

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2024
HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3rd FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager
Elizabeth Dow - *Zoom*
Kristen Leahy, Zoning Administrator
Jason Bahner

Others Present

Todd Lindenstruth

Regular Meeting

6:00 P.M. Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Select Board Vice Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add an Executive Session pursuant to 1 VSA 313 to discuss the town report dedication (just so it can be a surprise)

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the adjusted agenda as stated.

6:01 P.M. – Communication from the audience – None

6:01 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of November 21, 2024

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of November 21, 2024, written.

6:10 P.M. – 6:21 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David shared that the LVRT Council that previously worked with Danville, St. Johnsbury, Walden and Hardwick on the scoping study for the trailheads is looking at a similar idea for purchasing bike racks and picnic tables. The preliminary plan looks like it would be a 20% match from the participating towns not to exceed \$5,000.

David reported that Tracy is finishing up the repeater grant application and it will be submitted tomorrow. They received two quotes after contacting six companies. This is our second time applying and he is hopeful that we have a good chance of being awarded the grant.

David was tied up at the Police Station prior to the meeting trying to deal with some housing crisis issues created by a multi-unit apartment fire in East Hardwick earlier today. The Red Cross indicated that they couldn't make it to Hardwick due to road conditions.

David shared that the pre-bid meeting for the pedestrian bridge was this week. We had seven interested companies show up at the meeting. We have a good chance of getting some competitive bids for this third round of bidding for the project.

David mentioned that preliminary sketches of the layout of the Creamery Rd. complex are underway from the architectural company that was hired to do the feasibility study. The plan is to have conceptual drawings released by Town Meeting. It looks like Highway, Fire, and Rescue could all fit at the Creamery Rd. site. Danny expressed concern about the Select Board being involved. Eric has attended some of the meetings and other members are welcome to attend. We just need to warn the meeting if three Select Board members plan to show up. Danny would like to see some of the preliminary work prior to Town Meeting.

David reported that we did calculations to determine the actual cost of the plowing/maintenance work that Hardwick does for West Woodbury and submitted the information to them. Currently, we have a fixed amount of \$6,000. The actuals came out to about \$8,400. They would like to sign a 3-year contract. Danny would like to see Hardwick benefit from the agreement and for us not to take a loss on the work we perform. We need to at least break even, or we should not be doing it. David will continue working with Woodbury on this.

6:03 P.M. – 6:10 P.M. Item #1 — Select Board to discuss how to spend the Budget Act Adjustment Funds (\$75,000) – *Possible Action needed*

The Town was awarded \$75,000 from the State of Vermont under the Legislative "Budget Adjustment Act." There was no formal grant agreement, but funds do not need to be repaid. We have already received the funds and there were only two restrictions on the use of the funds. The funds are not to be spent on projects which are eligible for the FEMA Public Assistance program, and we have to retain records of the expenditures until the records retention period for projects related to the July 2023 floods (DR-4720) has ended to demonstrate to FEMA that there has been no duplication of benefits. We have some time to spend the funds, but Casey wanted to generate some ideas about how we might spend it.

Eric suggested using the funds to offset the salary of the Director of Public Works position we are hoping to create which would be helping to complete multiple projects related to the 2023 flood.

Casey mentioned the pedestrian bridge because there is still a funding gap and the bridge itself is not a FEMA project. However, that project was delayed due to the retaining wall damaged caused by the flood.

Kristen mentioned that the Granite Street Historic district has fifteen houses that need flood proofing and are not available for public assistance. We could use it for engineering costs for that work. Danny commented that he doesn't like the fact that this would only benefit a limited number of residents.

No decision was made this evening. Casey would like to see the Board decide before the end of the fiscal year on how to spend the money.

David joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m. and we returned to the Town Manager report once he joined.

6:21 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Item #2 — Select Board to discuss VT Fish & Wildlife’s interest in acquiring two of the FEMA buyout properties and consider providing a letter of support – *Action needed*

There are two properties on Route 15 that are in the process of buyouts, and VT Fish & Wildlife wants to end up with them after closing. This would result in a payment in lieu of taxes to the Town. Danny likes this idea because if the Town keeps the properties after buyout, they are no longer on the grand list and there is no potential for any income to the town.

Upon motion by Eric Remick, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to provide a letter of support.

6:24 P.M. – 6:31 P.M. Item #3 — Select Board to discuss Perry Ln right of way width – *Possible Action needed*

David explained that Perry Lane adjacent to the town owned parcel on Mill St. that VT Huts has an option to buy was never laid out as a road. There’s no right of way that exists. The right of way would consume a considerable amount of the parcel that VT Huts wants to purchase for the hostel. A lease won’t work because we can’t lease something that is not defined. VT Huts’ funding sources might not agree with funding the project if this can’t be resolved. We could define a right of way, which would include public hearings and survey work. This is holding up the sale of that property. Eric thinks that we should get the ball rolling because it’s a process and we are going to have to work through it.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Eric Remick, the Select Board voted to have the Town Manager’s office proceed with officially laying out Perry Ln as a Town road.

6:31 P.M. – 6:34 P.M. Item #4 — Select Board to consider approving 3 new policies [Property Management, Financial Management, and Cost Principles] needed for federal grants– *Action needed*

The VT Department of Libraries grant requires 5 specific policies to be in place. We already had two of these and needed to create three additional ones. Casey is planning to do grant training for all staff that perform any functions related to grants in February. This will be annual training on our grant policies.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the Property Management, Financial Management, and Cost Principles policies, as presented.

6:34 P.M. – 7:53 P.M. Item #5 — Business Manager to recap the entire budget – all departments except Recreation – they will present their own, then spend time working on potential changes

Jason Bahner went over the Recreation budget. They are requesting that the budget be level funded from last year. Eric asked about the Recreation Coordinator being a paid position and the duties of the role. Most other committees don’t have a paid position. Jason explained what the role does. Danny shared what was discussed at the last meeting about an all-encompassing recreation department where trails and recreation, etc. could collaborate better. Jason used Stowe and Morrisville as an example where they utilize recreation departments to empty trash along with all of the recreational related activities.

There was discussion about combining the youth and community programming into one line. Casey will make this change before the next meeting.

Casey summarized each department, and the current draft shows an increase of 11.89% in expenses and a 7.61% increase in revenues.

There was discussion about the capital equipment schedule. Eric suggested we look at what extending the trade period of the dump trucks from every 8 to every 10 years. We could reduce the amount of capital set aside slightly from doing this. There was discussion about the trucks lasting that long and if we would end up having to put a lot of money into them before they were traded.

Danny expressed concern about the size of the library budget and that expenses are increasing with the expansion when in the past the Board was told that there would not be additional expenses. Ceilidh said that they are asking for minimal staff increases and to provide a livable wage for their current staff members, which is not unreasonable. Danny said that there is a large amount of money that has went into the building project and they never get to see that. Casey offered to bring a report to the next meeting of the building fund activity since that is a separate fund from the library's operating budget.

We then moved to make some actual changes in the budget to see how it would affect the bottom line. A list of changes that were made included:

- ~a reduction in capital equipment set aside
- ~put the \$75,000 of budget act adjustment funds into the budget as a one-time revenue
- ~add \$1,000 to the equity committee
- ~reduced the Police Dept. overtime by \$5,000

These changes make the budget now show a 15.7% increase in revenue and a 9.91% increase in expenses. See the meeting attachments for the details.

No Select Board reports, New Business, or Old Business.

7:55 P.M. *Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session to choose a dedication for the Town report (just so it's a surprise!) to include Town Manager and Business Manager.*

7:59 P.M. Exited Executive Session. *No action taken.*

8:00 P.M. Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Select Board Vice Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: _____
Casey Rowell, Business Manager

Minutes approved by: _____
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair