

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

Select Board

Eric Remick, Chair
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Vice Chair
Shari Cornish
Tim Ricciardello
Danny Hale- *Zoom*

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk
Kristen Leahy, Zoning Administrator- *Zoom*

Others Present

Nancy Kellogg

Regular Meeting

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

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda- None

6:01 P.M. – Communication from the audience- David read a thank you letter from Jean Hackett in regards the 2023 Town Report being dedicated to her. Jean is a very vital part of the Town, and we continue to appreciate everything she has done.

6:01 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of March 7, 2024

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of March 7, 2024.

6:02 P.M. – 6:11 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David reported that Tracy Martin, the Town’s Community Development Coordinator, has finished the Emergency Watershed Protection grant for three of the properties that were heavily damaged by the July 2023 flood. Two of those properties will be bought out by FEMA, and their closing will be on Monday March 25, 2024. After the closing, the buildings will be demolished, and properties will be cleaned up.

David and Casey attend weekly meetings with FEMA. FEMA has moved several emergency projects to a much more simplified process to submit the projects that need to be completed. The Town will need to certify the projects for audit purposes.

David has requested a larger bridge for Hardwick Farms Road to provide adequate space for farm equipment. The Town would be swapping the bridge with VTrans and will also get support with the project from VTrans.

David reported that on April 8, when the Eclipse occurs, the Town roads will be open. The State has provided some guidance due to the increase in traffic. The Town will address and respond to emergencies as they come up. Please be cautious. If you need further information, please visit the Library.

VTrans will be working on the LVRT this summer as there was a section near Belfry Road that was heavily damaged by the July 2023 flood. This project will be from May to September, and the section from Ward Hill to Tousant Hill will be closed. VTrans has asked if they could set up a detour through East Hardwick Village.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the detour as needed to fix the “big dig” on the Rail Trail. Danny abstained.

6:11 P.M. – 6:12 P.M. Town Highway Report – Given by David Upson

David reported that the Town crew has been busy ditching and grading when the weather allows. They have also been plowing and salting and preparing for the upcoming storm.

There was not a Hardwick Police Department Report tonight.

There was not a Hardwick Electric Department Report tonight. However, Ceilidh reported that Nat Smith has resigned from his seat on the Hardwick Electric Commission Board. The Select Board wants to thank Nat for all of his years of dedication to the Electric Commission. There is an open seat to fill Nat’s remaining term, which ends in June. If interested, please send a letter of interest to the Town Manager’s Office.

6:13 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to consider approving Hardwick Electric Department’s request for a Bond Bank Loan to pay for flood repair work – *Action needed*

The Wolcott Hydro-plant, which is owned by the Hardwick Electric Department (HED), was heavily damaged in the July 2023 Flood. HED has applied for FEMA to help with repairs, however, the process is going to take some time before the funds are available. HED needs to start making repairs to help generate power and keep costs down. Therefore, HED would like to apply for a bond from the Vermont Bond Bank. To apply through the Vermont Bond Bank, the application must be through the Town of Hardwick. HED will be paying for the Bond with the available FEMA funds that they get.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the resolution and certificate as written for the Vermont bond bank loan in the amount of \$1,257,000 to complete the flood related repairs to the hydro-plant. Danny abstained.

6:24 P.M. – 6:26 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to consider approving several liquor license renewals– *Action needed*

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the following liquor and tobacco licenses:

Second Class Licenses for:

Walgreens Eastern Co. Inc.
GSB, LLC d/b/a D&L Beverage & Deli
Global Montelle Group, Corp. d/b/a Jiffy Mart

Tobacco License:

Walgreens Eastern Co. Inc.
Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC
GSB, LLC d/b/a D&L Beverage & Deli
Global Montelle Group, Corp. d/b/a Jiffy Mart

Tobacco Substitute Endorsement:

GSB, LLC d/b/a D&L Beverage & Deli
Global Montelle Group, Corp. d/b/a Jiffy Mart

All the above are renewals and have no infractions.

6:26 P.M. – 6:33 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to consider participating in the VT Department of Health program “3-4-50 Commitment to Reducing Chronic Disease”. – *Action needed*

This program is called 3-4-50, which means three bad behaviors could lead to four different types of health diseases which lead to more than 50 percent of deaths in Vermont. This program helps Vermonters understand the impact of chronic diseases and inspires us to take change and influence healthy choices. There is no cost to the Town’s participation. Please see the 3-4-

50 attachment.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve participating in the VT Department of the Health program 3-4-50 and authorize the Town Manager to sign the commitment letter.

6:34 P.M. – 6:37 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to discuss with the Zoning Administrator reinstating flood permit fees in the near future. – *Possible Action needed*

The Zoning Administrator explained that back when the July 2023 flood occurred, the Select Board decided to waive the fees for the residents that live in the Zoning flood plain to help the flood victims make the necessary repairs. They still needed to get the necessary permits, but they didn't have to pay the fee. The Zoning Administrator has been working closely with the flood victims, and the list is down to ten more properties that still need to get permits. The Zoning Administrator and Town Clerk asked the Select Board to reinstate the permit and recording fees.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to reinstate the Zoning and recording fees effective April 15,2024.

6:38 P.M. – 6:40 P.M. Item #5 Select to review and consider approving changes to the Town's Economic Development Loan Policy - the interest rate charged on loans. – *Action needed*

Ceilidh explained that the Town is reviewing the policy and wanting to change the interest rate. Currently the fixed interest rate is 1% less than the bank of Boston Prime. The Town wants to change the policy to say that the interest rate will be 1% over the Town's deposit rate on their general money market account at the time of issuing the Letter of Commitment. This change will benefit the applicant as the rate won't be as high.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello the Select Board voted to approve the Town's Economic Development Loan Policy.

6:40 P.M. 6:41 P.M. Item #6 Select Board to review and approve the FY25 Annual Financial Plan for Town Highways for VTrans. – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the FY25 Annual Financial Plan for Town Highways for VTrans.

6:41 P.M. – 6:44 P.M. Item #7 Select Board to review and approve the Statement of Work and contract for the Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) for design and engineering of the municipal complex on Creamery Road. -- *Action needed*

David explained that the Town is doing a feasibility study on Creamery Road to determine what the property would look like and how suitable it would be if the Town had the Town Garage, the Fire Station, and Hardwick Rescue all on the same property.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale the Select Board voted to authorize the Town Manager to sign the MTAP for design and engineering on Creamery Road.

6:44 P.M. – 6:46 P.M. Item #8 Select Board to review and approve the Forest Management Plan for the VT Route 14N gravel pit to be submitted to the State of Vermont Current Use Program -- *Action needed*

The plan was written to help maintain the properties condition, and to help with the State of Vermont's Current Use. This excludes from any material, such as gravel that is needed.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the Forest Management Plan for the VT Route 14N gravel pit.

Select Board Reports

- Eric reported that the Yellow Barn portion of the project should be completed soon, and that Cabot Creamery should be ready to open their visitor center in July.

New Business

- The Select Board nominated Kristen Leahy to be the NVDA representative for the Town of Hardwick. Thank you to Shari and Danny for previously being on the board.
- Shari announced that the Town does have glasses for the eclipse. You can get them at the Town Managers Office, Town Clerk, or the Library.
- David Reported that there’s more of a land slide occurring off School Street. He is working with Hazard Mitigation and the likelihood is the Town will permanently close that street. More information to come.

Old Business

- Ceilidh asked about the traffic control in the summer when the Pedestrian Bridge is getting repaired. Eric explained that the Main Street wall and the abutments also need to get replaced, however, the contractor will need to present the Town with a plan that includes whether they need to do traffic control. The estimated start date in July or August of 2024, depending on what the Town receives for bid.

No new information was presented to the Select Board regarding the loan contract, so the Select Board did not enter into an executive session like the agenda stated.

6:56 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