

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2024
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Erik Josephson - *Zoom*

Others Present

Bill Chidsey
Ann Gilcris

Regular Meeting

6:01 P.M. – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:01 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add an Item #6 to authorize the Town Manager to enter into an engineering services agreement for the wastewater plant relocation study.

Ceilidh asked about the EWP grant to repair riverbank damage on three properties that was discussed at the last meeting and if we needed to discuss that tonight. We do not need to decide tonight. We have until the end of February. David is currently researching options for a match. Danny is not in favor of providing the match from taxpayer dollars for three certain properties.

We also need to add an Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 for a personnel matter to include the Town Manager and Police Chief.

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

6:06 P.M. – Communication from the audience – Bill Chidsey came to share some information about one of the properties that had erosion from the flood. The -property is on the EWP list for repairs. He wants to see the Town participate in the NRCS program to repair the three properties.

Ann Gilcris lives near the Haynesville Brook. She is not able to get assistance from FEMA because they do not help with repairs to property, only buildings. She is concerned about ice jams in the spring. She wants to stay there but does not have the means to do it on her own. David mentioned CURVE, which is a long-term recovery group – NEKHS is their fiscal agent. David is not sure how much of a source they have for flood recovery. As he mentioned earlier, we are actively looking for match funds, so we can sponsor the project to repair the riverbanks.

6:16 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of January 10, 2024

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of January 10, 2024.

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

David shared that Kristen worked diligently to secure an appraiser for the state buyout properties. The appraisals are in process now.

David mentioned that he had a meeting with the State and the recovery person assigned to us. The goal is to organize our disaster and damage inventory plan to get out RFP's out for recovery efforts. State and federal agencies are teaming up to fund the wastewater plants that were damaged in the flood (Hardwick, Johnson, and Ludlow). As of now, they are tossing around a lot of strategies for the recovery efforts. He also mentioned that we were assigned a new PDMG from FEMA.

David has been going to bat for the Town recently. He spoke at two senate hearings last week, one about government operations and the other about economic development. He let them know what we needed, including hazard mitigation for homeowners and a solution for our wastewater plant. David is advocating for funding for a temporary civil engineer position to help us get through recovery and ongoing projects.

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

The crew has been plowing. They also fixed a significant water leak in town today. They opened up the sidewalks in East Hardwick.

6:25 P.M. – 6:43 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report – Given by Michael Henry

Mike handed out the annual report he did for the Town report, which had data about top arrests, traffic crashes, etc. He shared that mental health calls have increased. They are fortunate to have an embedded mental health worker close by. Her name is Alex Jum and she recently moved from the Hardwick Inn to the Sr. Ctr. She is also doing critical incident debriefing, which is helpful to the police department.

Danny asked about snowmobile patrol this year. Yes, we will be doing some, but staff is limited. They are mostly doing inspections. This is fully funded by VAST. One of the snowmachines is in the shop being fixed.

Mike talked about the radar signs. We currently have three battery operated ones and two solar ones. Unfortunately, the solar ones are not working right now and the one on Mill St. has been out of service for a long time. The key is connecting with a technician on a sunny day, which has proved to be difficult lately. Elizabeth asked if we could put one of the radar signs on the snowmobile trail. Yes, we could. There was brief discussion about a couple of possible locations close to Town.

Elizabeth asked how Hardwick compares to other departments of similar size in terms of the data that Mike presented. People come to us being the only department in this area. An example is that fingerprint services have more than doubled.

Danny brought up how he sees likely drug activity going on in the community in broad daylight, a pattern of out of state cars going to the same houses and it is pretty obvious what is going on. Mike said that it is helpful for the PD to just know what people are seeing so they can log incidents, even if no response is warranted. Plate numbers are helpful. Data can be shared with other agencies for trends. David mentioned that the monthly public safety discussion is next Monday at Hazen and encouraged Danny to attend.

Getting back to the report that Mike handed out, Ceilidh asked about the number of arrests increasing 60+% year over year. A lot of the arrests are for in state warrants. Danny commended the PD for doing their job in catching these people. Mike indicated that traffic crashes were down in the data. The police department is out there doing

motor vehicle enforcement. More visibility and presence by the police department reduces crashes. Leaving the scene of a crash incidents were half of what they were the year before.

Ceilidh mentioned that social media engagement with PD has been good.

Mike Sullivan was not present so there was no Hardwick Electric report this evening.

6:44 P.M. – 6:45 P.M. Item #1 Town Clerk/Treasurer, Tonia Chase, to present liquor licenses for approval –
Action needed

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the following liquor and tobacco licenses:

First Class license for:

The Cork & Fork LLC

Hardwick Post No. 7 American Legion Inc.

Second Class Licenses for:

Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC

Third Class Licenses for:

The Cork & Fork LLC

Hardwick Post No. 7 American Legion Inc.

Outside Consumption Permit for:

Hardwick Post No. 7 American Legion Inc.

Tobacco License:

Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC

6:45 P.M. – 6:48 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to review and consider approving the 2024 Town Meeting warning
– *Action needed*

Ceilidh asked about posting information about the available positions on Front Porch Forum to get the word out about the positions that are available. David has several public engagement sessions at the Legion coming up in February.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the 2024 Town Meeting warning, as presented.

6:48 P.M. – 6:50P.M. Item #3 Select Board to certify annual highway mileage for highway state aid – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to certify the annual highway mileage for highway state aid.

6:50 P.M. – 6:52 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to review the Step 1 Clean Water Loan (Planning & Feasibility) application for relocation of the wastewater plant (forgivable loan) and sign it – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve and sign the Step 1 Clean Water Loan (Planning & Feasibility) application for relocation of the wastewater plant.

6:52 P.M. – 6:55 P.M. Item #5 Select Board to review and approve bid to remove the East Main Street Bridge – *Action needed*

We received three bids:

J.P. Sicard - \$112,178

Winterset - \$145,000

Austin Construction - \$195,000

Danny made a motion, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, to award the bid to J.P. Sicard in the amount of \$112,178. Motion passed unanimously.

6:55 P.M. – 6:57 P.M. Item # 6 Select to authorize the Town Manager to enter into an engineering services agreement for the wastewater plant relocation study.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to authorize the Town Manager to enter into an engineering services agreement for the wastewater plant relocation study.

Select Board Reports:

Eric said that there is great skiing at the Hardwick trails and Danny said that snowmobiling season is here as well. Enjoy the winter weather!

Old Business: Danny brought up the selling town property procedure that has been discussed in the past. We have a specific way that we need to sell property by statute, but Shari has wanted to see us come up with a policy or procedures related to selling town property. Danny feels there is nothing to discuss until there is an offer on the table. Danny said that no one had come to us with an offer. We need a proposal in order to discuss the sale, but we do not have any active offers and we have not listed the property.

7:03 P.M. *Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, voted to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 for a personnel matter to include the Town Manager and Police Chief.*

7:45 P.M. Exited Executive Session. *No action taken.*

7:45 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