently met with Dave Gross and Dr. DiGiulio (Hazen Principal) and they have agreed to be a part of the Act 164 task force.

Kiwanis is starting to plan their Spring Festival, and David is willing to help Kiwanis with the planning.

Lastly, the Town Highway plows West Woodbury Mountain. The current arrangement is not equitable for the Town. The Select Board generally agreed to have the Town Manager talk to Woodbury to come up with a better approach.

6:11 P.M. – 6:36 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Aaron Cochran

Aaron presented an incident analysis report. The first two pages included the top 10 incidents for the period of November 19, 2021 to December 1, 2021. The following two pages included the top 10 incidents for the period of November 19, 2020 to December 1, 2020. When comparing these reports, directed patrol, thefts, and juvenile problems has increased in 2021. Suspicious events and citizen disputes have decreased. See full report for more detail.

The next section in the analysis report explains the top 5 activity locations. See report for more details, but one important factor to note is that these activities might not be bad activities. For example, on North Main Street, the officers do patrol for the Elementary school.

Aaron then took the media log from the past two weeks and reported that there were 58 incidents.

Aaron also compared the top 10 incidents from January to December 1 for both 2020 and 2021 and compared the reports. These reports also show the activity per month. Please see report for additional information. Ceilidh asked why the total activity per month is down in 2021 compared to 2020. Aaron said with staffing issues and the loss of Greensboro, there hasn't been as much directed patrol.

Aaron stated that there has been an increase in mental health calls. He is trying to track those situations better.

Overall, the Board thought these reports were great, but they wanted to review them in more detail.

Hardwick Electric Department Report – There wasn't a Hardwick Electric Report.

6:37 P.M. – 7:03 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to hear from Recreation, Trails, and the Library, about their proposed FY23 department budgets

Norma Spaulding presented the Trails Department budget. She stated that for the most part, the budget was level funded except for the salaries. Last year the employee didn't get a raise, so this year they have proposed an increase of 5.9%. Elizabeth asked why the funds were not used. Norma stated that the employee had surgery, COVID played a factor, and weather was another factor. See budget for more detail.

Daphne Kalmar and Lisa Sammet reported on the Library budget. Daphne proposed that the salaries increase, explaining that some of the employees are making around minimum wage. There's a great staff at the library and she would hate to lose them. Michael asked about the Fiber Connect increase. Lisa stated that the Library has a Federal E rate reimbursement program, however the reimbursement is very sporadic. The Town has to budget the actual cost, but at the bottom of the Library budget, the Town takes into account the credits that the library will get, which offsets the increased expense shown in the upper section. See budget for more detail. Elizabeth asked why the funds were not spent, and both Daphne and Lisa stated that the budget amount was for the addition to the Library, which hasn't happened yet.

Jason Bahner and Ceilidh explained that the Recreation budget doesn't have major changes. Some of the programs have been lumped together, the youth program went down, and the funds that were previously in the

transfer to capital line will go away. There is a capital sheet that has a three-year plan, in which the Recreation will put \$1,000 into and that will grow. See budget for further detail.

7:04 P.M. – 7:20 P.M. Item #2 Representative from Hardwick Rescue Squad to discuss their FY23 budget request

Lindsey O'Steen was present to explain Hardwick Rescue's budget. See attachment for more detail. The major change is they want to go from two full-time employees to three full-time employees. The insurances have also increased, and they would like to provide their members with t-shirts. To date there have been 733 calls. The number of volunteer hours is over 22,000 hours for 50 volunteers. This does not include trainings and meetings.

Another point that Lindsey brought up was that they have completely outgrown their space. They are looking into different options. David stated that the Town Garage has also outgrown their space. Eric would like to see David and Lindsey work together to make that area more adequate.

7:20 P.M. – 7:22 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to discuss and authorize the Town Manager to approve the amendment to the Master License Agreement between the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Town of Hardwick concerning a water and sewer line.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to authorize the Town Manager to approve the amendment to the Master License Agreement.

7:22 P.M. – 7:59 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to discuss the Governor's new legislation about mask mandates within Towns

Judith Ruskin asked who put this item on agenda and why the Town was discussing this. She stated that Burlington has a mask mandate, and there will be fines if masks are not worn. She is concerned what will happen in Hardwick if there is a mandate.

Eric stated that the Governor has asked that the Towns have a discussion and decide whether masks will be mandated in their Towns. Ceilidh mentioned that the Select Board hasn't had a conversation about it, and now is a good time.

Bill Moore is from Johnson; however, he has been a part of the legislature sessions and was part of the Burlington meeting.

Nancy Notterman, former health care worker, would love to implement a mask mandate especially since Vermont has increasingly high numbers and the current percent is over 5%, which is the highest it has ever been. She has worked in the ICU, and she feels that others need to realize what the ICU nurses go through on a daily basis. She has known people that have not only gotten COVID but have passed from it. She is wondering why the Select Board doesn't have masks on tonight.

Brenda Bolieu expressed that her health is her responsibility and that studies have shown that masks don't work. Ceilidh stated that this isn't a discussion about whether masks work.

Elizabeth stated that you never make a rule unless you can enforce it, and she doesn't know how the Town would enforce the policy. She believes that the Town of Hardwick should opt out.

Shari stated that masks are required in her business and that if she were to get COVID, then her store would need to be shut down. She feels safe in the Memorial Building because there is a policy, and she would like to believe everyone is following that policy. She is also social distancing. Her store is offering curbside pickup, mailing and there is a website that customers can order from.

Michael stated that some people will not shop where there is a mask mandate. He stated that he doesn't feel comfortable with the mandate.

Aaron stated that VLCT has two policies- one with the mandate and one policy that doesn't include the mandate. There's been a discussion among the Chiefs and the consensus was that there is not enough staff to enforce the policy.

Paul Fixx stated that others look at leaders for guidance. Nancy Notterman and Bill Moore agreed.

Ceilidh would like the Town to do more to get information out in the community. She would also like people to model wearing the masks. David stated that the pandemic has weighed on all of us, and that we should work together.

No Select Board Reports or New Business.

Old Business: Ceilidh mentioned that she called Don Montgomery but hasn't heard back. David stated that Casey has spoken with him recently.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session to discuss police service contracts pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 A; to include the Town Manager.

8:35 P.M. Exited Executive Session.

The Board has generally agreed to allow the Town Manager to continue communicating with Greensboro about getting a contract renewed with them.

8:35 P.M. Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: _____
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator

Minutes approved by: _____
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair