

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 2025
HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3rd FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Business Manager
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk/Treasurer
Kristen Leahy, Zoning & Floodplain Admin.
Todd Lindenstruth
Irene Nagle - *Zoom*

Others Present

David & Gail O'Brien - *Zoom*
Dave Gross - *Zoom*
Cheryl Michaels - *Zoom*
Gary Michaels - *Zoom*
Kathy Hemmens - *Zoom*
Nathan Apolito - *Zoom*

Regular Meeting

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

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Amend Item #4 for the Select Board to also consider approval of applying for a Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF) grant in the amount of \$460,189.47

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, 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 December 19, 2024

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of December 19, 2024, as written.

6:02 P.M. – 6:07 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David shared that we are starting to kick off some of the Municipal Energy Resiliency Program (MERP) grant work. We have submitted the required documents to the grant funds, and we have an internal meeting scheduled for the next steps. The first project will be at the Community Center focusing on the heating system.

David let everyone know that the *TextMyGov* widget is up on the Town's website to show that it is coming soon. We will be rolling that out in the next couple of weeks.

David reminded anyone listening that if they are supposed to submit a report to the Business Manager for the Town Report to please get that in ASAP. They were supposed to be submitted by 12/31.

David shared that we applied for a Better Back Roads grant for \$20K for a section of Mackville Rd.

David said that he and the Select Board will be required to attend a Code of Ethics training course which needs to be completed this year. The Town also needs to update our current code of ethics policy to follow the Statewide Municipal Code of Ethics - Act 171 that was enacted in June 2024.

Shari asked if there was any update on the reopening of 9 South Main St (the Clip Joint building). David is collaborating with several people such as the Fire Marshall and the managing entity in an attempt to move things along.

David mentioned that the pedestrian bridge bids are due January 22. We will likely need to hold a special Select Board meeting to review those bids. He also said that we received three proposals for the slope stabilization project on School Street in East Hardwick. That will be on the next meeting agenda.

No Road Foreman or Police report this evening.

6:07 P.M. – 6:11 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to set the location of the 2025 Town Meeting - *Action needed*

Tonia was present to discuss the location of the 2025 town Meeting. She needs to know where it will be in order for her to prepare the Town meeting warning.

While the hope was for it to be at the Town House this year. it will need to be at Hardwick Elementary again because the construction will not be complete at the Town House to make it handicapped accessible.

Tonia reminded everyone of the open seats for this year:

Hardwick Select Board:

One 3-year Term

Two 1-year Term

Town Clerk & Treasurer:

One 3-Year Term

Hazen Union District #26 Board:

One 3-Year Term

Two 1-Year Remaining on Three Year Term

If you wish to be considered for one of these positions, petitions are due January 27, 2025, by 5:00 p.m.

6:11 P.M. – 6:12 P.M. Item #2 – Select Board to consider approving a cannabis license renewal for VTegridy Farms - *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the cannabis license renewal for VTegridy Farms.

6:12 P.M. – 6:33 P.M. Item #3 -- Select Board to consider entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO) for the in-kind work needed for a grant match for improvements to the LVRT trailhead in East Hardwick - *Possible Action needed*

As a follow up from the last meeting, EHNO is applying for grant funds from the State of Vermont's Recreational Trails Program to undertake improvements to the East Hardwick trailhead of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT). The MOU calls for the Town to perform some of the preparation site work for the in-kind work for the grant. It also indicates that the Town will provide construction management services. It was asked what the construction management services would look like. It is anticipated that the Town will be overseeing the work that is being done by the contractor and that the Town will look over the bids. The contract would be between the chosen contractor and EHNO.

Ceilidh expressed concern about the clause that said that the Town would empty the trash and recycle receptacles. Dave Gross indicated that if we do not provide receptacles that we will have litter. Eric and Tim both felt that people should "pack in pack out."

We previously received a grant for trash and recycling receptacles. Dave Gross was able to confirm with Tracy Martin that we have four sets of receptacles for three trailheads and an extra. Eric said that if it turns out that the trash gets out of control with household garbage, etc. then we may need to revisit that clause.

Irene explained that EHNO is paying 30% of the match with in-kind and cash reserves.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to authorize the Town Manager to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO) for the in-kind work needed for a grant match for improvements to the LVRT trailhead in East Hardwick.

Irene asked about the School Street MOU that they also asked about at the last meeting. David explained that we have a slope stabilization project to do there, and he would like to hold off on that for now until we know more about what that project is going to look like.

6:33 P.M. – 6:42 P.M. Item #4 – Select Board to consider approving a municipal planning grant application for flood resiliency planning in the Granite Street historic district and Atkins Field and a Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF) grant in the amount of \$460,189.47 - *Action needed*

Kristen explained the details of the Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) for the Granite Street research. She provided a handout to show what is currently being done in areas of the Town. Granite Street is one area that does not currently have projects for flood resiliency. See attachments for the detailed handout.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve applying for a municipal planning grant for flood resiliency planning in the Granite Street historic district and Atkins Field.

In addition to the MPG, we also have the opportunity to apply for another FRCF grant for the buyout of two flood impacted properties outside of the floodplain, but in the river corridor. This would be similar to the other buyouts where we are responsible for managing the purchase and demolition. Kristen was the project manager for the last round of buyouts, and she is prepared to do this again. There is no match for this. The grant is for just over \$460,000.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve applying for a Flood Resilient Communities Fund grant.

6:42 P.M. – 7:10 P.M. Item #5 Select Board to go through the FY26 draft budget and make changes as desired and then consider approving a final draft for presentation to the voters at Town Meeting –
Action needed

Casey explained that the \$75,000 Budget Act Adjustment cannot be put into the FY26 budget because that money has to be considered FY24 money. The state issued those funds prior to June 30, 2024. The Board has to decide how to spend it since we already have it.

There was discussion about the two new positions that the Town wants to fund – a full-time police officer and a Public Works Director to oversee projects. Casey will prepare a summary of the cost of each position and what the budget would look like without those two positions. At quick calculation, it looks like the increase would be about 5% without those positions.

Casey updated the insurance figures (property, unemployment, and worker's compensation) since the last meeting because we received the 2025 figures. We know at least the first half of FY26 amounts, so they are more precise than the previous estimates.

There was discussion about the cost of trash and recycling disposal on Main Street and the trailheads. The Board has discussed several times the desire to hire a company to pick up the trash on Main Street and the trailheads. It will only be one trailhead for FY26, since the East Hardwick one likely will not be completed, and we do not know if they are getting the grant to make the improvements yet. After some discussion, we took \$1,000 from the maintenance line of recreation and put \$1,500 more in the "Downtown maintenance/trash" line in the Highway Department to account for the additional expense.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the FY26 budget in the amount of \$4,417,752 to present to the voters at Town Meeting.

Select Board Reports: Shari mentioned that she is resigning as the Hardwick representative for the Solid Waste Mgmt. District, and she would like someone to take the position. It offers a small annual stipend from the Town and meetings are once a month, typically virtually. As the March Select Board organizational meeting comes closer, when we need to appoint someone, she will do some additional community outreach via Front Porch Forum, etc. to solicit interest.

New Business: Ceilidh mentioned either having a future agenda item or maybe a retreat about the buyouts/fire in E. Hardwick and how difficult it is to find housing in Hardwick. She'd like to brainstorm how the Town could do something about housing as well as keeping people here and attracting people to come here.

Old Business: *none*

7:16 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