

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 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

Others Present

Casey Rowell, Business Manager

Others Present

Regular Meeting

6:00 P.M. – Casey Rowell, Business Manager, called the meeting to order.

6:01 P.M. Reorganization of the Select Board, Business Manager to take nominations for Chair:

- a) Floor opens for Select Board Chair nominations
- b) Board votes to elect Chairperson - *Action needed*

Ceilidh Galloway-Kane nominated Eric Remick for Chairperson, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously for Eric to be the Chairperson.

- c) Eric Remick, Chair, assumed control of the meeting.

6:01 P.M. Election for Vice-Chair of the Select Board - *Action needed*

Shari Cornish nominated Ceilidh Galloway-Kane for Vice-Chair, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously for Ceilidh to be the Vice-Chair.

6:02 P.M. Approval of the minutes of the Regular Board meeting of February 20, 2025, and the minutes of the Informational Meeting of February 20, 2025 - *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of February 20, 2025, and the minutes of the Informational meeting of February 20, 2025, both as written.

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

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

6:02 P.M. – 6:13 P.M. Item # 1 Town Appointments - *Action needed*

On the agenda, there were a few blanks to be filled in. The group discussed who we would fill the slots with. Tim Ricciardello agreed to be the alternate for NEK Communication Union District. Eric will be the Agent to Convey Real Estate again this year and Ceilidh agreed to be the alternate for the CVSWMD Board. She was the alternate last year as well. We do not have anyone as the primary rep for that board as of now, so we will leave that blank.

- David Upson, Jr., Civil Defense/Emergency Management Coordinator
- Bill Chidsey, Town Energy Coordinator
- _____, CVSWMD Representative
- Ceilidh Galloway-Kane as CVSWMD Alternate Representative
- Lawrence Hamel, Town Service Officer
- Eric Remick as Agent to Convey Real Estate
- Shari Cornish, as Board Representative to Sign Warrants
- Shari Cornish as, NEKarts Board Representative
- Paul Fixx, as NEK Communication Union District Representative
- Tim Ricciardello, as NEK Communication Union District Alternate Representative
- Eric Remick, as Hardwick Trails Committee Rep.
- Danny Hale, Hardwick/Woodbury Rail Trail
- David Upson, as Town Safety Officer
- Maya McCoy, Town Website Coordinator
- Kristen Leahy, Town Representative for NVDA
- Eric Remick, Town Health Officer
- David Upson, Jr., Deputy Health Officer
- Shari Cornish, as Hardwick Downtown Partnership Board Representative

Note: The appointment of the Health Officer is through the Vermont Department of Health. Eric Remick is the Health Officer by default as the Select Board Chair and David Upson, Town Manager, is the Deputy Health Officer.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Board voted unanimously to approve the slate of appointments, as read, including the blanks that were filled in from the agenda.

6:13 P.M. – 6:16 P.M. Item #2 Establish Select Board Calendar - *Action needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the calendar as presented. Meetings will be the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, except in July 2025, there will be one meeting on July 10, and in January 2026, the meeting will be the 2nd and 4th Thursday due to New Year's Day. See attached calendar.

6:16 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Item #3 Business Manager to discuss an opportunity for zero percent borrowing from the Vermont Bond Bank to bring the lift stations up to codes and standards and to increase capacity for future – *Possible Action needed*

The Vermont Bond Bank has a program called the Small System Capacity & Resiliency Program (SCRP) that would help us to bring our lift stations up to codes and standards after they flooded twice, as well as increase capacity for the future. The total offer letter is \$1.7M at 0% interest (draw as we need). The initial Grant Anticipation Note (GAN) will be payable in full one year from the closing date. If needed, the initial GAN will be refunded with another GAN or a multi-year note. The intent of the program is to provide up to three years of cost-free capital with principal repaid with proceeds from FEMA and the State of Vermont. After proceeds from FEMA and the State of Vermont are received and used to pay down the loan, the required local match (up to 25% of FEMA-endorsed project costs) may be eligible for forgiveness. (Additional forgiveness, potentially up to \$1 million, may be available subject to DEC approval.) Three years after the closing date, unless the loan is refunded by another program or lender, any unforgiven outstanding principal will be amortized over the next 4 years.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to move forward with the grant anticipation note for \$1.7M with VT Bond Bank and authorize the Town Manager to sign the commitment letter.

Casey provided a quick update on the 428 request that we have into FEMA for our wastewater plant. She and David had a recent meeting with our FEMA program manager and representatives from Guidehouse (third party that the State uses for FEMA related areas). They indicated that the process has moved on to the benefit cost analysis phase and that we may see an offer letter from FEMA in the near future. We do not have an exact date, but it was originally thought to be July before we would hear. Now it sounds like we might get an offer in a couple of months instead.

6:24 P.M. – 6:28 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to review and consider selecting an engineering firm for the design and engineering work for the East Main Street Bridge #31 and authorize the Town Manager to sign a contract with the chosen company – *Possible Action needed*

The Town received two proposals. The price of the two proposals varied significantly.

Horizons Engineering \$69,900 Engineering only

Dubois & King \$367,457 Engineering only and \$147,124 for Construction Admin (if we wanted)

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to accept the Horizons Engineering proposal for \$69,900 to do the engineering work for the East Main Street Bridge #31 and authorize the Town Manager to sign a contract.

Select Board Reports: Shari, as the representative of both the Downtown Partnership and NEKarts, shared that these two organizations had unauthorized funds taken from them by their bookkeeper. She reported that since it was discovered, both organizations received reimbursement for the money that was taken.

New Business: The Business Manager let the Board know that the 2019 unmarked police car needs costly repairs to the tune of \$5,500-\$6,000. The repairs are almost as much as the car is valued at. It is scheduled to be replaced in FY26, but we might need to look at replacing it sooner. We have funds in the equipment capital fund for the purchase. Casey is going to research a couple of options but is letting the Board know that they might be seeing a purchase request in the next couple of meetings. Tim suggested shopping around for different repair shops.

Ceilidh asked if we have ever had a designated Select Board member who attends the Library Trustee meetings, similar to how someone attends the Hardwick Electric meetings. She would like to see this happen. The Board generally agreed that this would be a good idea.

Old Business: Danny asked for an update about the pedestrian bridge. Casey explained that SE Group and Engineering Ventures have provided documents to say that the bids received are reasonable and fair. This was passed on to USDA. At the last meeting, it was thought that we would still be short on funding even if we obtained the second Downtown Transportation grant that we recently applied for at the end of February. That calculation was actually using the bridge cost on the last round of bids, not the most recent amount of \$775,000. Casey crunched the numbers with the new bridge cost and if we can get the Downtown Transportation grant, we would have the funds we need to move forward. USDA will give us a "notice to proceed" once they confirm we have all of the funding. The Board wondered when we would hear about the grant decision. Casey did not know the timeframe and she will check with Tracy tomorrow. We have to do this project during this construction season, or we will lose several of our funding sources.

Danny questioned if the buyout of the Civic Standard building would affect the project. Shari said that buyout is in early stages and was just a placeholder for the program and that we should not be concerned about that at the moment. The Board wants to talk again at the next meeting about the bridge, specifically when we are going to hear the grant decision.

6:44 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