

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:30 P.M. Thursday, February 17, 2022
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson, Jr. Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager - *Zoom*
Michael Henry – Interim Police Chief – *Zoom*
Karl Stein, Hardwick Rescue - *Zoom*
Tim Nisbet, Hardwick Rescue – *Zoom*
Lynne Gedanken, HED - *Zoom*

Others Present

***Due to technical difficulties with the 5:30 Special Informational meeting, that meeting did not start until 6:00 and the Regular Select Board meeting was delayed until 6:30. ***

Regular Meeting

6:33 P.M. – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:33 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Remove Executive Session

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

6:34 P.M. – Communication from the audience - none

6:34 P.M. – 6:36 P.M. Select Board to approve minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of February 3, 2022

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 3, 2022, as written.

6:36 P.M. – 6:43 P.M. Town Manager’s Report– Given by David Upson

David reported on his activities, which included an update on the rebid of the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) upgrade project, fireworks show for Springfest, NEK Broadband activity, and the need for Recreation Committee members.

The minimum fireworks show has gone from \$4,000 to \$5,000. The Town sets aside \$3,000, so we will need to fundraise and seek donations from businesses and residents to fill the \$2,000 gap. The Community has been very generous in the past, so the group is hopeful we will be able to raise the funds to have a great show.

Eric mentioned the idea of doing another Bond vote to increase the WWTF bond amount if we could get additional subsidy. This may not be a popular idea but would help us to get all the upgrades and a larger subsidy.

David shared that the VOREC grant we applied for is still working on decisions for the applications they received.

See attached report for details.

6:43 P.M. – 6:45 P.M. Road Foreman Report– Given by David Upson

David reported that the crew did a brake job on the one ton today. They have been salting and sanding. Back roads were icy today, but they are working away to keep the roads in good shape. Snow removal from last storm was done with the loader. Overall, there have not been too many major equipment breakdowns recently. Eric said the crew did a great job after the last storm and were diligent in clearing the roads. Ceilidh said they have been really on top of the sidewalks this year.

6:45 P.M. – 6:47 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Interim Police Chief Mike Henry

Mike reported that they have completed the State Auditor's report. He also shared that they have conditionally hired two applicants for Officer positions. They are both from out of state. They have passed the background check but do still need to complete a polygraph and fitness test, before their hiring is finalized. It is expected that they will have orientation days next weekend. They will both need to go to the Academy.

Mike shared that they have had to do shift adjustments due to the limited number of Officers. They are currently covering 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. The other 5 hours are on call. Coverage is lean and they are working with Vermont State Police (VSP), but the coverage they can provide is extremely limited and there are conditions.

Mike thanked the Fire Department and Rescue Squad for their assistance at the fatal accident scene recently.

David commented that we recently revamped the employment application for the Police Department, and it is now a fillable form available on our website.

Ceilidh asked about how we can help to support the Department in a time where we are so short staffed. Mike indicated that there is not much that can be done. The Officers must prioritize calls based on life threatening. There have been times where multiple accidents all came in at once.

6:48 P.M. – 6:54 P.M. Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Report - Given by Lynne Gedanken

Lynne shared that HED has been planning an express circuit to connect all the substations for close to a year and a half now and it is getting closer to a reality. This is important for customers because it gives 100% redundancy to customers, meaning that if one substation goes out, then they can look at another one for back up.

The annual report for outage frequency was completed and they are doing much better than the state requirements, specifically 54% better on the interruption rate than the requirement.

Lynne shared that the Center Rd. Solar Project is one of the largest projects around with 2.2 megawatts. It is coming online in March. HED will have to buy its proportional share, which is about 1%.

There is a new opportunity to increase revenue at HED. It is what is known as a "wheeling tariff" where a utility can charge for transmission from their system to another system. HED will receive an estimated \$25,000 annually from this.

ISO New England is developing a plan so that what happened in Texas last year does not happen here in New England. Mike Sullivan is on the development committee for this.

Lynne shared that Wolcott Hydro is up and running and they will produce about 10% of their power from there.

Ceilidh asked about the website. Lynne indicated that it has been disappointing because they had hoped it would be up and running by now. It is inadequate and she hopes it will be ready soon. It is a topic of discussion for the upcoming Commissioner meeting.

6:54 P.M. – 7:13 P.M. Item #1 Lindsey O’ Steen & Tim Nisbet to discuss potential locations for a new Hardwick Rescue Building

Lindsey could not make it this evening. Tim Nisbet and Karl Stein were present. Tim shared that HRS has outgrown their building (about 10 years ago). They have been challenged to find volunteers and have needed to hire more people. The facility is inadequate. They want to build a new building. They need to find a location in the Village of Hardwick, which has good parking and building space. They would like it to be connected to Town water/sewer. The current building is 4,100 sq ft. They have spoken to other area departments. Tim said they would like to find a piece of land with at least a half-acre of land and build a facility that is 4,500-5,500 sq feet. Tim mentioned the lot that the Town owns down by Dollar General.

Shari mentioned that this lot being referenced is partially wetlands and that the Town is still within a 5-year period in which they cannot really do anything with it. We are less than a year away from that 5-year period.

Eric brought up that the Town’s Highway Garage is also in need of replacement and asked if they might be interested in staying on Creamery Rd. and collaborating with the Town. Tim indicated that they are not opposed to this. David asked about a budget. Tim said they do not have a budget at this point – they also do not have a design but do have an idea of what size building and type of location they will need.

Ceilidh commented that it might make sense to have a joint meeting with the Town Manager, Tom, and EMT’s to brainstorm. Elizabeth asked if there were any advantages of them staying on Creamery Rd. near the Highway Garage. Tim said the biggest advantage to being near the Highway Garage is that they purchase fuel from the Town and the pumps are right there for them to access. Other than that, it is not necessary.

Karl has reached out to other organizations for their design plans and feedback on their buildings. David suggested reaching out to Orleans Ambulance, as it is likely a similar size.

Eric said that the rescue is important to the community and the Town certainly wants to cooperate, but we should investigate the whole concept, including a new Town garage.

Tim mentioned a task force to explore this collaboration. Ceilidh and Elizabeth are both interested in being a part of the task force.

Fundraising was mentioned. Karl said that how fast they can raise the money is what will drive how quickly it can all come together. Ceilidh suggested that a design and budget would be helpful as a starting point.

The Town Manager’s office will coordinate with Hardwick Rescue to start a task force that can explore the idea of collaboration of a building and/or location for their building and a new Town garage.

7:13 P.M. – 7:15 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to consider approving water and sewer connection applications for LB2 LLC for a carwash to be located at 75 Log Yard Drive

Shari asked if they had went through all the other channels with permitting. David reported that the building is

already up, and all permits have been obtained so this is really the last step. Ceilidh asked about capacity of our water and wastewater system to handle this. David indicated that we do have the capacity to support this.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the water sewer connection applications for LB2 LLC for a carwash to be located at 75 Log Yard Drive.

7:15 P.M. – 7:18 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to consider acceptance of a Police Office appointment for Mike Henry, Interim Police Chief – Oath has been taken with Town Clerk already

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to accept the appointment of Mike Henry as Interim Police Chief.

7:18 P.M. – 7:24 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to discuss ATV access to Town (follow up from a previous discussion)

The conversation about ATVs being able to travel from Mackville to the end of So. Main St. (village center by the light) is being picked back up. The existing ATV ordinance would need to be updated to add this section of road.

Calderwood Insurance has indicated that parking would be available on the weekends. VASA would oversee the signage. Shari wanted to clarify that the ATVs would not be parking in the car spaces along Main Street. They can only go up to the intersection, so they could park in front of the school or in the Calderwood and O'Reilly's parking lots after hours and on weekends.

Ceilidh asked if they would be turning around in the diner parking lot. David said that we would have a hard line where the trail should stop such as the stop sign at the intersection. Ceilidh also asked about how they would turn around and if they would be doing a U-turn. That could be a part of the trail guidance and users could have a specific spot to turnaround.

The Board agrees that we get a draft of the ordinance change and that the Town Manager sit down with VASA to figure out the details. This is a way for ATVs to patronize Town businesses.

7:24 P.M. – 7:25 P.M. Item #5 Select Board to authorize the removal of Jon Jewett as an authorized signer on the Town's TCM Bank credit card account and add David Upson Jr. as an authorized signer and allow David to obtain a credit card (subject to Town's credit card policy)

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to authorize the removal of Jon Jewett as an authorized signer on the Town's TCM Bank credit card account and add David Upson Jr. as an authorized signer and allow David to obtain a credit card (subject to Town's credit card policy).

Select Board Reports: Shari reported that the first set of banners from the Vermont Community Foundation grant funds have been put up. She shared that the Downtown Commission is hearing proposals from applicants for consultants that would help with the Downtown Designation. She indicated that the Town House may not open right on March 1, just because they do not have plans to use it right at this time. She shared that the Chamber Players are going to come this summer, and the school may also use it for activities.

Eric shared that the Yellow Barn bid documents will be released tomorrow and will be due on March 21. Exciting news!

David mentioned that Chip Troiano contacted him about the Charter change, and it is moving through the process. It has not been approved yet but is moving forward.

Old Business: The Business Manager brought up the East Hardwick property that the Montgomery family wants to donate to the Town. The Town originally agreed to accept the donation last summer, but it has now become known that it is not really a usable space for the Town. There is no legal access to the property other than from the LVRT, so it would cost the Town money to do an annual lease with the State of Vermont. Considering this, it would not make sense to take this property as a gift.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to rescind the decision to accept the parcel and decline the offer of this gift.

7:35 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