

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
5:15 P.M. THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2024
STARTED AT YELLOW BARN AT 323 VT RTE 15 W HARDWICK
ENDED AT HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3rd FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman
Kristen Leahy, Zoning Administrator/Floodplain Administrator

Others Present

Timothy Fuller

Regular Meeting

Shari and Eric were the only present Select Board members at 5:15, so with no quorum, it was just a site visit for a tour of the Yellow Barn property. The tour was recorded, and the meeting was not called to order until there was a quorum at the Memorial Building. People present at the site visit besides Eric and Shari were Casey Rowell, David Upson, Cory Hennessy from Center for an Agricultural Economy, and James & Nella Coe from Coe & Coe Architecture. Erica Burke from Cabot was present for part of it as well. The Cabot retail store plans to have a soft opening in mid-August.

6:01 P.M. Select Board Chair to call meeting to order

6:02 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – *none*

6:02 P.M. – Communication from the audience - *none*

6:02 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of July 18, 2024

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of July 18, 2024, as written.

6:02 P.M. – 6:06 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David reported that he has been working closely with the Zoning Administrator/Floodplain Administrator on a number of recovery and mitigation plans. He put out several "Request for Proposals" for bridge projects related to the flood, including Hardwick Farms Rd. and Riverside. Fisher Folly will be next. Most of his time has been focused on flood recovery and future mitigation.

Eric commented that while the Town Manager's office continues to run the day to day operations, they are also focused heavily on flood response and recovery. He and the rest of the board recognize the extra work that these events create.

6:06 P.M. – 6:21 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that the Underpass in Greensboro Bend is back open. Hardwick fixed their portion pretty quickly after the flood. The crew spent about 2.5 days on Kate Brooke Rd. as there were roughly 8-9 washouts on that road. They still have

one spot to do there. They also installed two additional larger culverts. Following Kate Brooke, the crew went to Tucker Brook Rd. It is open but is pretty rough. There is additional work to be completed. They have added some additional culverts to assist with the future. They also armored some spots. They will continue to clean up and grade roads over the coming weeks.

Tom shared that they have also done a lot of work on Smith Farm Rd. to get that back into shape again. The grader was out towards Mackville this week. In addition to this work, they helped at the Hardwick Farms Rd. site dismantling the bridge. The temp bridge installed last year is going to be going back to the state.

Tom reported that there will be 40' culverts for Hardwick Farms delivered tomorrow morning and another two sections tomorrow afternoon. Gravel Construction will work on that Monday.

Tom and David wanted to discuss the plan for Fisher Folly. They are thinking pick the bridge up, armor retaining wall and then place the bridge back down. David said that putting Fisher Folly bridge out to bid will delay it 15-30 days. We will need the large excavator that we have rented at the gravel pit and a crane to move the bridge to the side while the temp repairs are done. Our crew is capable of performing the work and this would save money on the overall cost as it would be the crane and materials. They plan to use the same bridge. Tom and David agree that doing it in house is the best route.

Carey Rd. is still not open. There is a resident that thinks we should not reopen that road. While the Town will need to do some work there, it is going to be less of a priority other than covering up the water line that will freeze this winter. Ceilidh asked if the fix for Carey Rd. could be done relatively easy to cover the pipe. Tom said that we could put a couple loads of material and basically it would be a band-aid for now.

David mentioned that we have several projects that need engineering. The Carey Rd. one doesn't need to be a high priority. Fisher Folly is the next priority. Riverside bids are going to be discussed later today.

There was some general discussion about the number of projects that we have going on related to the flood.

6:21 P.M. – 6:23 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike reported that he is working through the process of hiring a local person as a part-time officer. He has been through the background check and Mike is working with him on the remaining due diligence hiring process. He has a background in first response.

Mike brought up that the radio system continues to be a challenge. Ultimately, their radios do not work. Unfortunately, we did not get the grant we applied for to replace the system. He explored a used system, but in talking with people, was advised that was not a good option. He continues to look at options.

6:23 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to consider appointing Marcus La Barge as a Hardwick Police Officer– *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to appoint Marcus La Barge as a Hardwick Police Officer.

6:24 P.M. – 6:34 P.M. Item #2 Zoning Administrator to present the Select Board with the findings of the AARP report of pedestrian safety on South Main Street

Kristen Leahy presented the AARP walkability report. The Board was given the report ahead of time so they could

read through it. See attachments for the report. Kristen wanted to bring attention to Item # 7, which is a recommendation for a crosswalk near Summer Street due to children trying to cross the street to go to school.

Select Board acknowledges the recommendations. The specific recommendation is not as simple as painting a crosswalk because it has to be ADA compliant. There is not even a sidewalk on one of the sides and the other side needs work as well.

6:34 P.M. – 7:08 P.M. Item #3 Zoning Administrator to give a flood update and potential RIVER request – *Possible action needed*

Kristen Leahy, Zoning/Floodplain Administrator, along with David, gave a flood update to the board going through a multipage list of *ongoing work in progress* list that included several items. While all of the projects are important, there needs to be emphasis on the most critical ones. Without listing each one, since it is a work in progress, examples included the bank stabilization near the former Inn by the River/Hay's Service Station, the wall behind Civic/Brochu's Garage and the Hardwick Inn, the intersection of Cooper Brook and Lamoille River, relocating the wastewater plant and fire station, stormwater mitigation, bridges, etc. We can continue to lean on the RIVER program that we talked about at the last Select Board meeting and work with Stantec. Kristen explained that a motion would be appropriate to show the Board's support for continued work with RIVER and Stantec.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to support the flood resilience and recovery plan with the priorities as presented.

Ceilidh expressed concern about staff capacity with all that is going on. Danny thinks we are not adequately staffed. There are a lot of areas that are being neglected, not with ill intent, but due to lack of time and staff. Ultimately, the Board wants to make sure that the staff isn't getting burned out and that things continue to run smoothly. The board would like to have the Town Manager come back in 2 weeks with ideas for how the Board can support the staff, including the road crew. There was some discussion about hiring temporary staff for the next year.

7:08 P.M. – 7:09 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to consider appointing Bud Stevens (currently 1st alternate) to the Hardwick Planning Commission for a 3-yr term expiring 6/30/2027 and changing Kole to the 1st alternate (currently 2nd alternate) – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to appoint Bud Stevens (currently 1st alternate) to the Hardwick Planning Commission for a 3-yr term expiring 6/30/2027 and changing Kole to the 1st alternate (currently 2nd alternate)

7:09 P.M. – 7:10 P.M. Item #5 Select Board to consider a cannabis license renewal for Naked Hemp – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the cannabis license renewal for Naked Hemp.

7:10 P.M. – 7:11 P.M. Item #6 Select Board to consider giving a waiver to Hardwick Electric (HED) for their handicapped accessible ramp to be in the Town right of way – *Action needed*

Kristen explained that HED doesn't currently have a handicapped accessible ramp out front. They have submitted a plan for one. While the current plan shows it does not impact the right of way, she is concerned that once they get started the pitch might have to change and then it would be in the right of way. She'd like to address this now in case the plan has to change. The sidewalk won't be impacted – it's just the right of way.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to give HED a waiver for the Town right of way for their handicapped accessible ramp (if necessary).

7:11 P.M. – 7:18 P.M. Item #7 Select Board to consider accepting a proposal from one of the submissions for the design and engineering of the Hardwick Farms Rd bridge over Porter Brook and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract for the work– *Action needed*

Danny Hale made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to choose the best option he sees fit for the design and engineering of the Hardwick Farms Rd bridge over Porter Brook and execute a contract for the work. There was not a second.

The Board asked David for his opinions about the proposals. We received three:

Mumley Engineering:	\$25,500
Easten Engineering:	Percentage of the construction costs – not clearly defined
New England Consulting Engineers	\$36,503

David indicated that he would choose between New England Consulting Engineers or Mumley. In terms of comparing them, they are both capable, but David noted that New England Consulting firm has a team of staff, whereas Mumley is just two people. There was a discussion about the two firms and their capacity to do the work.

Eric asked if David felt either firm could perform the work. David said yes; Eric said he is inclined to go with the lower cost given that scenario.

Ceilidh Galloway-Kane made a motion to use Mumley Engineering, seconded by Danny Hale and the Board voted unanimously to accept their proposal for the design and engineering of the Hardwick Farms Rd bridge over Porter Brook and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract for the work.

7:18 P.M. – 7:24 P.M. Item #8 Select Board to consider accepting a proposal for the emergency bridge repair work for the Riverside Farms bridge and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract – *Action needed*

David went over the scope of work for the Riverside bridge emergency repair. We received 3 bids:

Winterset, Inc. -	\$160,000
CCS Constructors -	\$184,000
Gravel Construction Co. -	\$212,625

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to accept the proposal from Winterset, Inc. for the emergency bridge repair work for the Riverside Farms bridge and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract.

7:24 P.M. – 7:26 P.M. Item #9 Select Board to review and consider approving the "Sale of Real Estate" Policy -*Action needed*

Casey explained that she made the conflict of interest criteria match the town's existing conflict of interest policy for consistency. The changes that have been talked about at other meetings were made as well.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the "Sale of Real Estate" policy.

7:26 P.M. – 7:31 P.M. Item #10 Select Board to discuss the Pedestrian Bridge Project

Eric explained that after putting the project out to bid a second time, we only received one bid and it was for more than we currently have funding for. See funding information in the attachments. However, the real concern here is that the retaining wall that would hold the bridge up was damaged in the 2023 and 2024 flood events. The repair to the retaining wall has to be done before the bridge and the entire corridor downtown should be reviewed prior to that repair.

Select Board Reports:

Shari reported that NEKarts was notified that they have been awarded a cultural facilities grant from the VT Arts Council for almost \$15K for the lift at the Town House.

Ceilidh shared that the equity committee is working on a grant with Vermont Community Foundation that helps communities become more equitable and inclusive.

Ceilidh also mentioned that the Better Connections brainstorming session had great attendance.

New Business:

Casey asked everyone to consider sharing with committees throughout the Town to communicate with her before hiring vendors for work. There have been several times when she received an invoice after the fact and then had to track down a W-9, insurance, etc. It would be best if this information was collected prior to the work being performed. There have been instances where people did not have proper insurance and we end up having to pay worker's comp premium on the amount we paid them. Note that budget season is a good time to remind committees of this when they come to present their budgets to the Board.

Shari mentioned that at the Yellow Barn tour, Cabot shared that they are hiring for several positions. They are advertising on their website, Indeed, and the VT Dept of Labor, etc. you can to www.CabotCreamery.com to learn more about open positions. Eric said that the project is expected to create at least 20 jobs.

David explained that the Town is in a position to blast in our gravel pit to create materials that we will need in the future, such as stamatt. He and the Business Manager talked about how we can pay for the blasting. The idea that they have come up with is to use the Carey Rd. proceeds for gravel pit operation, such as blasting or crushing. Danny was prepared to make a motion to support this, but Ceilidh suggested that this be put on the next agenda as an actual item for discussion.

David gave a shout out and thank you to all of his staff and the road crew for all of their work efforts during the flood. The Select Board mirrored his comments.

Old Business: Danny asked about a cost estimate for installing the 2 culverts at Hardwick Farms. David said that we can do a cost not to exceed. It is emergency work being done by Gravel Construction. Danny just wants to ensure that it's not an unlimited budget for the work.

Ceilidh asked about an update on the library building budget. Casey summarized what they have in remaining funds now and that they should know soon about the VT Department of Libraries grant soon.

Danny asked about the progress of hiring a General Manager at Hardwick Electric. They had more than a dozen applications. They interviewed a couple of candidates, and one person did a second interview. Eric and David attended that second interview.

Shari asked about the Downtown Partnership doing the August 2025 coin drop that is still available. It was suggested that this be added to the next agenda.

7:49 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