

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, March 20, 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

Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk
Tracy Martin, CDC

Others Present

Sarah Braese, HED
Paul Fixx
Katt Tolman

Regular Meeting

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

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add an additional item to approve a letter of support to Center of Agriculture Economy (CAE) for their application to a T-Mobile hometown grant for \$50,000 for solar array on the roof of the Food Hub at the Hardwick Yellow Barn complex.

Amanda requested to add an Executive session per 1 V.S.A. § 313 for contract discussion.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, 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 March 6, 2025

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 March 6, 2025.

6:02 P.M. – 6:03 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden & Amanda Fecteau

The mud season so far has been quite mild. There was one section on Stratton Road that broke up, somewhere between 300 and 400 feet in distance, but the crew was able to quickly fix it. The crew has hauled other materials and fixed other areas that are starting to break up, but nothing too major. Overall, the roads are in fairly good shape. The crew is waiting for the potholes to dry out a little bit before fixing them. All the roads have been posted for the last couple of weeks, and the signs will come down as soon as road conditions improve.

There's been about half a dozen culverts and three catch basins that they've had to thaw out.

Banners have been switched out and the crew has also been hauling winter sand back to the shop to get ahead.

*The Select Board did the Hardwick Electric Report first. *

6:09 P.M. – 6:12 P.M. Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Report – Given by Mike Henry-

Mike reported that he has one staff member in the part time academy. The Town has put out an ad for the full-time officer position, and Mike is looking into the price of a new car and the equipment.

Eric asked about the repeater. Mike stated that everything has been ordered, but it will take months to come in. In the meantime, he's hoping to switch out the repeater on West Hill, which will hopefully improve the service, and Mike is also hoping to connect to fiber, which could also take a while.

6:03 P.M. – 6:09 P.M. Hardwick Electric Report (HED)- Give by Sarah Braese-

Sarah reported that the Vermont Public Utility Commission requires monthly outages to be reported. The outages are improving quite a bit. One reason is due to tree trimming.

In February of 2025, HED contracted with TSI to perform inspection and diagnostic test of two regulators experiencing mechanical issues, as well as to conduct oil sampling and Dissolved Gas Analysis (DGA). There will be more information to come on this.

Sarah reported that the power supply increased in January 2025, and she will continue to monitor this.

The integrative plan is due May 1st, so the staff is working hard to finish that project.

HED's proposed budget passed on Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

Lastly, Sarah is working on staff gaps, and planning for the future for staff retirement.

Danny mentioned that he saw the crew on Lower Cherry Street and it's great to see a full staff.

Ceilidh thanked Sarah for providing a report.

Paul Fixx stated that NEK Broadband is working with HED to put fiber into the office.

6:12 P.M. – 6:14 P.M. Item #1- Select Board to consider approving several liquor license renewals– *Action needed*

Tonia provided a list of liquor and tobacco license renewals.

First Class license for: The Cork & Fork, LLC bpali, llc d/b/a Caja Taqueria
Hardwick Post No. 7 American Legion Inc.

Second Class Licenses for:

Global Montelle Group, Corp. d/b/a Jiffy Mart

Third Class Licenses for:

The Cork & Fork, LLC

Hardwick Post No. 7 American Legion Inc.

Outside Consumption Permit for:

Hardwick Post No. 7 American Legion Inc.

Tobacco License:

Global Montelle Group, Corp. d/b/a Jiffy Mart

Tobacco Substitute Endorsement:

Global Montelle Group, Corp. d/b/a Jiffy Mart

Upon motion by Danny Hale seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the liquor and tobacco licenses.

6:14 P.M. – 6:18 P.M. Item #2 –Select Board to authorize the purchase of new Water Meter reading equipment up to \$15,000- *Action needed*

Danny mentioned the fact that the meter installation project needs to be completed. The Board would like to discuss the plan for this project at the April 3rd meeting.

Upon motion by Celidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted by majority to approve the purchase of the new Water Meter reading equipment not to exceed \$15,000.

Eric-Yes

Ceilidh- Yes

Tim- No

Shari- Yes

Danny- No

6:18 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Item #3 – Update on the Downtown Transportation grant award date for the Pedestrian Bridge and Select Board to discuss alternate funding if we don't receive the grant - *Possible Action needed*

Tracy spoke on this grant and stated that the Town of Hardwick is eligible for this grant, but the decision won't be until April 28th. Due to the decision being so close to when the project needs to start, the Town needs to discuss alternate funding in case the grant isn't given to the Town.

Eric asked Tracy if anyone talked to ACCD to see if using Town funds would compromise the grant. Both Tracy and Shari stated that it wouldn't compromise the outcome.

Upon motion by Danny Hale seconded by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, the Select Board voted to move forward and

approve using \$200,000 out of the fund balance for the Pedestrian Bridge project and to continue to seek additional funding.

6:24 P.M. – 6:33 P.M. Item #4 –Select Board to authorize the Town Manager to draft a letter of support for the NEK Broadband so support an application for federal (BEAD) funding. - *Possible Action needed*

Paul reported that NEK Broadband has reached 665 miles so far, and within that perimeter, 1200 customers have signed up already. He stated that residents can go to get.nekbroadband.org to find out if you can be a part of the NEK Broadband.

Next, Paul stated that 29 million dollars is coming to Vermont, but about half of that is coming to the NEK. The letter of support is to express support for the expansion of broadband infrastructure.

Upon motion by Danny Hale seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the letter of support for the NEK Broadband application to support the BEAD funding.

6:33 P.M. – 6:35 P.M. Item #5 – Select Board to review and approve the Town's Annual Financial Plan for Highway state aid- *Action Needed*

Upon motion by Danny Hale seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the Town's Annual Financial Plan for Highway state aid.

6:35 P.M. – 6:37 P.M. Item #6 – Select Board to consider approving a grant proposal for a Municipal Highway Grant to help pave Center Road. - *Action Needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the grant proposal for a Municipal Highway Grant to help pave Center Road in FY26.

6:37 P.M. – 6:43 P.M. Item #7 – Select Board approve a letter of support to Center of Agriculture Economy (CAE) for their application to a T-Mobile hometown grant for \$50,000 for solar for solar array on the roof of the Food Hub at the Hardwick Yellow Barn complex.

Katt Tolman, from CAE, reported that the solar array is coming from Green Mountain Solar, and the cost is \$430,000 but the grant that they are applying for is only \$50,000. The grant is a non-federal grant, and there's no responsibility from the Town on this project.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to appoint the Town Manager to sign the letter of support for the T-mobile hometown grant for the amount of \$50,000.

Ceilidh stated that there's a lot of different funders within this project and asked how it would work if CAE applied for the solar arrays. Eric stated that yes there are many funders within this project, but there are three tenants within the Yellow Barn complex. Within negotiations, CAE knew that needing refrigeration would drive up costs, so they asked if they could place a solar array on the accelerator building. The solar array is referenced within their leased, and it's CAE's responsibility to take care of this as its listed as one of their assets. The credits from this solar array would be used internally to provide energy savings from the refrigeration.

Select Board Reports: None

New Business: Ceilidh asked the Business Manager to provide a report as to where the Town is at with the fund balance, including the \$200,000 for the Pedestrian Bridge.

Old Business:

- Amanda reported that the Town has been using the TextMyGov platform, and it was recently used as a communication platform about high water and potential flooding. It worked well, and the Town office received really good feedback.
- Danny and Shari both asked for the job description for the Public Works Director. They would like to see a job description drafted within the next couple of weeks as the new fiscal year is quickly approaching.
- Danny asked if the Town has received the \$200,000 from the Yellow Barn project, and Eric stated no.
- Danny stated that he recently took the ethic's training and is requesting a discussion about this topic at the next Select Board meeting. He would like all of the board members to complete the training before the discussion.
- Shari stated that the Downtown Partnership is planning for Spring Fest. <https://www.hardwickdowntown.org/> has a lot of information about the Spring Fest. Danny asked about the truck pulls, and Shari stated that he should talk to the committee.
- Danny asked about the Police Cruiser sitting in front of the Hardwick Elementary School (HES) all day with the blue lights. Mike stated that there were horse rides for the kids on which they left HES, crossed onto Terrace Hill Road, and then came back to the school.
- Tracy reported that the Better Connections project is wrapping up this month and the presentation will be on the next agenda.

6:50 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 for contract discussion.

7:10 P.M. Exited Executive Session. *No action taken.*

7:10 P.M. Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: _____
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator

Minutes approved by: _____
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair