

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, October 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- *absent*

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman

Others Present

Monica Myles
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 authorize the Town Manager to sign the SE Group proposal to complete Phase II of the Pedestrian Bridge and Park Project. Select Board also wanted to add an Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 for a personnel matter to include the Town Manager

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to adjust the agenda as stated.

6:03 P.M. – Communication from the audience – Monica Myles, Public Affairs Specialist with the Small Business Administration (SBA) announced that everyone that was affected from the July 2023 flood can still apply for an SBA loan with a low interest rate. The deadline for individual applicants to apply is Thursday October 12, 2023, and businesses have until Spring 2024. There will not be a fee to apply and if applicants apply, but later decide they don't want the loan, they can cancel as long as it's before the official signature of the loan closing date. The SBA may ask for further information if the loan is over \$25,000, such as collateral, but this won't affect the determination of the loan. The interest of this loan doesn't start for one year after the closing. If there are questions, or to apply, please call 1-800-659-2955.

6:10 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the regular Select Board meeting of September 21, 2023

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular Select Board meeting of September 21, 2023, as written.

6:10 P.M. – 6:16 P.M. Library Trustee Report- Given by Jodi Lew-Smith

Jodi Lew-Smith, Chair of the Library Trustee Board, reported that the construction restart date will be October 16, 2023. The library had to amend the design due to the ground being too wet, and not allowing the previous design to work. Instead of adding onto the side of the existing building, the library has decided to raise the existing building and build an addition on the bottom. The library is still working on getting the final numbers for the redesign, but the predicted cost is between \$200,000 and \$400,000. The library continues to talk to funders about helping with the additional costs. The estimated completion date currently is August 2024.

****** After the minutes were approved, it was brought to the Town Manager's attention that some of the Library

information within the October 5 meeting minutes were incorrect. There was a misunderstanding, and the below amendment will hopefully clarify the confusion.

*The Library is not going to lift the existing building and add to the bottom. They are still planning to build the addition to the side, but the redesign includes lifting the addition up higher than planned so that there won't be water issues affecting the building. ***

6:16 P.M. – 6:22 P.M. Town Manager Report- Given by David Upson Jr.

David reported that the state took on a project to inspect sewer lines within the Towns that were affected by the flood. They have recently started inspecting and cleaning the sewer lines in the Town of Hardwick. Please be aware that there might be temporary bubbling within your pipes. This will go away. The cost of this project will not affect the taxpayers.

The data from the State is starting to come back regarding how much the Sewer Plant was affected by the flood. The damage is greater than 50%, however, the Town is making sure the operation of the plant is up and running. The Town needs to decide how to move forward to protect the property from future disasters.

David met with FEMA's grant manager on October 4, 2023, and the disaster inventory was discussed, and the Town should be seeing reimbursements start to trickle in. Hardwick has spent \$460,000 on flood-related funds. The items that have not yet been expensed are equipment, material, and the overtime, however, this is being worked on. Eric mentioned that even though the projects are still not 100% completed, the Town has been in good financial standing to open roads up and make sure things keep moving forward.

6:22 P.M. – 6:27 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that all of the roads are now back open, and those areas that were previously paved but were damaged by the flood have now been paved or patched up. Hardwick Farms will soon be getting a temporary bridge in which the Town of Hardwick crew will install. Lastly, Tom stated that jersey barriers have been ordered to keep the bridge in East Hardwick closed. The Town needs to decide on the best approach to fix this and prevent it affecting the river.

6:27 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Hardwick Police Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike reported that the Police Department will be doing a program at Hazen Union High School, in which individuals can go get fingerprinted in order to volunteer with the school district. This will be held on October 10, 2023, from 5pm to 6:30pm.

6:30 P.M. – 6:51 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to discuss Downtown Parking

Shari mentioned that the Planning Commission recommends that the Town paint the curb yellow in the intersection next to the "No Parking" area near Front Seat Coffee, to make it easier for people to see when we have snow on the pavement. It was further recommended that the handicap spot near the Flower Basket be changed to a 15-minute loading and unloading spot. There was further discussion about the direction handicap signs were supposed to face. Mike suggested that the Town shift the handicap spot-forward to allow for larger trucks. Elizabeth asked if there was enough room for larger delivery trucks to park where the current handicap spot is. Right now, the Town would have to eliminate another parking spot for the delivery trucks to park properly without affecting the crosswalk. Mike also stated that the handicap signs should be at a 45-degree angle, however, this is still being looked into since the rule seems to vary by agency.

Ceilidh mentioned that realistically there's two issues that the Town is working on the parking and the enforcement. Mike stated that currently the Police Department could enforce parking, however, it would have to be periodically. Eric mentioned that in the past there's been an animal control officer who has also enforced the parking issues.

After some discussion, it's determined that there's plenty of parking within Town, however, delivery trucks need to park close to businesses, and parking needs to go the correct way for safety concerns. The Select Board has asked the Town Crew to paint the "no parking in intersection area" yellow, and to order loading/unloading 15-minute signs. This topic will be revisited in the Spring.

6:52 P.M. – 6:53 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to sign Downtown Vibrancy Fund Letter of Attestation

Shari explained that this is a new grant program for all of the designated downtowns in VT. It's a \$25,000 grant from the Agency of Commerce & Community Development that supports the Hardwick Downtown Partnership. The plan is to use the grant money to hire a Part-Time Executive Director for the downtown organization.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the Downtown Vibrancy Fund Letter of Attestation.

6:53 P.M. – 7:01 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to review and authorize the Town Manager to sign the payment agreement with Casella for the removal of the contaminated soil at the Yellow Barn site

Eric reported that the Yellow Barn was recently lifted and there was a new foundation that was put in place. The barn has now been placed back down and everything is looking great. However, the Accelerator building is being delayed, due to the soil. The soil had to be tested and the test came back saying the soil was contaminated. This caused a change in the direction of disposing of the soil, however, the CVSWMD agreed to charge only the administrative fee of \$7.50 per ton rather than the \$30 per ton that they have in their charter will save over \$125,000 of the project funds. The Yellow Barn project and the Town need to move forward in removing the soil to get the footings completed before winter. Currently there are grants that the project is applying for, however, the Town is currently covering the costs of the removal in order to move forward. If the grant is awarded, the grants will reimburse the accrual cost. If the grant is not awarded, then the Yellow Barn project will make changes so that they can reimburse the Town for the accrual cost of the soil removal.

Upon motion by Elizabeth Dow, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted unanimously to authorize the Town Manager to sign the agreement with Casella, the Solid Waste Management District, and any further related documents to move forward with the contaminated soil. Eric abstained from voting.

7:01 P.M. – 7:10 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to authorize the Town Manager to sign the SE Group proposal to complete Phase II of the Pedestrian Bridge and Park Project

The Select Board previously discussed the draft, but the existing conditions have changed in the past couple of months. This is the next step in order to move forward to gather bids for the project. The bridge is expected to be completed by the end of 2024. The current proposal is \$94,000 for the bridge and \$45,000 for the park. SE Group is working with Bridge Brothers for the engineering of the bridge. Currently, the timeline is that the permitting will be finalized in June of 2024, the bridge will be delivered in September, and the placement will be finalized between October and November of 2024.

Elizabeth asked if the flood in July affected the project. The flood unfortunately created new conditions as it affected the retaining wall near the bridge which is tied into the abutments of the bridge. The retaining wall will

