

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager – *Zoom*
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Erik Josephson – *Zoom*
Bill Chidsey

Others Present

Regular Meeting

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

6:01 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda

6:01 P.M. – Communication from the audience – none

6:01 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of January 18, 2024

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Elizabeth Dow, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of January 18, 2024, with one change to fix Alex Jump's last name (the p was left off).

6:02 P.M. – 6:09 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David mentioned that he had a meeting today with some potential funders about moving the fire station. They provided some guidance on how to proceed. Similar to WW plant, they said to let FEMA do their thing and that money that we get back to fix fire station we can hold and use for a potential move. David wants to discuss with our PDMG at FEMA because he was under the impression that we had to spend the money first to get it back. He shared that we had our first debris project obligated, so we should be starting to see some funds for that soon. The temp bridge projects are also getting close to being obligated. He just has to submit the permits to FEMA.

David mentioned that he and Eric attended a meeting with the NRCS about the EWP program, which he will update us on in Item #1. He also shared that he has received an assessment from Matt on the parking lot near the Clip Joint that was talked about in earlier meetings this year. He just got it before the meeting, so he will share it at the next meeting.

In regard to the fire station, he has talked to the USDA about Community Facilities Grants. They think that there is going to be a disaster supplement coming out. This would be beneficial to the Town. Eric asked about MTAP funds. This would be for moving the fire station. David explained that “substantial damage” is what will determine if it can be relocated. 51% is the number that would be needed to make this determination.

David went to a Hardwick Rescue Squad meeting on Monday. They do not really want to put their building in our space, but want to be involved in the planning of the overall campus that might happen on Creamery Rd.

6:09 P.M. – 6:11 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by David Upson

David mentioned the crew caught up on some maintenance. There was an electrical issue on Tom's truck that has been fixed. Edward has been down at the plant. A guy from Caterpillar came and looked at the generator in the basement of the plant that was flooded. He said that they could take the generator head off and clean it, etc. for about \$30,000. We have talked about a portable generator. As of now, there is no automatic backup power for the plant. David reported they fixed a water leak down by Buffalo Street.

6:11 P.M. – 6:25 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report – Given by Michael Henry

Mike reported that the snowmobile that was in the shop is back, but now the trails are not in good condition for patrolling. He shared that they took Elizabeth's suggestion and put up a speed sign on the trail coming into town. Mike has had two interviews with prospects for new officers. The next full-time academy is in August. He is looking at having them do the part-time academy instead, which starts in March. The plan would be to put them through the part-time academy and work them through field training process.

Eric asked about the budget ramifications. We have two open part-time and one full-time, so these two will fit into that. The downside is that they will be on the payroll before they can be fully utilized on their own. We don't pay a fee for the actual academy, but we pay the officer's salary while they are in the academy.

Mike would like to have the Select Board's approval to give them the salary of a part-time trainee while they are in the part-time program. The good thing about doing it this way is that we will be able to gauge their performance prior to putting them through the full-time academy. We still have to go through the polygraph, background check and physical tests before they would be hired. The Board gave their approval without a formal motion.

6:19 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Item #1 Town Manager to give update on possible match sources for the EWP grant program

The past couple of meetings, we have discussed that there are three properties in Town that could be candidates for this program to repair their riverbanks. A "sponsor" is needed for the match portion, and the Town was asked to provide those funds. Last time, Select Board members were not in favor of paying for specific properties to be repaired with taxpayer dollars because that is not fair. David has been looking at options for finding the match without the Town providing it, so that the property owners could get the repairs that are needed.

David mentioned that there is a flood relief fund that could be approached through the State of VT. In a recent meeting with NRCS, they explained that traditionally towns have been the grant manager and sponsored the projects but have never used Town money for the matches. If we reach a certain percentage of damage, the sponsor amount would be a lot less. It would be up to the landowner to come up with the match money. Eric was also at that meeting and commented that there is a no downside to us entering into the grant agreement because it does not bind us financially. We can back out at any point up to the actual construction. We can use part of the grant funds to get the engineering done and find out it is too expensive. We do have landowners that want to participate.

Bill Chidsey has done some research and says that the cost will be less than the estimate for his property. Eric said that accepting the full amount of the grant is okay because some projects might come in less while others might come in more.

Danny joined the meeting at 6:24 p.m.

