

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING  
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025  
HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING  
20 CHURCH ST. 3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

**Select Board**

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

**Others Present**

David Upson, Town Manager  
Casey Rowell, Business Manager  
Mike Henry, Police Chief  
Kristen Leahy, Zoning & Floodplain Admin.  
Perley Allen, Fire Chief

**Others Present**

Katherine Tolman - CAE  
Bethany Dunbar - CAE

**Regular Meeting**

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

**6:00 P.M.** – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add approval of the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of January 30, 2025, along with the Jan. 16 minutes and add an Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. § 313 for a potential litigation matter to include the Town Manager and Police Chief.

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the adjusted agenda as amended.*

**6:01 P.M. – 6:04 P.M.** Communication from the audience – Perley Allen, Fire Chief, came to let the Board know that the Fire Dept. has found a used tower truck (2000 Seagrave Apallo 105 Tower) that another department is selling at a reasonable price. He and a couple of fire department officers are planning to go look at it on Saturday. They plan to look it over thoroughly and come back to the Board at the next meeting if he thinks the Town should purchase it. The current ladder truck does not have a working pump. This one offers more height for firefighting. Eric mentioned that we have money in fire capital for the purchase and this one is significantly less than what we expected to spend a few years from now.

**6:04 P.M. – 6:06 P.M.** Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of January 16, 2025, and the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of January 30, 2025

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of January 16, 2025, as written.*

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of January 30, 2025, as written. Ceilidh abstained.*

**6:06 P.M. – 6:10 P.M.** Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David shared that a contract has been prepared for the engineering work for the slope stabilization project on School Street in East Hardwick. He sent it to Mumley Engineering for review and is waiting to hear back.

David mentioned that with regard to the Perry Ln. road issue, our lawyer is preparing a memo outlining the legal procedures needed to legally lay that road out. This is the road next to the lot that we have a purchase option with VT Huts on. He expects to have that memo for the next meeting which will help us to start the process.

David said that we submitted an Act 250 application for our gravel pit. We received a response that additional information is needed, so he will be meeting with the engineer and our consultant to work on those questions.

David mentioned that he received correspondence from Hardwick Electric Department (HED) regarding loan documents that the Select Board needs to sign. Our lawyer is currently looking over everything. He mentioned that the Select Board may need to have a special meeting next week, as the documents are needed prior to the next regular meeting.

David shared that February 20 is Northeast Kingdom Day at the State House. This is a good opportunity to rally for our needs. He hopes to attend.

David thanked Shari Cornish for being the first person to complete the required ethics training. She said it takes about 45 minutes.

Shari asked about the dumpster at the corner of Perry Lane near the Clip Joint. It is full and she wondered if it was going to be moved soon. He does not want to see it moved into the street; therefore, he has let it be where it is for now. David will inquire as to why it is still there.

**6:10 P.M. – 6:13 P.M.** Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike reported that things at HPD are going well other than being short staffed. They continue to operate with just one officer per shift, which is not ideal for many reasons, particularly safety.

Mike mentioned that they had seen an uptick in DUI crashes. He wanted to recognize Perley's lifesaving actions in a recent DUI crash. The person was upside down in the car which rolled, and the roof had peeled back. Perley crawled into the car to assist in getting the person out despite inclement weather.

Mike wanted to remind everyone of the winter parking ban and asked if we could put out a reminder to the community about this.

**6:13 P.M. – 6:14 P.M.** Item #1 – Select Board to consider approving a cannabis license renewal for Mill 47 LLC d/b/a/ The Cannabis Shop and The Clean Cannabis Company – *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve a cannabis license renewal for Mill 47 LLC d/b/a/ The Cannabis Shop and the Clean Cannabis Company.*

**6:14 P.M. – 6:33 P.M.** Item #2 -- Select Board to consider approving a grant proposal for an Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) grant through National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) - *Action needed*

This grant is similar to the 2023 EWP grant that we had last year for bank stabilization and armoring of properties at risk of future flood damage. This new grant would be for five properties. There is a 25% match. Two of the five properties are town-owned, and our match equates to about \$89,000. The other properties the owners have to provide the match. NRCS will do the engineering and then the cost will be defined.

Danny expressed concern about saying yes because he feels that we are committing to the match money, and we do not have a definite answer as to where those funds will come from. Other than the fund balance, we do not have a place from which to pull those funds. Ceilidh mentioned the \$75,000 Budget Act Adjustment funds that we received in FY24 as possible source.

Kristen explained that NRCS will do the engineering and determine the final costs, and we can back out prior to construction if the Town decides they do not want to provide the match. It may end up being less than the \$89,000 predicted once the actual engineering is done. At the very least, she would like to see us proceed so that the other three property owners can take advantage of the opportunity to have 75% of the work paid for by the grant. Further, she said this is the best chance at turning around these mitigation projects quickly and with financial assistance. It could take years for these to be done independent of the grant.

Eric thinks we should move forward because the engineering will not cost us anything to find out what the cost of the work is. We can back out prior to construction.

*Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve a grant proposal for an Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) grant through National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).*

**6:33 P.M. – 6:41 P.M.** Item #3 -- Select Board to consider approving a new social media policy – *Possible Action needed*

David explained that the Town has various departments that currently have Facebook accounts, such as recreation, trails, fire department, etc. In light of this, we need a social media policy. The Town is planning to set up a Facebook page to communicate with the public, especially in disasters. There was discussion among the board about their thoughts on this. They thought it sounded like additional workload for the staff. Kristen explained that the Neighbor to Neighbor group along with a consultant have been working on amending the Local Emergency Management Plan to include response/communication to the public. The new plan suggests that communication through Facebook is a necessary means.

The documents provided tonight were samples of two versions we could use. It was not known if the Board would consider approving one tonight, so they are marked as "draft." Option one was a template from VLCT and was very lengthy. Option two was a shorter condensed version that still covered the necessary points.

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to adopt the Social Media Policy Option 2.*

A "clean" copy of the policy will be brought to the next meeting for the Board's signatures. Ceilidh mentioned that it is important that consistent messages for emergencies are relayed among the various departments' social media pages.

**6:41 P.M. – 6:44 P.M.** Item #4 Town Manager to request to use \$150,000 out of the fund balance to purchase a simulcast repeater for the safety of our emergency personnel – *Action needed*

David said that the Town applied to Homeland Security for a grant to replace the repeater. A decision will be made on February 10, which is early next week. The repeater has been down intermittently, and officers need to be able to call for backup and have communications. It presents a serious safety risk when officers cannot communicate. This has been an ongoing issue for several years and the situation is not improving.

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to use up to \$150,000 of the fund balance for a simulcast repeater purchase if we do not get the grant award from Homeland Security.*

**6:44 P.M. – 6:45 P.M.** Item #5 – Select Board to adopt the municipal resolution for the municipal planning grant  
- *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to adopt the municipal resolution for the municipal planning grant.*

**6:45 P.M. – 6:47 P.M.** Item #6 – Select Board to adopt the municipal resolution for Downtown Transportation Fund- *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to adopt the municipal resolution for the Downtown Transportation Fund grant.*

**6:47 P.M. – 6:51 P.M.** Item #7 Select Board to consider approving a letter of commitment for a grant for CAE- Atkins Field- *Possible Action needed*

Katherine Tolman, Grants Manager at the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE), was present to explain that they are applying for a grant to assist with flood resiliency for the Atkins field/Granite Street area. The Town would not be a recipient or need to provide any financial support. CAE is only looking for a letter of support. See attachments for the details. The letter would need to be signed by Kristen as the Zoning and Floodplain Administrator.

*Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to provide a letter of support for a grant for the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) and authorize appropriate town officials to sign as needed.*

**6:51 P.M. –6:58 P.M.** Item #8 Business Manager to give Quarter 2 FY25 Budget Update

The Business Manager provided a budget update through the first half of fiscal year 2025 (12/31/24). Both revenues and expenses are on track. See attachments for the details.

David explained that the Caledonia County taxes have not been paid because he is not authorizing payment. He feels strongly that we have gotten zero support from the County level and does not intend to sign off on the payment to them. He said that the Board can authorize payment, but he does not intend to.

**6:58 P.M. – 6:59 P.M.** Item #9 Select Board to complete the annual Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards - *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to complete the annual Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards.*

**Select Board Reports:** none

**New Business:** David received two legislative updates from Mike Southworth. Mike had previously asked if it could be incorporated into the meetings. It was decided that we would put the report into the Select Board's shared folder, and we would also put into the meeting attachments.

Ceilidh Galloway-Kane reminded everyone about the pre-town meeting on February 20 at 5:30. She said that we have some big asks in this budget. She said it is important that we look at the big picture with all of the projects we have going on. The fund balance has gone down and with tonight's financial commitments, she is concerned it will decrease even more. She looks forward to engaging with residents at that meeting and at Town Meeting.

Casey mentioned that she received the FY24 draft audit earlier this week and is working on the Management Discussion & Analysis. She hopes to have the report to the Board by the end of the month.

**Old Business:** Shari reminded everyone that the Hardwick representative for the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District is open as she officially resigned. The commitment is about 1 hour per month and then sub-committees if you decide to join any.

**7:09 P.M.** *Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 to discuss a potential legal litigation to include the Town Manager and Police Chief.*

**7:16 P.M.** Exited Executive Session. *No action taken.*

**7:17 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