

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING  
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022  
MEMORIAL BUILDING  
20 CHURCH ST. 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

**Select Board**

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

**Others Present**

David Upson, Town Manager  
Casey Rowell, Business Manager  
Mike Henry, Police Chief  
Darcie McCann, NEK Chamber  
Jason Bahner, Recreation Coordinator

**Others Present**

Sara Behrsing  
Gary Michaels  
Ross Connelly

**Regular Meeting**

**6:02 P.M.** – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

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

**6:03 P.M. – 6:17 P.M.** Communication from the audience:

Ross Connelly came to express concerns about the Rail Trail. He does think that it is a wonderful asset to the Town; however, he is concerned about the speed limit signs posted by VAST of 35 mph. He thinks that if snowmobiles are traveling at 35 mph, it is too fast. He doesn't want to see public safety sacrificed for one group of individuals who use the trail, when there are several groups of people who use the trails.

There was discussion about these same speed signs being posted in various areas throughout the trail system. David indicated that he's been contacted by the State Safety office and there is concern about safety on the rail trail which is why they are offering law enforcement grants to purchase snowmobiles to patrol the trails and enforce the speed limits.

Ceilidh said that we might be able to ask the State about lowering the limits near the village area. She also suggested that we could use one of our portable radar signs near the Hardwick Health Center.

Eric commented that we have not had a full winter with the trail system, so it would be good to see how this first winter goes. Elizabeth agrees with Ross that 35 mph within a village is too fast.

Ross would like to see us reach out to Jackie Cassino who works for the State's Agency of Transportation with the concern. The board generally agrees that it is worth asking about.

**6:17 P.M. – 6:18 P.M.** Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of November 17, 2022

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of November 17, 2022, as written.*

**6:18 P.M. – 6:23 P.M. Town Manager’s Report – Given by David Upson**

David updated us on several items including the progress of a purchase and sales agreement for the Davis gravel pit that the Town would like to purchase, continued negotiations with the Police and Public Works Unions for new contracts and the bridge survey.

David shared that Tracy Martin (CDC) submitted the grant application for the feasibility study for moving the town garage and the fire department to Carey Road.

He reported that the downtown paving project contract is coming to end. There are several items that still need to be addressed. They are also aware of the paint at some of the crosswalks and other painted markings, which they will address in the Spring. See attachments for details.

David talked about the opioid settlement and how the funds for this can be used to revitalize the Sr. Center side of the Public Safety building space and make it a true community space.

**6:23 P.M. – 6:25 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by David Upson**

David met with Michel Renaud to look at some large roadside trees on Center Road that need to be removed. Weather depending, Michel may be able to start on some of the work next week and finish up in the Spring. Tom was involved in their discussion.

Eric asked if all the Town trucks were running and David was happy to report that as of now, yes!

**6:25 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Police Chief Mike Henry**

Mike reported that he has been working with the Business Manager on the COPS grant audit. This was a random audit for the 2017 award that we currently have, which is almost finished. There was a large amount of information that we had to provide and there is a video conference with the COPS office on December 29.

Mike shared that they are trying to sell the 2018 Taurus Interceptor. It has been advertised on Facebook marketplace, along with some accessories they no longer need (sold separately).

Mike mentioned that they have been seeing a lot of “leaving the scene of an accident” incidents. Mike also shared that the word has gotten out that they offer fingerprinting services and so they have been servicing 3-4 people/day. There is a \$25 fee for the service.

**6:30 P.M. – 6:33 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to consider dissolving the Downtown Commission since the Hardwick Downtown Partnership has now been officially formed**

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously to dissolve the Hardwick Downtown Commission.*

Before moving on to the next item, Darcie McCann joined the meeting a little while ago and the Chair deferred to her as she was not here during the communication from the audience section of the meeting. Darcie is from Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce and just came to introduce herself as they have been the Chamber representing us for the last 1.5 years since the Heart of VT Chamber dissolved.

**6:33 P.M. – 6:38 P.M.** Item #2 Select Board to discuss and approve the purchase of network hardware for the Town of Hardwick's enhanced security features

David shared that he obtained 3 different quotes for the hardware that we need. He will have an installer come for an in-person assessment so the cost may decrease because there are some parts that were estimated as needing several and we may not need as many as provided in the quote. Quotes are in the attachments.

Ceilidh asked if this would cover all departments. David said yes; it includes the Memorial building, Library, Police Department, Highway garage and Wastewater plant.

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of network hardware for the Town of Hardwick's enhanced security features not to exceed \$14,000.*

**6:38 P.M. – 7:25 P.M.** Item #3 Business Manager to present draft budgets of Police, Revenue, and Buildings ~~Trails and~~ Recreation Committee to present their budgets

Trails will be presenting at the next meeting instead of this evening.

Jason Bahner, Recreation Coordinator was present to discuss the Recreation budget. They are asking for an additional \$2,000, specifically for community programming line. They had a very successful soccer youth clinic and feel that if they have funds to pay people stipends, they will draw more people in and be able to offer more of this type of event.

The discussion about buildings was the increase in heating fuel oil costs. Eric suggests that we keep an eye on the market over the next month or so before the final budget is approved. The biggest driving factor in the buildings increase is heating oil for the buildings.

For the police budget, it has the least increase of all departments with a proposed increase of 1.88%. There was talk about the staffing levels. This budget shows four full-time and a chief, as well as four part-time at 900 hours/year each. This is the same level of current staffing.

There was discussion about the fireworks, which are a \$6,000 expense (minimum show) and then we ask for donations. The group consensus was that we should remove the fireworks line item and the revenue of donations and then have Recreation use some of their community programming line towards the Spring Fest.

The group talked about how the Town is very fortunate to have a healthy fund balance, which will help us in the current fiscal year and in the next couple of years, including this budget. At the next meeting, we will go over library and trails, the last two departments that have not been covered yet and then recap the entire budget. Between now and the next meeting, if any new information comes in about actual costs, Casey will update the budget accordingly. See attachments for the draft budgets.

Danny asked about the library construction project. Jodi will be here next month to give an update to the Board when they present their proposed FY24 regular library budget.

### **Select Board Reports:**

Eric mentioned that the Yellow Barn project bid due date was extended to December 15. They are exploring the concept of doing a construction management style to attract bidders.

Shari reported that the Downtown Commission dissolved but all the same people are a part of the Hardwick Downtown Partnership, plus one additional member.

**New Business:** Casey mentioned that the Board needs to be thinking about a dedication and cover photo for the Town report and we should discuss at the next meeting.

**Old Business:** Shari suggested a page in the Town report with a job description for the various roles in Town Select Board, Planning Commission, etc. Town Meeting will be in person this year.

**7:33 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