

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 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

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Alberta Miller, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer
Kristen Leahy, Zoning Administrator
Rose Friedman, Civic Standard

Others Present

Tobin Porter-Brown
George McWilliam, Heartbeet
Michael Southworth
Jeannine A. Young
Elaine Bellavance
Sharon McWilliam

Regular Meeting

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

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – *none*

6:00 P.M. – Communication from the audience - *none*

6:01 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of May 16, 2024, and the Special Select Board meeting of May 28, 2024

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of May 16, 2024, and the Special Select Board meeting of May 28, 2024, as written.

6:02 P.M. – 6:14 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David shared that the EWP Project only received one bid from a firm for technical assistance for the three properties. The bid was for \$170,000 and the budget was only \$42,000. He sent the bid to NRCS. NRCS is going to do the technical assistance on 2 of the 3 riverbanks to help with the cost. They are going to negotiate independently with that one bid company to take care of the rest of the work that they cannot do.

David reported that the liner in lagoon one has been installed. The aeration system is in, and 3 blowers are now going as well. The hydraulic curtain is in and then they can install the anerobic cover. Things are wrapping up and the final grading will be done soon. We just signed a change order to remove the underground storage tank.

David mentioned that a third party consultant company hired by the MERP "Municipal Energy Resilience Program" did energy assessments on all town buildings. They will do a complete report with recommendations. The furnace and oil lines located in the public safety building are a high priority.

David brought up a recent situation that happened in Town. A young man asked his permission to cover up the vulgar and racial slurs under the North Main St. bridge by painting more positive images using spray paint. At the time, he thought it was a good idea. However, it turned into much more when social media posts started popping up and discussion about it throughout the town. There was also additional graffiti that showed up without permission around town, which was not the intention when permission was given for a specific area.

Rose Friedman wanted to talk about how the Civic Standard became involved in the painting underneath the bridge. She started by giving some background about how the Civic Standard helped to form the "Hardwick Skatepark Collective." They meet every Tuesday at 3:30 at the Civic. It is a group of young men ages 13-19 who are working on the possibility of creating a skatepark in Town. The young man who asked permission is a part of this group. Civic also talked to them about the painting project. The Civic oversaw the original painting that David had given permission to do, including purchasing the paint for the project. However, after that was completed, additional graffiti started turning up throughout the town. It is unclear if this group of kids were responsible for all of the unwanted graffiti around town. The Civic has talked to this group about the backlash of the additional graffiti and how they can assist with the cleanup, as the intention was only to do the area under the bridge. In their meeting last week, they started talking about finding a professional graffiti artist to clean up the areas.

Shari mentioned that the Town House already had an energy audit in the past.

6:14 P.M. – 6:16 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike shared that two new officers are attending the part-time academy to become Level II officers. The Academy is going through a transition as the Executive Director has resigned. Mike indicated this is a good thing and will be positive for the Academy going forward.

Mike brought up that the Mill Street solar speed sign is still not working. They have continuously been collaborating with the company but have been unsuccessful in getting it to work. This will be ongoing.

Mike wanted to thank Tom and the crew for getting the crosswalks painted. They have received a lot of positive feedback about the crosswalks.

6:16 P.M. – 6:17 P.M. Item #1 Select Board consider approving a liquor license and a tobacco license – *Action needed*

One liquor license and one tobacco license were presented. Both are renewals with no infractions.

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

First Class liquor license for Hardwick House of Pizza, Inc. and a tobacco License for DG Retail, LLC b/b/a Dollar General

6:17 P.M. – 6:26 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to hear from Daughters of the American Revolution about a community memorial garden

Jeannie Young and Elaine Bellavance with the Daughters of the American Revolution St Johnsbury Chapter came to talk to the Select Board about their chapter's desire to start a "Never Forget Garden" somewhere locally as they are considering sponsoring one. Jeannine explained that the garden is a memorial for veterans. They have not made a final decision but want to see if there is a place available in Hardwick and they like the idea of Memorial Park. She gave background about what types of plants there would be and what they would look like as far as flowers and a headstone. They maintain the garden. They basically want to know if the Town would be willing to allow them to do this if they decide to move forward.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted unanimously to move forward with permission for the garden concept after discussing with the Legion and Hardwick Rescue.

6:26 P.M. – 6:31 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to hear from the Executive Director of Heartbeet Lifesharing, George McWilliam

George McWilliam is the new Executive Director of Heartbeat Lifesharing. He first wanted to thank the town for maintaining Town Farm Rd. He wanted to come introduce himself to the Select Board and let them know what Heartbeat is doing in the community and working on. He gave some background about the work that they are doing with individuals with disabilities. They are expanding their housing and will be able to offer additional housing for people with intellectual disabilities. See attachments for a handout from Heartbeat.

6:31 P.M. – 6:32 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to review and approve the loan documents for the Town's line of credit with Union Bank to supplement flood repairs - *Action needed*

There are actually two separate lines because one is for the sewer fund and one for the general fund. The total for the two lines is \$1,025,000, which was approved at a previous meeting (\$675,000 for sewer and \$350,000 for general fund).

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve and sign the loan documents for the Town's lines of credit with Union Bank to supplement flood repairs.

6:32 P.M. – 6:37 P.M. Item #5 Select Board to review and consider approving renewal documents for Hardwick Electric's line of credit at Union Bank – *Action needed*

Danny mentioned that he has not heard anything about what is going on at HED but heard today that they have a new interim General Manager. Eric confirmed that was true.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve and sign the renewal documents for Hardwick Electric's line of credit at Union Bank provided that the "the legislative bodies" on the Tax Certificate are crossed out.

Danny wants more regular updates from HED.

6:38 P.M. – 6:39 P.M. Item #6 Select Board to consider appointing Erik Erbes to the Hardwick Conservation Commission for a 4-year term ending June 30, 2028 – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted unanimously to appoint Erik Erbes to the Hardwick Conservation Commission for a 4-year term ending June 30, 2028.

6:39 P.M. – 6:40 P.M. Item #7 Select Board to consider appointing Lindsay O'Steen as Second Constable term expires at Town Meeting 2025 – *Action needed*

Mike commented that the police department can use the constables for special events like parades. This is extremely helpful. Lindsay is the President of Hardwick Rescue, and she is currently Level III certified law enforcement. Larry Hamel is the first constable.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously to appoint Lindsay O'Steen as Second Constable with a term expiring at Town Meeting 2025.

6:40 P.M. – 7:21 P.M. Item #8 Select Board to discuss and consider approving the FY25 water and sewer fund budgets – *Action needed*

The Business Manager presented the proposed expense budgets for the water and sewer funds. Water is relatively flat with about a \$5,000 increase (1.62%). This was by design because most people have water and sewer, and the sewer fund is more costly to operate and will have a higher increase. The first draft of the sewer budget is showing a 9.30% increase primarily

due to chemical costs as well as the increased cost of salaries and benefits across all departments because the sewer fund transfers money to the general fund for the time that public works and office staff spend on enterprise fund related business.

We are only putting \$10,000 into capital – we have already planned on the bond payment, so that is not a driving factor in the increase. There is a possibility that the chemical expenses will decrease some because we were only running on one lagoon last year, which definitely increased the treatment needs. We do expect that to level off, which is why we felt it was okay to decrease that for the coming year. It was decided to reduce process chemicals to \$45,000 to lower the overall increase. The new percentage is 6.42% with this change.

The group had a lengthy discussion about the capital fund budget. They are not excited about only setting aside \$10,000 this year. The original capital budget was \$10,000/year for the next four years. After discussion, that amount was changed to increase \$10,000 each year (\$10K, \$20K, \$30K, \$40K). This could change next year when the time comes. After this upgrade, the plant should be in good shape for many years. Sludge disposal is the biggest expense we need to save for now. We need to do cleanout more often since the last cleanout cost about \$1.5M.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the FY25 water budget, as presented.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the FY25 sewer budget for a total of \$553,277.

7:21 P.M. – 7:22 P.M. Item #9 Select Board to consider approving the revised cemetery policy to include Main Street, Fairview, and Maple Street – *Action needed*

The only change was to address that the Town now manages all seven of the cemeteries instead of just four of them. Casey also changed the font and layout a little, but no other content changes.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the revised cemetery policy to include Main Street, Fairview, and Maple Street cemeteries.

7:22 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. Item #10 Select Board to review and consider accepting the bid proposal from Complete Demolition Service LLC for the flood resilient communities fund (FRCF) projects and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted by majority to accept the bid proposal from Complete Demolition Service LLC for the flood resilient communities fund (FRCF) projects and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract.

*Eric – yea
Ceilidh – yea
Tim – yea
Shari – yea
Danny - nay*

7:30 P.M. – 7:31 P.M. Item #11 Select Board to approve and sign the FY25 Lamoille County Sheriff's Dept. dispatch contract – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve and sign the FY25 Lamoille County Sheriff's Dept. dispatch contract in the amount of \$44,625.06.

Select Board Reports:

Shari mentioned that the foundation for the addition to the Town House is in. Ceilidh wanted to give a shout out to Eric Stevens about the work being done on the former Hunt House at 67 Main St. in East Hardwick. Stark Construction is doing a great job, and it is looking really good and will be a good housing asset to the community.

New Business:

Kristen was at a flood symposium today. She shared that it was recommended that we start working on a long term recovery planning document. She heard at the symposium that Hardwick is ahead of most Towns in terms of flood recovery efforts.

Shari mentioned that she wants to update the Recreation policy. She wondered if we should ask the Recreation committee to revamp the policy to include town parks and LVRT trailheads. The TM office will look at the policy.

David asked that people stop parking at the health center to use the rail trail. We have parking available on Creamery Rd. Ceilidh commented that there is not a lot of signage pointing people there. Shari commented that we do not have a road sign for Creamery Rd. at the end near the health center. David said that the state is planning a sign package, but not until the end of the summer, which does not help now.

David mentioned that we are in the process of getting project management training for all staff. Eric thanked all staff for taking on all of the additional work caused by the flood on top of the everyday business of the town.

Eric asked for an update on the Town’s computer/cyber security at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Danny asked about the Hardwick Farms Rd. bridge removal. David explained that we are still looking at alternatives – there is no timeline right now. David said that some residents have expressed disappointment that the decision was made for one resident.

Shari brought up the “sale of real estate” policy. She created a draft policy. The Town Manager’s office is looking that over. It is on the next agenda for consideration.

7:50 P.M. *Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. § 313 for loan contract discussions to include Town Manager, Business Manager, and Tobin Porter-Brown.*

8:12 P.M. Exited Executive Session.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve a \$71,000 loan to Front Seat Coffee LLC to be secured by all business assets and no real estate.

8:13 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