

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, July 18, 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 Jr., Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk
Tracy Martin, CDC
Kristen Leahy, Zoning Administrator
Robin French
Lynne Gedanken
David Upson Sr.

Others Present

Bruce Melendy
Helen Willey
Jon Lussier
Lydia Parker
Dave Snedeker
Erica Bornemann
Todd Lindenstruth
Steve Jenne
Raymonda Parchment
Justin Rabioux
Scott Beck

Regular Meeting

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

Eric thanked the Town employees for all their hard work, especially with the recent flood.

6:01 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – None

6:01 P.M. Communication from the audience-

Jon Lussier, who lives on Granite Street spoke about the recent flooding. In the past two years, he’s been impacted heavily from the two major floods. He shared a photo with the Select Board of how high the water was the morning on July 11th, which when the photo was taken, the water had receded some. He wants the Town to be proactive instead of reactive. He stated that there’s vegetation around Cooper Brook, and when the Brook fills up, the water is going over and bypassing the vegetation, causing flooding to Granite Street, Cottage Street, and Wolcott Street. This recent flooding caused Jon to lose about three feet of gravel and damaged the foundation to his house. Jon stated that he feels that if this keeps happening, the Town of Hardwick will lose businesses, and even more land. Jon asked about draining Hardwick Lake and dredging the brooks and rivers. David stated that looking at Cooper Brook is a high priority for the Town of Hardwick. Jon stated that he would be willing to walk with the Town to check out the area and the vegetation.

Helen Willey, who lives on Granite Street was too affected by the flooding and asked that the Select Board be proactive. In the 50+ years that she’s lived there, she hasn’t ever had to deal with flooding as bad as she has in the past two years. She asked about the regulations on the brooks and rivers. David stated that ANR controls all the regulations. David also stated that the storage within the river channel is filling up and needs attention.

6:11 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of June 20, 2024

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of June 20, 2024, as written.

6:12 P.M. – 6:18 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David reported that he has met with ANR, VTRANS, and state and local officials regarding the river erosion next to Hay's Service Station. ANR and VTRANS will be temporarily fixing the bank to prevent future erosion.

The Town lost a total of five bridges last week during the flooding. Two of those bridges were state temporary bridges that were placed last year. The plan is to unbolt and move a few sections of the temporary bridge located on Hardwick Farms and move it to Fisher Folly. This will help the residents on Fisher Folly be able to get in and out of their property. Riverside Farm completely lost the bridge. The Town is trying to figure out the conditions of the abutments to figure out what the next steps will be for that property.

The Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) received about six inches less than last year. The controls were spared; however, the influent pumps were submerged. The Town is still trying to get an inventory of what was damaged and try to fix things as quickly as possible. David met with Governor Scott at the WWTF to talk about the future for the facility. The lift stations on Route 14 and Buffalo Street received damage as well.

The Town has submitted paperwork to blast gravel in the Town's gravel pit per emergency declaration. The Town is also renting an excavator for the pit for the next month.

6:18 P.M. – 6:23 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that the Town crew has been able to fix all of the roads for residents to get in and out of their properties, except for Fisher Folly. Dutton Road, Kate Brook Road, and Smith Farm Road have all been worked on this week, and the crew will continue to monitor them. The upper part of Tucker Brook is closed.

The bridge in Greensboro Bend near East Main Street and Standard Mountain Road borders four different towns and is currently closed due to the flood. Hardwick has been in communication with the other towns on how to fix it. Hardwick plans to look at the retaining wall next week.

Once the bridge in Greensboro Bend is completed, the road crew will begin work on Tucker Brook and Carey Road.

Ceilidh asked about the hydrologic study and upsizing the culverts. Tom mentioned that the Town is trying to get as far ahead on projects; however, there's a lot of restraints when dealing with brooks, rivers, and wildlife.

6:23 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike introduced Robin French. Robin was hired as a part time officer and has been going to the part-time academy to become a level 2 officer. On August 5, Robin will go to the full-time academy to become level 3 certified. The full-time academy is a 17-week program. Robin is doing a phenomenal job.

6:24 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Hardwick Electric Report (HED)- Given by Lynne Gedanken

Lynne reported that HED has recently hired two new apprentices.

She also reported that during the most recent flood event, HED had about \$500,000 to \$700,000 worth of damage, including the grid system and Wolcott Hydro Plant.

Lynne stated that HED is still in the process of hiring a General Manager. They will be starting the first round of interviews soon.

Lastly, HED has created a Facebook page. She encouraged everyone to like and follow their page as they will keep it updated with important information.

6:30 P.M. – 6:33 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to review and consider approving the FY25 tax rate presented by Tonia Chase, Clerk/Treasurer – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the 3.5212 FY25 residential tax rate, and the 3.6065 FY25 tax rate for non-residential.

The Town's increase was 10.53% with the appropriations, and the education tax was 12.99% for the homestead, and 16.50% for non-homestead.

The overall total increase was 11.90% for homestead, and 13.90% for non-homestead.

Tonia also stated that the tax bills will look a little different this year, as the tax bills will be printed on different paper.

6:34 P.M. – 6:35 P.M. Item #2 Select Board to review and approve the annual Internal Financial Controls Checklist– *Action needed*

Tonia stated that there was one change since last year, which was that there was a theft recently at the library. They had about \$40 stolen from their cash box.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve annual internal financial control checklist.

6:35 P.M. – 6:36 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to consider approving a manufacturing cannabis license for Green Mountain Scientific (transfer from another Town) and a Mixed Tier 1 Small Cultivator renewal for All Bliss Cannabis LLC - *Action Needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve a transfer of a manufacturing cannabis license for Green Mountain Scientific, and a Mixed Tier 1 Small Cultivator renewal for All Bliss Cannabis LLC.

6:36 P.M. – 6:38 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to consider appointing Robin French as a Hardwick Police Officer -*Action Needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to appoint Robin French as a new Hardwick Police Officer.

6:38 P.M. – 6:46 P.M. Item #5 Zoning Administrator to present to the Select Board the LVRT loop recommendations from the Hardwick Planning Commission

Tracy Martin and Kristen Leahy stated that the Town received a USDA grant. The Town was given permission to put the money towards looping the LVRT to the Pedestrian bridge so that users of the trail could get to downtown. The Planning Commission presented the LVRT loop recommendations last year. However, the recommendations have been impacted due to the Library project, North Main Street getting paved, and the Pedestrian Bridge not being finished. The Planning Commission would still like to move forward with some of the recommendations that they feel will guide the trail users. Some of the recommendations are to create ample bike parking at the pause park next to the Memorial Park. The Planning Commission wants to encourage bikers to leave their bikes and walk to downtown by incorporating bike racks. They would also like to create and install temporary signage on the LVRT and in the Downtown area directing bikers to the best routes to downtown, and to install bike racks at Hardwick Inn and in the Peace Park.

Ceilidh asked about the logistics of the Peace Park as the Civic Standard also uses the Peace Park. David mentioned that there will be communication with the Civic Standard about the bike racks.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the LVRT loop recommendations from the Hardwick Planning Commission.

6:46 P.M. – 6:57 P.M. Item #6 Select Board to discuss the River Program with NVDA representative(s)

Dave Snedeker and Bruce Melendy from NVDA talked briefly about the recovering and resiliency of the rivers and how they are working with Towns that were affected by the flooding the last two years. NVDA is collaborating with contractors from Stantac in order to help facilitate the FEMA application in order to get funding. Erica Bornemann and Justin Rabidou from Stantac introduced themselves and stated that the timeline to get funding from FEMA would take a while, which can be frustrating. However, Justin stated they he met with Kristen and David and walked the downtown area. He mentioned that Hardwick has the knowledge, advancement, and public connectivity which will help the process. As the application process moves forward, Stantac will continue to meet with Kristen, David, and the Select Board.

6:58 P.M. – 6:58 P.M. Item #7 Select Board to consider reappointing Norma Wiesen and Ben Pougner to a 4-year term on the Hardwick Conservation Commission – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to reappoint Norma Wiesen and Ben Pougner to a 4-year term on the Hardwick Conservation Commission.

6:58 P.M. – 6:59 P.M. Item #8 Select Board to consider appointing Renaud Demers for a 3-year term and Roger Prevot for a 2-year term as Hardwick Electric Commissioners – *Action needed*

Ceilidh pointed out that both applicants are reappointments.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to reappoint Renaud Demers for a 3-year term and Roger Prevot for a 2-year term as the Hardwick Electric Commissioners.

6:59 P.M. – 6:59 P.M. Item #9 Select Board to consider reappointing Jim Lewis and Michael Haveson for 3-year terms on the Hardwick Planning Commission – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to reappoint Jim Lewis and Michael Haveson for a 3-year term on the Hardwick Planning Commission.

6:59 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. Item #10 Select Board to consider reappointing Ruth Gaillard and Helm Nottermann for 3-year terms on the Hardwick Development Review Board – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to reappoint Ruth Gaillard and Helm Nottermann for a 3-year term on the Hardwick Development Review Board.

7:00 P.M. – 7:01 P.M. Item #11 Select Board to review and consider approving the coin drop requests for 2024 – *Action needed*

On the agenda, it stated that the coin drop requests are for 2024. However, 2024 was approved last July. This is approving May through October of 2025. August was not filled, so if an organization would like to take August, please contact the Town Manager's Office.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the coin drop requests for 2025.

7:01 P.M. – 7:03 P.M. Item #12 Select Board to consider appointing Abrah Griggs to the Equity Committee – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted four to one to appoint Abrah Griggs to the Equity Committee. Tim Ricciardello abstained.

7:03 P.M. – 7:03 P.M. Item #13 Select Board to review and approve the audit engagement letter with Sullivan, Powers, & Co., for FY24 audit services – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the audit engagement letter with Sullivan, Power, & Co. for FY24 audit services.

7:04 P.M. – 7:05 P.M. Item #14 Select Board to consider approving a 3-year collective bargaining police contract with New England PBA – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the 3-year collective bargaining police contract with New England PBA and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the agreement.

7:05 P.M. – 7:06 P.M. Item #15 Select Board to review and consider approving the "Sale of Real Estate" Policy

There was no documentation provided for this item, so this item was moved to the August 1, 2024, meeting.

7:08 P.M. – 7:20 P.M. Item #16 Select Board to review and consider accepting bids for 40 Carey Road and the Mill Street properties that the Town wants to sell- *Possible Action needed*

Tim asked if this was the appraisal value or the market value. David stated that it was the appraisal value. Ceilidh stated that Vermont Huts came to a Select Board meeting previously, which started the discussion about selling

property. Vermont Huts has been in discussion with the Zoning Administrator; however, the project will need to go through the Development Review Board. The Select Board was discussing the project and the accommodations for the LVRT. Kristen suggested to the Select Board to separate the project and the purchase and sales agreement as they are two separate items that need approval.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted four to one to enter into a purchase and sales agreement with Vermont Huts for the purchase of Town owned property located on Mill Street; parcel number 24052-00010.

Eric- Yes

Ceilidh- Yes

Danny- Yes

Shari- Yes

Tim- No

The project on 40 Carey Road would also have to go through the Development Review Board and would need a fair amount of cleanup.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted unanimously to enter into a purchase and sales agreement with Jeff Perry for the purchase of Town owned property located at 40 Carey Road; parcel number 09056-00000.

David will contact the attorney to start both purchase and sales agreements. There is a 30-day comment period. The draft of the purchase and sales agreement will be presented to the Select Board potentially at the next Select Board meeting; August 1, 2024.

Select Board Reports:

- Eric stated that he would like the Select Board members to walk through the Yellow Barn and the Accelerator building. On August 1, 2024, there will be a special site visit at 5:30 P.M. at the Yellow Barn, and then the Select Board will have their regular meeting at 6:00 P.M. at the Memorial Building.
- Shari mentioned that the Chamber players are at the Town House every Thursday night until the middle of August.

New Business:

- Ceilidh mentioned that the East Hardwick Master Plan project will be on July 29 at 5:30 P.M. at the Grange Hall. This will be a village supper, and discussion on the development for revitalization of East Hardwick.
- Ceilidh thanked the Neighbor to Neighbor for their efforts with the recent flood. Ceilidh asked that in the future multiple emergency shelters open up to make it easier for people outside of the village to get to. Kristen stated that the Church on Route 16 is a Red Cross location and that Neighbor to Neighbor is already discussing what can be done in the future.
- David asked the Select Board to explore several more buyouts. After the most recent flood, there have been homeowners that have contacted the Town and are reconsidering their buyout option. However, the Town can't engage with the landowner until the Select Board agrees. There's funding available. The Select Board generally approved that the Town engage with these landowners.
- David stated that some homeowners have shown interest in elevating their homes. There's also funding

for these projects as well. The Select Board generally approved that the Town engage with these homeowners.

- Kristen stated that last year when the flood occurred, the zoning and recording fees were waived for flood impacted properties. She asked that zoning fees be waived again. Tonia stated that recording fees should also be waived too.
 - *Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve waiving all zoning and recording fees for flood impacted properties for one year.*

Old Business: None

7:33 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