

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. Thursday, July 21, 2022
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM

Select Board

Eric Remick, Chair
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane
Elizabeth Dow
Shari Cornish
Danny Hale

Others Present

David Upson, Jr. Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager
Mike Henry, Interim Police Chief
Tonia Chase – Town Clerk
Mike Sullivan, HED – *Zoom*
Jessica Bickford, Healthy Lamoille - *Zoom*

Others Present

Jodi Lew-Smith
Steve Fortmann
Josh Oakley
Jesse Dimick

Regular Meeting

6:01 P.M. – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:02 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda - *none*

6:02 P.M. – Communication from the audience - *none*

6:02 P.M. – 6:03 P.M. Select Board to approve minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of June 16, 2022, and the Special meeting minutes of July 14, 2022

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the Regular Select Board meeting of June 16, 2022, as written.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the Special meeting minutes of July 14, 2022, as written. Danny abstained. All others aye.

6:03 P.M. – 6:20 P.M. Town Manager’s Report– Given by David Upson

David shared that Tracy Martin started as the Town’s Community Development Coordinator and she has hit the ground running. David talked about the “Meet the New Town Manager” series that was held over the last month or so.

David spoke about the analysis of the Davis gravel pit and the Town buying it. The Board agrees that David should continue the research associated with this including getting test holes dug. He mentioned a potential “Safe Streets and Roads for All” grant. Danny is going to join the CDC and Planning Commission to evaluate if this is something for which we should apply. See attachments for the full report.

Shari asked for a Pedestrian bridge update. David is working with SE Group. They will be starting to work on the design in August and expect to have two proposed designs by mid to late October.

6:20 P.M. – 6:26 P.M. Road Foreman Report– Given by David Upson

David shared that the crew has been working on the Church Street sidewalks, hauling winter sand, and have also been dealing with a few sewer issues.

He mentioned the wastewater project and reported that Lagoon #2 is empty, and power is almost ready, so that the dewatering process can begin for sludge removal.

Ceilidh asked about the bump outs and utility access holes in Town and how they are quite a bit above the pavement grade. David explained that they have been raised because there is still a topcoat to go over and then they will be more level with the pavement. Mid to late August is the estimate for the topcoat of pavement.

On another note, our regular Town paving is coming up soon in the next couple of weeks. Gray's Paving will be paving several streets in the Village area, including Terrace Hill, Lower Cherry St., Elm St., Cottage St., Upper Cherry St., Dale St., and West Church Street.

6:26 P.M. – 6:37 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Interim Police Chief Mike Henry

Mike reported that the Police Department recently upgraded computer systems, one of which was the data storage. Most of them were 10+ years old. This was necessary to enhance their security system.

Mike also shared that the PD started a new Facebook page, and they are working on a web page. The plan is to have commonly requested forms as downloadable documents on the website. It will be linked to the Town page once it is up.

Mike mentioned that all the cruisers are marked now. Bike patrol has started again, as well as foot patrols in the Village area. There has been a lot of positive feedback from residents about seeing Officers around Town.

Mike commented that they have been executing a fair amount of search warrants. The PD also picked up a couple of stolen vehicles today. They had a large federal FBI audit recently, which has been submitted. This is an audit that is done every 3 years. There were some policy changes that resulted from the audit. Mike also reported that the PD now has a digital schedule for the Officers, instead of just a paper copy at the station.

Mike shared that we recently learned that we had State Highway Safety Office equipment grant funds of \$6,672 available to us. This enabled the PD to purchase a handheld radar gun, as well as a solar radar sign, and a couple of other smaller items.

Eric asked about the dispatch communication issue. Mike is actively working on this. Ceilidh asked if we could have an update on staffing and budget at the next meeting.

We just had an Officer graduate the Academy last week.

6:37 P.M. – 6:51 P.M. Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Report – Given by Mike Sullivan

Mike reported that the Wolcott Hydro has generated over 2,000,000 kWh so far in 2022, which is 30% over budget.

Mike also reported that the H-11 project is 12% over budget for production, which is great because this is HED's most inexpensive source of power.

Mike shared that LiDar completed the satellite laser GIS mapping of all HED's poles. The NEK Communications Union District has all the GIS and mobile communications information now, so that design and work can move forward with confidence/accuracy.

The Public Utility Commission recently did a service standards performance measure audit of HED, and Mike was pleased to share that the results came in as excellent. There are three factors that are considered: lost time accidents, outage frequency (54% better than required) and outage duration, which HED beat the target/requirements by 31%.

The warehouse sewer project has been completed and they are now on the Town's sewer system.

Mike reported that YTD revenues are 3.3% over budget and expenses are 4% over. The HED Commissioners just approved a pilot program that is a loan where HED can be the administrator. Ratepayers can get low-rate loans for efficiency upgrades to their homes.

Mike let everyone know that HED looking into a partnership with Delorean Power on a peak shaving battery installation that can save their customers significant money with no capital expenditure.

Ceilidh asked if rates are going to increase because Nat mentioned this at the last meeting. Mike indicated that there are factors that suggest that a rate increase will be needed, but it has not been determined yet. HED has not had a rate increase since 2009. Part of the reason that rates have not increased is because there were upgrades done that decreased system losses by 10%, so they have been able to maintain at the current level. However, expenses have certainly increased across the board. At this point, they just wanted to mention that this may be coming down the pipeline but will not be until sometime in 2023.

Shari asked for an update on the EV chargers. Mike said that HED is ready to go, but the most recent discussion with Buffalo Mountain Coop was that Norwich is looking to get to the corner of the Buffalo Mountain Coop parking lot, which is not as simple as expected with needing to go under the road. Regarding the charger that is supposed to be installed at HED, they are waiting for the retaining wall to be replaced before the charger can be installed at their location.

Eric mentioned that a joint Commissioner/Select Board meeting should be scheduled soon. The last one was in February, so the next one should be in September or October. He wanted to get that on the radar to be scheduled soon.

6:51 P.M. – 6:53 P.M. Item #1 Town Clerk/Treasurer to present the annual Financial Management Questionnaire

Tonia explained a couple of new questions that were added this year and two minor changes that had been made about who does specific duties.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the annual Financial Management Questionnaire, as presented.

6:53 P.M. – 6:57 P.M. Item #2 Town Clerk/Treasurer to present the FY23 proposed tax rate

The Town Clerk/Treasurer, Tonia Chase, presented the calculations for the 22-23 municipal tax rate. The good news is that taxpayers will see a decrease in their municipal taxes. See attachments for details.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the FY23 municipal tax rate of \$1.3365.

6:57 P.M. – 6:58 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to review Coin drop requests for 2023 and make selections

Danny Hale made a motion to approve the 2023 coin drop requests as presented and it was seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane.

There was brief discussion that there is one month vacant (October 2023). It was mentioned that the Food Pantry had wanted to do a coin drop, but the new Director was not familiar with the process for requesting and asked recently about having one in 2023.

The motion was amended to include the Food Pantry for October 2023 and the others as presented. Amended motion passed unanimously.

May 2023	Hardwick Historical Society
June 2023	AWARE
July 2023	Trails
August 2023	HCTV
September 2023	NEKArts
October 2023	Hardwick Food Pantry

6:58 P.M. – 7:01 P.M. Item #4 Select to review and approve purchase of a 2022 Ford Police Interceptor for \$34,434.35 plus fit up (FY23 car purchase)

We still have the 2017 sedan that was replaced by a new Explorer a few months ago. This new purchase is supposed to replace the 2018 car. We have not been able to sell the 2017 yet. We are going to see if we can trade the 2017 towards the new Explorer and then try to sell the 2018. The plan is to not actually complete the purchase until we have sold or traded at least one of the sedans, so we can deposit that money into capital towards the new car.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of a 2022 Ford Police Interceptor for \$34,434.35 plus fit up.

7:01 P.M. – 7:02 P.M. Item #5 Select Board to consider reappointing Roger Prevot (2-year) and Michael Ambrosino (3-year) as Hardwick Electric Commissioners

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to reappoint Roger Prevot and Michael Ambrosino as Hardwick Electric Commissioners for 2-yr and 3-yr terms, respectively.

7:02 P.M. – 7:04 P.M. Item #6 Select Board to appoint Steven Mitchell III as a Hardwick Police Officer

Steve was with Hardwick PD for almost 10 years and left in early 2021. He is returning to be the Sergeant.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to appoint Steven Mitchell III as a Hardwick Police Officer.

Presenters for Items # 7 & 8 were not present yet when Item #6 was finished, so we skipped ahead to Items 9 & 10 and will come back to these later.

7:20 P.M. – 7:35 P.M. Item #7 Jessica Bickford from Healthy Lamoille Valley to discuss procedure for forming a Cannabis Control Commission

Jessica presented information about how to form a Cannabis Control Commission (CCC). Retail stores can open in October, but licenses have already started to be issued. If the Town does not choose to do this, then the decisions default to the State. The Town would not be notified when licenses were issued. She presented a two-page information sheet about this, which can be found in the attachments.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to establish a Cannabis Control Commission.

Jessica indicated that someone should reach out to the State Control Cannabis Board to let them know that the Town decided to form the CCC. At the next meeting, the plan is to provide a slate of members for the Commission to the Board.

7:35 P.M. – 8:09 P.M. Item #8 Jeudevine Library Chair Jodi Lew-Smith to discuss a bridge loan to fund the gap in the expansion project and Board to discuss allocating \$48K of ARPA to Library

Jodi gave an update on the library expansion. The bid came in higher than expected at \$3,025,000. They are hoping to get a bridge loan to be able to sign a contract with EF Wall.

See attachments for full details. Jodi expects the project to get about \$500,000 in grants, so she would like the Town to consider doing a bridge loan “in anticipation of grants.” This can be done without voter approval if the term is less than one year. Jodi indicated that they have individuals who are willing to be co-signers and take on the risk of the loan if the expected grants were to fall through. Jodi asked what the Select Board would need to feel comfortable with doing a bridge loan in anticipation of grants. Several Board members were inclined to put it out to the voters and did not feel comfortable deciding amongst themselves without consulting the voters. After discussion, the Board would like to get more information about the loan structure from the Bank and asked to have this available for the next meeting. It was mentioned that the non-profit group “Friends of the Jeudevine” could borrow the money instead of the Town.

Elizabeth Dow made a motion to allocate the remaining \$48,000 of ARPA to the Library expansion. There was not a second.

The group discussed the Library’s ARPA application and the fact that it did not receive any funding at their recent July 13 Special meeting, while most of the others did receive some or all their requests.

Ceilidh made a new motion to give \$35,000 to the library expansion, seconded by Elizabeth Dow. Motion passed by majority vote.

<i>Eric</i>	<i>aye</i>
<i>Elizabeth</i>	<i>aye</i>
<i>Shari</i>	<i>nay</i>
<i>Danny</i>	<i>nay</i>
<i>Ceilidh</i>	<i>aye</i>

7:04 P.M. - 7:05 P.M. Item #9 Select Board to consider reappointing Kate Brooke to the Development Review Board (DRB) for a 3-year term

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to reappoint Kate Brooke to the DRB for a 3-year term.

7:06 P.M. – 7:20 P.M. Item #10 Kingdom Bent, LLC to discuss the development of the Town owned Carey Rd. property

Josh Oakley and Jesse Dimick were present to discuss their vision for developing the Town owned Carey Rd. property into housing. They had a PowerPoint presentation which showed what they envision it looking like, which included a couple of different scenarios such as single-family houses, a combination of residential with a couple of commercial spaces. They are currently working with the Town of St. Johnsbury on a similar type of project for housing. At this point, they just want to know if the Town is interested in selling the property to allow this development to happen. This is in the early stages, as it would likely take at least 2 years to come to fruition. The Board asked to have it put on the next meeting agenda, so they can take additional time to review all the slides in the presentation and think about it before moving forward.

8:09 P.M. – 8:11 P.M. Item #11 Select Board to receive East Hardwick walkability audit – for discussion at a future meeting

The audit was given to the Board as a hard copy and electronically. The Planning Commission wants to come to a future meeting to discuss.

Select Board Reports: Shari let everyone know that the Chamber Players are at the Town House every Thursday night through August. Primary voting will be at the Town House on Tuesday, August 9 from 9 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

New Business: none

Old Business: Ceilidh mentioned that we should create a process for distributing the ARPA funds in terms of what the requirements will be as far as reimbursement or paying the money up front, etc. She is willing to assist with this working with the Town Manager’s office. Elizabeth would also be willing to help with this, and it was suggested that they work on this between this evening and the next meeting.

8:14 P.M. *Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 to discuss a personnel evaluation.*

8:40 P.M. Exited Executive Session. No action taken.

8:40 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