

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, May 15, 2025
HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3rd FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson Jr. Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Alberta Miller, Assistant Town Clerk
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman
Kristen Leahy, Floodplain Administrator

Others Present

Sarah Braese- HED
Larry Fliegelman

Regular Meeting

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

6:01 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – None

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 May 1, 2025

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of May 1, 2025.

6:02 P.M. – 6:11 P.M. Hardwick Town Manager's Report – Given by David Upson Jr.

David stated that the downtown area looks great.

The town office is working with SE Group to finalize the documents for the Pedestrian Bridge project. Once the documents are agreed upon, the documents are going to be sent to the Town's lawyer for an opinion. The documents should be signed soon by all parties. With that, David stated that at the next Select Board meeting, he would like to approve the bid for the contractor.

The Town is looking for bids for the Trail Head proposals, and paving bids for Center Road. Please see the website for further details.

David is working with FEMA on the best solution for the Fire Station as it has had major flooding in the past two years.

An engineer has looked at Hideaway Acres and at the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) for upgrades. FEMA is working with the Town on the WWTF and is deciding on the best option. The Town has not received their decision; however, the deadline for the Town to appeal FEMA's decision is July 14, 2025.

Eric mentioned that currently the Town would like to have the Fire Station, the Highway Department, and the Rescue Squad all on the Creamery Road property, but the layout and the costs need to be discussed further. David mentioned that the Rescue Squad is trying to figure out if they want to own or lease their building; however, the Town could potentially pay for the Fire Station and the Rescue Squad and then bond the Highway Garage. After discussion, the board would like to have a bond vote at the 2026 Town Meeting for the new Town Garage. There will be more discussion on this at the next Select Board meeting.

6:11 P.M. – 6:18 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported they have graded several roads, moved the silt pile in the Town's pit, and painted the crosswalks. They also had a water leak on South Main Street that took a few nights due to unforeseen circumstances, but this has been resolved.

Next week, the crew will hang the new banners and put the flags up, in addition to finishing up painting downtown. Tom stated that he decided to use the red and white paint and will use the same color in East Hardwick.

Within the next week, the crew will receive a load of hot mix and will patch some areas up before Memorial Day.

Eric asked if the Town updated the water inventory to include the 10-inch water clamp that was needed for the South Main Street water repair. Tom stated that yes it was noted but clamps along South Main Street vary between 8 and 12 inches.

Shari asked about the sweeper. Tom stated that the sweeper came to town, but he will check in with them for further updates. The town crew will touch things up this coming week.

Shari asked about the crosswalk near the Library and Tom said that once the sidewalk construction is done, he will fix the crosswalk in that area.

Lastly, Tom reported that they got all of the names for the water meter pits, but the Town is just waiting on the parts.

6:18 P.M. – 6:18 P.M. Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Report – Given by David Upson Jr.

David reported that he and Amanda fixed the sign on Mill Street. Officer Gagnon has been charging the other radar signs and moving them to various locations.

6:18 P.M. – 6:25 P.M. Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Report – Given by Sarah Braese

Sarah reported that HED has submitted several filings including the entry plan documents which encompasses project and system improvement analysis. This has been challenging because at the same time, HED has also kicked off a power system study which will occur over the next few months. The comprehensive report for the power system study will be completed in November. This report will help identify and prioritize system improvement projects and work towards costs and the greater benefit to reduce system loss.

Sarah reported that there has been a proposed rate increase of 13.24%. This was filed April 16, 2025. This increase is caused by operating management costs and power costs, mainly transmission. Sarah encourages customers to communicate during the public process to the Public Utilities Commission or the Department of Public Service. Their recommendation on whether to accept or reduce the rate increase is expected to be at the end of the week.

There is a feasibility study being conducted on the Wolcott Hydro Plant. HED issued a request for qualifications. Bids were received and evaluated, and on Tuesday the commissioners authorized the preferred vendor. Once the feasibility study is done, HED will know the cost and best path forward for future operations and then will move onto design and construction. HED is getting pressure from FEMA, but this will be a lengthy process and HED is moving forward the best they can.

There are union contract negotiations occurring now, which will play a role in the operating costs.

HED is working on a GIS project which will help keep track of outage management, assets, and asset management.

Next, Sarah reported that VPPSA has an automated metering infrastructure (AMI) project going on. There are utility companies that are testing out the specific meters needed for this project. Once the testing is completed, other utility companies can order the meters. The meters will determine the equipment needed, which will ultimately increase energy usage.

HED is exploring other funding mechanisms. They are looking into bond options, and at the next Select Board meeting they are requesting a line of credit increase. This increase will bring them in line with other utilities and give them about a 6-month cash reserve.

Eric asked if Hardwick was one of the test sites for the AMI project. Sarah said no that Swanton Electric is the test site.

Eric also asked how people should communicate about the rate increase and Sarah said to go to <https://epuc.vermont.gov/>.

6:25 P.M. – 6:26 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to consider approving several liquor and tobacco licenses-
Action needed

Second Class Licenses for:

Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC
Buffalo Mountain Co-Op, Inc.

Tobacco License:

Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC

Tobacco Substitute Endorsement:

Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the above liquor and tobacco licenses as stated.

6:26 P.M. – 6:27 P.M. Item #2 – Certificate of Application for Gate's Salvage Yard, Inc. to continue operating their salvage yard - *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve Gate's Salvage Yard application for 5 years.

6:27 P.M. – 6:31 P.M. Item #3 – Select Board to review and consider selecting an engineering firm for the design and engineering work for the Fisher Folly bridge and authorize the Town Manager to sign a contract with the chosen company – *Action needed*

David reported that the Town received \$113,000 for this project. What is left over from the bid amount can be used towards construction.

The Town received one bid from Horizon's in the amount of \$78,700.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve Horizons Engineering bid, the design and construction for 100% of the fund, and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the contract.

6:31 P.M. – 6:33 P.M. Item #4 – Select Board to review and consider selecting an engineering firm for the design and engineering work for the Tucker Brook & Carey Road and authorize the Town Manager to sign a contract with the chosen company – *Action needed*

David reported that the Town received \$250,000 for this project. What is left over from the bid amount can be used towards construction.

The Town received one bid from Horizon's in the amount of \$118,200.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve Horizons Engineering bid, the design and construction for 100% of the fund, and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the contract.

6:33 P.M. – 6:43 P.M. Item #5 – Select Board to discuss emergency response efforts and potential purchase-
Action needed

The past two summers, Hardwick has faced major flooding events in which the Town has needed to open emergency shelters and provide residents with supplies for cleanup. The Town wants to be proactive in the future in case the Town faces more emergencies. This will assist a lot of businesses in town and is a way to help the community at large.

David explained that the Town received \$75,000 from the Governor's office to spend on response and recovery.

The Town has recently purchased a trailer with some of that money to move the excavator around, leaving around \$40,000.

Kristen Leahy, the Zoning and Floodplain Administrator, would like to use a part of the remaining balance on purchasing more supplies for the supply and support shelter. In addition, David mentioned that he would like to purchase a storage container to house all of these supplies. The container would be located at the Police Department. David is requesting no more than \$20,000 for the purchase of the container and the supplies.

Tim asked when we must spend the money by. David mentioned that if it's not spent by June 30th, it will go into the fund balance.

Shari stated that the Town should look at wholesale prices. Kristen stated that she got three comparisons on all of the items, and the costs that she provided were wholesale prices.

Shari also mentioned that some of the supplies wouldn't be able to be kept in the storage container due to temperature. David stated that we would go through the inventory and keep the items necessary in a different location. Kristen stated that the storage container would also have built in shelves to keep track of the inventory easier.

See attached reports of the requested items.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the purchase of emergency response equipment, and the storage container; not to exceed \$20,000.

6:43 P.M. – 6:46 P.M. Item #6 – Select Board to review and approve the loan documents for the SCRF program through Vermont Bond Bank for Lift Station repairs- *Action needed*

In the past two summers, the lift stations have received significant damage from the floods and now needs some major upgrades. The Vermont Bond Bank is providing the Town of Hardwick with a \$1.7 million loan at 0% to make the flood repairs and incorporate additional capacity. If we increase capacity, \$1M would be forgiven and the balance of the loan is funding for the repairs to be paid back with FEMA funds.

David recently met with Aldrich & Elliott (A&E), and they found a set of plans to upgrade the Wastewater Treatment Facility that had the lift stations incorporated. A&E took the original plans and will redesign the lift station design.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the loan documents for the SCRF program through the Vermont Bond Bank for Lift Station Repairs.

6:47 P.M. – 6:48 P.M. Item #7 – Select Board to sign the FY26 letter of intent for the Municipal Roads Grants in Aid program and authorize the Town Manager to sign- *Action needed*

The Town has done this program for at least the past 5-6 years, and Tom says it's a huge help!

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the FY26 letter of intent for the Municipal Roads Grant and to authorize the Town Manager to sign it.

6:48 P.M. – 6:51 P.M. Item #8 – Select Board to consider appointing a Town Health Officer – *Action needed*

Eric mentioned that as of the beginning of 2024, the Fire Marshall has been doing the rental buildings in Town, which has been helpful.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to appoint Eric Remick as Town Health Officer. Eric abstained.

6:51 P.M. – 6:54 P.M. Item #9 – Select Board to discuss moving the June 19 Select Board meeting to June 26 as the 19th is a holiday. – *Possible action needed*

When the Select Board set the 2025-2026 calendar back in March, June 19 was one of the dates that the Select Board was scheduled to have a meeting. June 19 is a federal holiday, and the offices will be closed; therefore, it is proposed to push the meeting to June 26.

Danny brought up the July meeting. The Town usually only has one meeting in July- the third Thursday; however, Amanda reminded them due to conflicts, the meeting this year will be on July 10. This change was presented to the board back in March and was placed on the original calendar that was approved back in March.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the change to the Select Board calendar to move the June 19 meeting to June 26.

6:55 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. Item #10 – Select Board to discuss the job description for the new Public Works Director- *Action needed*

Shari mentioned that in previous discussion, the job description has stated Public Works Director and Public Works Coordinator. She would like to see it listed as Director. Danny disagreed, stating that he thinks director means this job will have supervision.

Eric mentioned that since this is a new position there may be things that will need to change once the Town hires someone. He believes that this is another member of the team to help with projects, buildings, and the Town's vehicles.

David mentioned that he does want a member of the Select Board to be part of the hiring committee.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted three to one to authorize the Town Manager's office staff to post the ad and organize the hiring with the presented job description.

Eric- Yea

Shari- Yea

Tim- Yea

Danny- No

Select Board Reports: Shari reported that the Town House project is moving along and is likely to finish mid-July.

New Business: David mentioned that there will be an agenda item at the next meeting to repeal the trash ordinance as it is unconstitutional.

Old Business: None

7:06 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