

**0MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, June 26, 2025**  
**HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING**  
**20 CHURCH ST. 3<sup>rd</sup> 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  
Kristen Leahy, Floodplain Administrator  
Tracy Martin

**Others Present**

Michael Ambrosino -HED  
Norma Wiesen  
Paul Cillo  
Rachel Kane  
Dave Gross  
Kris Burke

**Regular Meeting**

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

**6:00 P.M.** – Set/Adjust Agenda – The Town Manager stated that he wanted to take off the Hardwick Foreman Report and the Hardwick Police Report as both supervisors are not able to attend the meeting tonight. David also wanted to make note that Renaud Demers was supposed to give the Hardwick Electric Report; however, it will be Michael Ambrosino instead, and lastly, we need to add to item #8 and include a banner application for Department of Children and Families.

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the adjusted agenda as stated.*

**6:01 P.M. – 6:09 P.M.** Communication from the audience – Rachel Kane, co-chair of the Hardwick Conservation Commission reported that Ken & Chris Davis have 318 acres for sale off of Wright Farm Road. The Conservation Commission is interested in acquiring that property and making it a Town Forest, and hopefully will allow people to hike, bike, and enjoy the property. Rachel explained that there are grant funds for fair market value; however, the grant deadline is early Fall. Rachel is asking to be placed on the next agenda for more discussion including what it will cost and how the Town will be involved including accepting the land.

**6:09 P.M.** – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of June 5, 2025

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of June 5, 2025.*

**6:10 P.M. – 6:22 P.M.** Hardwick Town Manager's Report – Given by David Upson Jr.

David reported that he continues to work with FEMA, and that those discussions are moving ahead.

The Town of Hardwick has moved into Region One which is out of Boston, so mostly the focus is on the Fire Station and the Wastewater Treatment Plant. FEMA has a meeting with the engineer, Aldrich & Elliott (A&E) next week to discuss the repairs.

David has signed the VHB contract with a slight change in scope for the South Main Street/Mill Street study. There will be public engagement as part of the process.

David has been in communication with the contractor, CCS, for the wall repair and pedestrian bridge replacement. The attorney has approved the contract to proceed with the wall, and the attorney is reviewing the bridge contract and that will be given to CCS to proceed soon. David also mentioned that the power for the project is halfway done. Once the power is over to the Diner, then the pole can be moved.

David is also working with VASA on a project on Wright Farm Road.

The meter pit project is moving forward. The Town is getting releases signed by homeowners, and preconstruction photos.

The Town Crew has been working on the Church Street sidewalk and have completed about 250' so far. This is done through a grant. They have also cleaned brush from Creamery Road. Danny asked if the Town plans to clean brush from sidewalks/roadways throughout Town. David mentioned that it's on the list.

The Town has been working on the repeater on West Hill for the Police Department. There needs to be heat pumps installed. Eric asked about the completion and David said the Town is still waiting for equipment to come in.

The Hardwick Police Department has been working with Vermont State Police on a suspicious death that occurred last week.

Ceilidh mentioned that she was approached by two bikers who needed assistance to find the Rail Trail. She was wondering if there were any signs. Tracy Martin, Community Development Coordinator, stated that the State has directional signs coming.

Shari asked about the environmental report on the Town's property next to 9 South Main Street (where the Clip Joint is located). The last report that David received was that they had to hire another environmental consultant. Shari asked if there's anything the Town can do, and David stated that the Town can talk to Rural Edge. Shari stated that Bemis Block tenants are also having issues with air conditioning, and David stated that the Select Board might want to consider talking to the managers of Rural Edge and explain their concerns.

**6:22 P.M. – 6:33 P.M.** Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Report – Given by Michael Ambrosino

Michael reported that HED is still working on the rate increase. There will be a public hearing and the information for this hearing will be posted on www. <https://hardwickelectric.com/> .

Micheal reported that there is an engineering study being conducted on the Wolcott Hydro Plant. HED has spent \$1.5M to date to try and repair that and hopes not to spend more money until the study is completed. If it can be fully repaired, then the estimated completion date will be in 2027.

There have been union negotiations happening throughout the month, and they are close to a fair agreement.

HED Commissioners are discussing ways to inform the public when a power outage occurs.

HED Commissioners are also discussing a new process for customer relations, especially new customers and the steps needed in order to get power.

Lynn Gedanken' s term is up on June 30, and she has decided not to run again. Michael stated that he appreciated her commitment, and she would be missed. The Select Board will appoint new commissioners at the July 10 meeting.

Ceilidh asked what the increase will be, and Michael stated 13.4%. Eric stated that the PUC will decide if it's a fair percentage; however, the rates will go into effect before the PUC makes their final decision. Michael stated that if the PUC decreases the percentage, then rate payers will get rebates.

Ceilidh heard an interesting article about energy and when peak times were for running appliances. Michael stated that although there are peak times, it's not individual based and won't change your bill. They go off the transmission data. Running appliances affect the transmission overall, so the more you can control individual uses, the better, but generally the peak months are in the wintertime.

Danny stated that he and Eric met with Sarah on customer service and wanted to compliment her on how well she's doing.

David mentioned that VTOutages is an option for getting information out. Michael stated that they have tried that but they're having trouble getting the real time updates posted into the system. David mentioned TextMyGov has worked well for the Town. Michael stated that they had talked about that option.

**6:33 P.M. – 6:34 P.M.** Item #1 - Select Board to consider approving liquor license renewal- *Action Needed*

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the second-class liquor license for DG Retail, LLC d/b/a Dollar General.*

**6:34P.M. – 6:36 P.M.** Item #2 – Select Board to consider approving the 2025 Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to adopt the Hardwick Plan – 2025, including the 2024 Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) addendum, as the Town of Hardwick's official emergency operations and recovery framework. This adoption affirms that The Hardwick Plan- 2025 constitutes the Town's current LEMP, with the 2024 addendum serving as a supporting annex for compliance and operational reference.*

**6:36 P.M. – 6:38 P.M.** Item #3 – Select Board to choose a contractor for FY26 fuel purchases of heating oil, propane, and diesel – *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve Irving for the Town's heating oil, propane, and on-road diesel.*

**6:38 P.M. – 6:47 P.M.** Item #4 – Floodplain Administrator, Kristen Leahy, to give flood resiliency update

Kristen mentioned the Flood Mitigation & Modeling 101 event that will be held on July 7 at Vermont State University- Johnson Campus at 6:30 p.m. and stated that at least one Select Board member should attend to get clarification on how communities can mitigate future flood impacts.

Kristen mentioned the Writing for Flood Recovery workshops will be held on July 10 and 17 at the Jeudevine Memorial Library. Those impacted by flooding can write or share the memories or struggles of the flood and the process that everyone is experiencing.

The Town closed on two more buyouts. The buyouts were located on Route 14 South and Sawmill Lane. There will be two more buyouts in July- another property on Sawmill Lane, and another property on Route 14 South.

Kristen has been collaborating with contractors on 41 Brush Street. She has received 9 RFQ's and has sent them to the State for review. The State handles all of the FEMA buyouts; however, after receiving and reviewing the urgency of removing the structure on the property, the State has kicked this one property back to the Town. The State will still work with the Town on decisions, but the Town will manage the agreements. The amount of funds from the State has not yet been given to the Town, but the contractors all came in at around \$50,000. At the July 10 meeting, there will be more discussion about this property.

Kristen has been collaborating with a consultant for an RFQ for Granite Street. There will be more discussion on July 10.

The Planning Commission is working on amendments to the zoning bylaws and bringing things into compliance for a zoning district for East Hardwick.

Eric went to a flood safety training regarding flood safety act/river corridor information.

**6:47 P.M. – 6:54 P.M.** Item #5 -Hardwick Planning Commission to recommend to the Hardwick Select Board the adoption of the 2025 Better Connections Plan as an addendum to the Hardwick Municipal Plan (2019). Furthermore, the HPC supports the dedication of the 2025 Better Connections Plan to Meredith Holch. – *Action Needed*

David Gross, Planning Commission Chair, reported that the Planning Commission has been working on the Better Connections plan (2025) and has developed a comprehensive community engagement process that included participation of three State agencies, and local organizations in order to create a detailed action plan to revitalize East Hardwick. It reflects the broad, town-wide goals of the Hardwick Municipal Plan (2019) through specific, place-based projects that improve livability, mobility, resilience, and economic vitality. David stated Meredith Holch was actively involved in this process and the Hardwick Planning commission would like to dedicate the Better Connections plan (2025) to her.

The Better Connections Plan supports and complements the Municipal Plan. After thorough review, the Hardwick Planning Commission confirms there are no conflicts between the two documents. Instead, the Better Connections Plan provides a valuable implementation framework to realize the community's long-range planning vision at the neighborhood level.

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to adopt the 2025 Better Connections Plan as an addendum to the 2019 Hardwick Municipal Plan. Furthermore, the Hardwick Select Board approves the dedication of the 2025 Better Connections Plan to the memory of Meredith Holch.*

**6:54 P.M. – 6:55 P.M.** Item #6 - Select Board to consider approving a Manufacturers Tier 1 small cultivators' renewal for *All Bliss Cannabis LLC* – *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the Manufacturers Tier 1 Small Cultivators license renewal for All Bliss Cannabis LLC.*

**6:55 P.M. – 6:57 P.M.** Item #7 – Select Board to review and approve the FY25 audit engagement with Sullivan Powers & Co. – *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the FY25 audit engagement with Sullivan Powers & Co.*

The Select Board stated that the Town needs to put this out to bid. Kristen stated that it's very hard to get bids from audit firms. David stated that the Business Manager has been following the procurement policy and has been putting it out to bid when needed.

**6:57 P.M. – 6:59 P.M.** Item #8 – Select Board to consider approving a banner application for Circus Smirkus banner to be hung on Wolcott Street August 8 – August 17, 2025, and a banner application for the Department of Children and Families for a 2-week period on the iron fence near the Village Diner - *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the Circus Smirkus banner to be hung on Wolcott Street August 8-17, 2025.*

*Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the Department of Children & Families (DCF) banner to be hung on the iron fence near the Village Diner for two weeks, starting immediately.*

#### **Select Board Reports:**

- Shari reported that she sold tax credits from the Town House project and wanted to note that the process was not complicated and is available to non-profit owners in our designated downtown.
- Shari reported that the Town House project will finish mid-July.
- Danny mentioned that he's happy to see the work that the Town Crew has been doing at the Town Pit.

**New Business:** None

#### **Old Business:**

- Ceilidh asked about the Public Works Director position. The Town has received 3 applications and will start interviews soon. David asked for Select Board volunteers to participate in interviews. Shari volunteered.
- Eric mentioned that they will start the Town Manager evaluation soon.
- Ceilidh mentioned that the Town should find a way to make the Economic Development loan accessible for smaller funds/ smaller businesses. This will be discussed on a future agenda. Danny requested a breakdown on what we currently have in outstanding loans.
- Ceilidh asked about the new appraisal and how that will affect the new tax rate. The next regular meeting is July 10. The tax rate likely won't be available at that meeting so there will need to be a Special Select Board meeting later in July for approval of the FY26 tax rate so that the tax bills can be sent out at the end of July/beginning of August. The Select Board will reach out to

Tonia for clarification on the timing.

**7:04 P.M.** *Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 VSA § 313 for possible legal litigation discussion to include the Town Manager, the Business Manager, and the Chair of the Jeudevine Library, Daphne Kalmar.*

**7:40 P.M.** Exited Executive Session. *No action taken.*

**7:40 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