

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, August 3, 2023
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman

Others Present

Bill Chidsey
Jodi Lew- Smith

Regular Meeting

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

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add item #4: Select Board to support the NEKarts grant application for additional grant resources for the Town House Egress & Accessibility Project. Add item #5 Select Board to adopt a Thank You Resolution regarding the July 2023 Flood.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the adjusted agenda as stated.

6:01 P.M. – Communication from the audience- Bill Chidsey reported that the bridge behind his house on the Rail Trail was damaged due to the flood and is very unstable. He has talked to FEMA, and a Geological Surveyor has been out to look at the bridge. It is currently closed; however, he’s seen the public try to still go on it. This is a public safety concern. David agreed to talk to the Rail Trail to see what more could be done to protect the public.

6:05 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of July 19, 2023, the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of July 20, 2023, and the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of July 28, 2023

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of June 20, 2023, and the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of July 19, 2023, and the Special Select Board meeting minutes of July 28, 2023.

6:05 P.M. – 6:16 P.M. Town Manager Report- Given by David Upson Jr.

David has been working diligently on gathering flood information and trying to solve the concerns that have been raised. One issue that he has been working on is the landslide that occurred on School Street in East Hardwick. A Geotechnical Engineer Assistant visited the location and is currently working to put a report together. Repairing this issue is likely to be very costly, so the Town might have to change the direction of the road or find another right of way. Danny mentioned that there are properties and buildings that could be removed in order to relocate the road. This is a further discussion once the report is completed.

While working with residents and FEMA, there have been six potential properties identified for buyout by FEMA, but the buyout has not happened yet. This is due to the significant damage that the property sustained.

This ultimately means those six properties will no longer be on the grand list once the buyout happens. David is also working with residents and with FEMA on options to take care of the debris. Currently, there are local organizations that are donating money and time to help residents out. One great partnership that the Town has had is with the Civic Standard. The Town cannot thank them enough! FEMA will be at the Farmer's Market on Friday, August 4, 2023, at Atkins to answer any questions that residents may have.

Next, at the July 19, 2023, special Select Board meeting, Michael Demers mentioned the fact that the road that his business is on was destroyed due to the flood. He asked for some assistance. David reported that the Town hired a contractor to fix the road, and it is now complete.

Lastly, David mentioned that the resident that owns land adjacent to the West Hill Cemetery is trying to put the land into a conservation trust and needs to quit claim some of the property, mostly, the cemetery to the Town of Hardwick. Elizabeth Dow is working on this.

Eric asked to clarify the FEMA portal and what they determine is a project. David mentioned that if there are issues that are near each other and can be fixed together, then it will be categorized as a project. However, if for example an issue is on Mackville Rd. and another issue is on Hardwick Farms Rd., then those two areas cannot be categorized together due to the distance, even though they may or may not be fixed the same day.

6:17 P.M. – 6:25 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that the crew managed to get Tucker Brook Road opened. The crew is still working on ditch work and culvert work on that road, but it is passable.

Fisher Folley's Bridge will be getting a temporary bridge; however, it is still yet to be determined if the Town will be putting this together, or if it will be contracted out.

Tom reported that so far, the crew has hauled about 7,500 yards of gravel, 600 yards of stone, and has brought in 230 culverts.

The plan next week is to continue to work on roads that still have flood damage on them, and then to go around to all the roads to grade and make them in better condition. Elizabeth asked about Carey Road. Tom stated that Carey Road will likely be closed for the remainder of the year because the box culvert is undermined. The state is going to look at it soon and determine options on how the Town should proceed, but for now the road is closed. Ceilidh stated that there are visibility issues on Hardwick Farms Road. Tom and David will look into this. Additionally, Tom reported that the paved roads that had damage on them that now have dirt patched on them, will be paved soon.

The crew has done a phenomenal job handling the flood event, and the Town of Hardwick can't thank them enough!

6:25 P.M. – 6:27 P.M. Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Report – Given by David Upson Jr.

David reported that the Hardwick Police Department has been busy fielding calls. He also reported that there have been complaints about speeding. One area is East Church Street in East Hardwick. David wanted to remind drivers that East Church Street is a 25-mph zone.

The cruiser that was damaged during the flood has been repaired and will be back at the station within the next few days.

6:27 P.M. – 6:38 P.M. Item #1 Jeudevine Library representatives to give update on the expansion project.

Jodi Lew-Smith reported that the library hired ReArch as their contractor in April, and they began construction at the beginning of May. However, after the project began, the contractors started to hit ground water. They used several sump pumps to try and help the situation. Unfortunately, the water was not subsiding, and the soil was very soft. They stopped the construction, and the Library had to decide how to proceed. One option was to redesign the building. Other options that the library investigated would have cost an additional \$100,000 to \$150,000, which wasn't feasible. After seeking out many options, the library board agreed to redesign the building and raise the lower level. This is the most cost-effective way; however, they are still looking into how to properly & carefully raise the foundation, and what to do about an elevator. The next step for the library is to get things priced out and proceed with a change order. The hope is that the contractor will start again in the next couple of weeks. Additionally, Jodi reported that the stained-glass windows are being repaired.

David reported that the Town has a Neighbor-to-Neighbor organization and there's a hotline in which rings into the library. The library staff has done a great job fielding all the calls.

6:38 P.M. – 6:41 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to adopt the VCDP Municipal Policies and Codes for the Library Accessibility grant.

Upon motion by Danny Hale seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve and adopt the VCDP Municipal Policies and Codes for the Library and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the grant agreement.

6:41 P.M. – 6:45 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to authorize the purchase of a new truck to replace the Dodge Ram destroyed in the flood not to exceed \$40,500.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve purchasing a new truck to replace the Dodge Ram that was destroyed in the flood; to not exceed \$40,500.

6:45 P.M. – 6:47 P.M Item #4: Select Board to support the NEKarts grant application for additional grant resources for the Town House Egress & Accessibility Project

Shari mentioned this is up to a \$50,000 grant.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to support the NEKarts grant application for additional grant for the Town House Egress & Accessibility Project. Shari Cornish abstained.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to authorize the Town Manager to write a letter of support on behalf of the Town of Hardwick in support of this grant.

6:47 P.M. – 6:52 P.M Item #5: Select Board to adopt a Thank You Resolution regarding the July 2023 Flood.

See the attached resolution for full detail. During this flood event, everyone came together, and the Town of Hardwick appreciates the enormous efforts to help and support one another.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the Resolution regarding the July 2023 flood.

Select Board Reports:

- Shari reported that the LVRT regional amenities scoping study meeting was held at the Town House on August 2, 2023. There was a good turn out, and the new designs are on the NVDA’s website, which is: <https://www.nvda.net/lvrt.php>. There was discussion that the Rail Trail from St Johnsbury to Danville should be opening back up soon; however, the rest of the trail will take some work. Within the next week, they are hoping to have a plan in place as to when it might reopen back up.
- Shari reported that the Craftsbury Chamber players play at the Town House every Thursday night at 7:30 P.M. until August 17, 2023. She also mentioned that Halcyon Chorale will be performing at the Town House August 6, 2023, at 7:00 P.M.
- Eric reported that he has been in communication with Ron Weisen about Jackson Dam. The Conservation Commission and Hardwick Electric have been looking into a study on whether it’s effective to have the dam there.

New Business:

- Shari requested that the Select Board look further into the Traffic Ordinance to better maintain, control & enforce the parking violations on Main Street.

Old Business:

- Danny requested that the Town continue to seek options on how to cut back trees and make it safer for travel. The Select Board discussed hiring this out or writing a memo and giving landowners time before the Town cuts trees. This will need to be a future discussion.

7:17 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