

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

Select Board

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

Others Present

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

Others Present

Myles Kamisher-Koch (HED)
Renaud Demers
Mike Southworth
Todd Lindenstruth

Regular Meeting

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

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add an Executive session per 1 V.S.A. § 313 for a contract matter to include the Town Manager

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to adjust the agenda as stated.

6:02 P.M. Communication from the audience- Mike Southworth stated that he is running for State Representative to cover the Hardwick/Walden area. He stated that he is looking forward to serving this area.

6:03 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of April 4, 2024

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of April 4, 2024, as written.

6:03 P.M. – 6:12 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David wanted to let the board know that the Planning Commission is working on updating the By-Laws. Once finished, it will go to the Development Review Board, and then to the Select Board. There will also be public comment. More to come later this Spring/Summer.

The Hardwick Historical Society (HHS) is looking to make improvements near the Depot. The Select Board generally agrees to have the HHS move forward with this project. HHS will be looking for a local contractor to do this project.

The Zoning Administrator (ZA) was approached by another landowner about a FEMA buyout. This property is on Route 14 South and sustained significant damage from the July flood. The landowner has explored all scenarios and will continue to work with the ZA if they wish to move forward with the buyout. The FEMA buyouts do not cost the Town anything, but they will get taken off of the Grand List. The deadline for a buyout through FEMA is June 21, 2024.

The Town has put out a request for proposal (RFP) for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Emergency Watershed Protection Program. Please visit www.hardwickvt.gov to see the official RFP. The submission deadline is no later than May 1, 2024.

David also mentioned that there have been several residents that have come to the Town Manager's office about their water bill being high. A leaky faucet or toilet will make it so the water goes through the meter and can drive the cost up. Please check to see if you notice a leak. If concerned, please contact the Town Manager's office and we can get a data log. Eric also mentioned that the bills are quarterly, so it's better to contact the Town Manager's officer sooner than later.

The Town is doing hydrant flushing from April 22 to April 26. Residents may experience brown water for a brief period of time. Please run your water for a few minutes, and if you continue to experience issues, please call the Town Manager's Office at 802-472-6120.

Lastly, Danny was nominated to convey real estate for the Town; however, there have been numerous times where meetings are held during the day when he's at work. He would like to step away from being the representative and have another Select Board member convey the real estate.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to nominate Eric Remick to be the new representative to convey real estate.

6:12 P.M. – 6:17 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that by next week, weather permitting, all the roads will have been graded. After they finish completing all the roads, they plan to do a second round. They have started ditching on West Hill, Bunker Hill, Marsh Road, and Porter Brook Road. There have been issues with the grader; however, Tom was able to fix it.

Friday, April 19, 2024, Tom will collaborate with high school students to do some spring cleanup.

Painting of the crosswalks will happen as soon as the weather warms up a little bit.

Eric asked Tom if his truck was working, and Tom mentioned that there have been issues with his truck and Tod's truck. They are hoping to solve the issue with Tod's truck soon, and Tom's truck will need to be worked on this summer.

6:18 P.M. – 6:21 P.M. Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike reported that he has two new employees starting in May, which he will send to the part-time academy in June. He is still interviewing for another full-time position.

Mike is still working on the new in car radar systems and getting bids for the new radios. David mentioned that they are still waiting to hear from Homeland Security on a grant for the repeater.

6:21 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Hardwick Electric Report- Given by Myles Kamisher-Koch

Myles reported that they have hired an interim general manager. He also stated that VPPSA has been a huge help throughout the transition. He wanted to thank the staff for continuing to work hard and keeping things running during this period.

Lastly, Myles stated that they are continuing to work on the Wolcott Hydro-Plant.

6:24 P.M. – 6:27 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to consider appointing Renaud Demers as Hardwick Electric Commissioners to fill a remaining 3-year term expiring June 30, 2024

Renaud Demers introduced himself and stated that he has been working in the electrical industry since 1973. He wants to maintain a reasonable rate and reliability for the Town. He has previously worked for Hardwick Electric and wants to continue to make good improvements.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve Renaud Demers to fill the remaining 3-year Hardwick Electric Commissioner seat, term expiring June 30, 2024.

6:27 P.M. – 6:29 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to consider approving a banner application for Aware banner to be hung on Wolcott Street June 21- June 29 and August 8 – August 17, 2024

Ceilidh mentioned that there was an error on the agenda, and that it should be for Circus Smirkus.

Eric asked if the Town Manager's office checked to see if there was available space. Amanda and David had not previously checked.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the banner application for Circus Smirkus for the periods of June 21-28, and August 8- 17, pending availability.

6:29 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to review and consider participating in the State FY25 Grant-in-Aid program

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the FY25 Grant-in-Aid program.

6:30 P.M. – 6:36 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to adopt the 2024 Local Emergency Management Plan

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the 2024 Local Emergency Management Plan.

Eric asked if there was any way for the Town to have an emergency alert system. David mentioned that the Town has an emergency notification email. The link to sign up is located on www.hardwickvt.gov. David has been approached by software companies; however, that can be a huge investment. For now, the Town will stay with the email system.

6:37 P.M. – 6:52 P.M. Item #5 Town Manager to discuss potential paths forward for the replacement of the Hardwick Farms Rd. Bridge

During the July flooding, the bridge on Hardwick Farms was damaged. Currently there is a 12-foot temporary bridge there. The landowners that use farm equipment can not fit through that bridge. David has worked with VTRANS on various options; extra-wide bridge, two lane bridge, two culverts, and a gravel crossing. FEMA will not cover this project, and all the options are expensive, temporary, or may not be feasible for either the state or the landowners.

Ceilidh asked when the Town thinks this project will be completed. The hope was to have a solution by Fall. However, with permitting, high water, and waiting on what exactly the solution is, the project might have to push the completion date to 2025.

Tim suggested that the Town reimburse those landowners that use that bridge for their farm equipment and pay them to go around. David stated that it's not just the extra cost, it's the extra time to always go around that also affects these landowners/businesses.

The Town Manager stated that there doesn't need to be a decision made tonight on how to proceed. He just wanted to give the board an update. The board suggested that the Town Manager facilitate a meeting between the landowners, and the state, onsite, and come up with a potential solution.

Select Board Reports:

Eric reported that the Yellow Barn project is going great. There were state-level representatives that visited and did a newsletter on the progress of the project. Cabot is planning to move into the Yellow Barn portion in mid-June. Wright and Morrissey will continue to work on the accelerator building throughout the summer. The plan is for the Center of Agriculture & Economy and Jasper Hill to move into the accelerator building in August, however, they might be able to help earlier with their fit up. He reported that they are moving the pile of dirt. They are only allowed three truck loads per day, and the hope is that it will be completely gone in the next six weeks. After the dirt is gone, they will work on a gravel driveway which will require permits and change orders. They will also look into doing a change order for the parking space behind the Yellow Barn.

Ceilidh asked for an update on the Library. David will check to see if there can be an update for the next meeting.

New Business:

Danny reported that Diane Peduzzi from Woodbury contacted him to see if they could get the Hardwick/Woodbury LVRTcommittee back up and running. Danny has agreed to be a part of it and will keep the Select Board up to date.

Old Business: None

7:02 P.M. Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. § 313 for a contract matter to include the Town Manager.

7:44 P.M. Exited Executive Session. *No action taken.*

7:44 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