

MINUTES SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING
8:00 A.M. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2023
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3rd FLOOR

Select Board

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

Others Present

Casey Rowell, Business Manager
David Upson, Town Manager
Mike Henry, Police Chief

Others Present

Special Meeting

8:02 A.M. – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

8:02 A.M. Set/adjust agenda - *none*

8:02 A.M. Communication from the audience – *none*

8:02 A.M. – 8:07 A.M. Item #1 Select Board to review and select a Contractor for the Fisher Folly temporary bridge placement

Danny indicated that he has experience with several of the contractors that submitted bids. Austin Construction is a well-known family company that he is familiar with, and they are certainly qualified to do the work. They do happen to be the lowest bidder as well. David mentioned that he does not want to take the abutments out right now. This is just a temporary bridge, and the abutments should be addressed in a permanent fix.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to have Austin Construction do the Fisher Folly temporary bridge placement.

Danny exited the meeting.

8:07 A.M. – 8:19 A.M. Item #2 Business Manager to review the cost for a new police officer to replace the one that just left

Casey and Mike talked about the costs associated with a new officer compared to the officer that just left. The new officer is a Level III certified with 25 years of experience. The officer who left was Level II certified. Basically, with salary and benefits, the increased cost is estimated to be about \$30,000. However, possible additional revenues and grants can help to offset the increased costs. Qualified law enforcement officers are hard to come by these days. The board generally agreed that this doesn't change their mind about moving forward with the new hire.

David mentioned that he hopes that the Town will be able to get to a point where they can provide police services to other towns and those towns would share in the costs of running the police department.

Mike reported that they are minimally staffed and are relying on our part-time officers who are retired officers.

These officers come with a great deal of experience and the mindset that the Town wants to see for our community, so that has been very positive for the department.

Elizabeth asked if community policing is being taught at the Police Academy. The answer is yes. Mike feels we have the environment here to truly demonstrate that. He used Vermont State Police as an example where they are jumping all around to different communities, but here officers can get to know people in the community. David talked about community policing in general and how Mike continues to work on building a team that is community focused.

8:19 A.M. – 8:26 A.M. Item #3 Discussion about the upcoming community discussion on crime being held at the Hardwick Town House

Eric explained that there is a community meeting that is going to be held at the Hardwick Town House on August 31 from 7-8:30 p.m. The event is being organized by Kate Scarlott after she heard about a crime and posted about it on Front Porch Forum, which seemed to get a lot of interest and reaction. Other communities have been invited to attend as well. There will be a moderator at the event and the intent is to discuss drug related crime in Hardwick and other local communities.

Ceilidh exited the meeting.

David said this kind of effort from a community member is exactly what we need. It helps to bring awareness to society's problems and people offering solutions is key to a successful community.

David and Eric are both planning to attend to listen. It was asked if HCTV was going to be there. Shari will ask Kate. This is not a Town event, so it would be up to the organizer to facilitate that.

Select Board Reports: Shari reported that the Downtown Partnership is working on an application to the Downtown Vibrancy Fund for \$25,000. This is funded by the State for the downtown organizations. It would allow the Downtown Partnership to hire for a part-time position.

Eric reported that the Yellow Barn construction continues despite several obstacles.

Old Business: Shari is working on a wish list of signage to help with parking on Main Street. There was a brief discussion about the no parking section of Main Street in front of Front Seat and Positive Pie. People are ignoring the no parking signs. Mike and David will touch base with those businesses so they can let their patrons know that the Town is going to be more diligent about enforcing those areas.

New Business: Shari mentioned that Jimmy Goldsmith is putting the bank building and the Brochu garage on the market and is not going to continue his projects that were planned for those locations.

8:34 A.M. Eric Remick, Select Board Chair adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: _____
Casey Rowell, Business Manager

Minutes approved by: _____
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair