

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2023
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, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman
Michael Henry, Police Chief – *Zoom*

Others Present

Coco Holton - *Zoom*
Tracy Martin - *Zoom*
Dean Mercier
Nancy Kellogg
Zarina Castro

Regular Meeting

6:08 P.M. – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:09 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Remove Item 3 and move other items up in order accordingly.

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

6:10 P.M. – Communication from the audience – Zarina Castro came to discuss electric charging stations within Hardwick. She has an electric car and would like to see the Town be more proactive about getting more charging stations. Ceilidh indicated that HED gives regular updates on charging stations. They are working on a station behind their building. Zarina expressed concern about the fees that the charging station at Lamoille Valley Ford charges. The Town does not have anything to do with any of the existing charging stations in Town, including that one, and they are not involved with the rate setting. Nancy Kellogg shared her experience with lack of chargers when her son visited from out of state and couldn't find a fast charger at a reasonable rate.

David mentioned that the demand fees for the fast chargers drives the cost of the stations up. It was suggested that these ladies go to the HED Commissioner meeting and discuss their concerns with them.

6:18 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of December 15, 2022

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of December 15, 2022, as written.

6:19 P.M. – 6:29 P.M. Town Manager's Report – Given by David Upson

David updated the group on various items including the union contract negotiations, the pedestrian bridge progress, the wastewater plant project, and the Town's updated common level of appraisal (CLA). David explained the Lead Survey Inventory for water connections that is required to be completed by October 2024. We need to inventory the type of pipe from every water connection to the meter. We actually have a lot of the information from the meter installations and the mapping that was done in 2016. See attachments for the full report.

6:29 P.M. – 6:31 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that there are a few potholes, but the roads are holding up okay overall. They plan to haul gravel Monday and Tuesday next week, weather permitting, and patch up some of the potholes.

Tom also reported that the F-550 has been down for 3 weeks. Truck #4 was down for a week or so during the storm but is fixed now. Truck #2 also had a leak but has since been repaired. The Toolcat and snowblower also had issues, which have been resolved. They also worked on a couple of sewer issues and a pumphouse issue on Glenside.

6:31 P.M. – 6:34 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report - Given by Chief Michael Henry

Mike reported that the COPS Grant Audit was completed on December 29. It went well. He worked with the Business Manager to complete it.

Mike indicated that they are continuing to see many cases of people leaving the scene of accidents (LSA). The department has stepped up their DUI Enforcement using the State Highway Safety Office grant funds. Officer Force is heading up the DUI efforts and doing a great job at getting impaired drivers off the road.

Mike shared that Hardwick Police will be doing snowmobile patrols once we get snow. They have two snowmobiles coming from Buffalo Mountain Powersports soon. Speed patrols will be done on the rail trail. There will be training this month for the snowmobiles.

6:34 P.M. – 6:43 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to discuss new developments in potential sale of property we acquired via tax collector's deed on Caspian Avenue

Kristina Michelsen, Dean and Kelley Mercier's attorney, reached out to David via email to see if the Town would accept less money than the purchase and sales contract because she can't provide title insurance or clear title. She asked if we would accept just what the Town has into the property, instead of the \$15,000 that was originally agreed upon. The consensus was that a reduced price will not change the title issues. The Town needs to consult their attorney about how to provide a clear title to transfer the property. This was tabled until the Town can talk with their attorney about how to clear up the title so it can be transferred to the Mercier's.

6:43 P.M. – 6:45 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to consider approving a cannabis cultivator license for Vtegridy Farms

The zoning permit has already been approved.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the cannabis cultivator license for Vtegridy Farms.

6:45 P.M. – 7:09 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to discuss bridge summary document and approve Pedestrian Bridge design characteristics & features

SE Group, the design architect for the pedestrian bridge replacement, provided ahead of time, a summary document about the bridge design options, costs, public engagement process, etc. The Select Board needs to review this and make some decisions about what design and features the bridge will have to move forward.

Option 1 was the one that was the most popular in the public survey and also happened to be the least expensive.

The choices that the Board agreed on were as follows:

Bridge Structure: H-Section

Deck Width: 8'

Decking Material: Black Locust (sourced locally if possible)

Finish: Painted & Galvanized (color TBD)

Railings: Contech vertical picket railings

Lighting: Point Lights under handrail

SE Group's estimate is \$1,049,310 which includes some options that we are not going with, which were more costly. David thinks it will be less than that as this is a high-level estimate. We currently have \$620,000 of funds for the project and will be applying for a \$200,000 Downtown Transportation grant, which would bring us up to \$820,000. There is also a 10% contingency in their figure of \$1.049M.

Ceilidh said it would be great to take pieces of the old bridge in the proposed park. David indicated that because it is historic, we will need to do something along those lines to commemorate the old bridge.

See attachments for the summary document. Due to the file size of the presentation, only the most pertinent pages that were discussed will be in the attachments. If you wish to see the full presentation, please contact the Town Manager's office.

7:09 P.M. – 7:11 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to review and authorize a Municipal Resolution for a Downtown Transportation Fund grant for the pedestrian bridge

Community Development Coordinator, Tracy Martin, is working on an application for a Downtown Transportation Fund grant for the pedestrian bridge. She needs the Board to complete a resolution to apply. We are applying for \$200,000.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to authorize the Municipal Resolution for a Downtown Transportation Fund grant for the pedestrian bridge.

7:11 P.M. – 7:13 P.M. Item #5 Select Board to discuss time and date of public hearing about gravel pit Bond [hearing needs to be between 2/28 & 3/6 – warn in newspaper 2/16]

The hearing needs to be within 10 days of Town meeting. It was decided to combine the hearing with the Pre-Town meeting that we usually do about the budget. It will be at 5:30 on March 2 before the regular Select Board meeting.

7:13 P.M. – 7:57 P.M. Item #6 Recap of entire FY24 Draft budget – given by Business Manager Casey Rowell

The Business Manager shared the most recent draft of the FY24 budget. Topics of discussion included the increased request from the Town cemeteries, and using the remaining uncommitted ARPA funds as one-time revenue. The group also discussed the capital budget for sidewalks and guard rails and a specific improvement

line for East Hardwick village. It was decided that a separate line for East Hardwick was not necessary as long as the sidewalks and other improvements are included in the Town's schedule. The Town is in the process of creating a sidewalk replacement schedule. See attachments for the detailed drafts.

There was discussion about the health officer position, the duties and skills needed, as well as stipend. It was decided that for now, we would leave it as is and decide at the next meeting if the stipend should increase.

Select Board Reports: Danny reported that the black bridge on the LVRT is almost complete. Danny mentioned that he has seen many dogs unleashed on the trail. He wanted to point out that it is very important that people have their dogs on leashes. They are passing by homes that may have other dogs, as well as consideration for other trail users.

Old Business: Ceilidh asked about receiving HED manager reports that are given to the commissioners at their meetings. It was mentioned at a prior meeting from a commissioner that the Select Board could get copies of those reports. She would like us to follow up with HED about getting these reports prior to their visits so they can ask questions. Shari asked if there is still work being done on a policy for selling Town properties. Danny felt that a policy would be difficult since they are usually on a case-by-case basis. It was decided that it would be good to have the statutes handy for a starting point, since a policy hasn't been established.

New Business: None

8:08 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