

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 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

David Upson Jr. Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Casey Rowell, Finance Director (*Zoom*)
Tracy Martin, Comm. Dev. Coordinator (*CDC*)

Others Present

Michelle Demers
Sue Rivard
Joe Rivard
Terry Reilly
Theron Lay- Sleeper
Renaud Demers
Bruce Lallow

Regular Meeting

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

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add Item #6 to review and accept the bid for the kiosk installation of the trailheads.

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

6:00 P.M. Communication from the audience –

Sue & Joe Rivard and Michelle Demers expressed uncertainty regarding the cost of purchasing the Davis property intended to become a Town forest, how it would impact town taxes, and why the Select Board is prioritizing this purchase as they feel the Town is in desperate times. They also questioned how the property acquisition would affect the existing trail system off Brook Road along Cooper Brook. Sue felt the process was rushed and lacked adequate public input.

Eric mentioned that the Select Board approved moving forward with the purchase only if the Conservation Commission is able to cover the full cost through donations. Eric also stated that there will still be a public process and a committee formed to guide next steps.

Sue remains concerned about the speed of the decision. Ceilidh responded that it may have felt rushed because the Planning Commission had brought this topic up to the Select Board at two separate meetings, and the acquisition aligns with the Town Plan to increase public land access. The urgency also stemmed from the property being actively on the market.

Sue emphasized that the way that this land is being portrayed, is that there will not be any commercial/motorized use on the trails, which raised some confusion with the board members as that is not their understanding. The Board thinks it would be preserved for everyone in town to continue to use, but this would be a good question

for the Conservation Commission.

Tim joined the meeting and didn't hear the previous concern about the trail, so he asked for clarification.

Michelle explained that the trail runs from House of Pizza to Buffalo Mountain Powersports and generates a lot of traffic especially in the winter, and raised concerns about adding more trails, citing potential public safety issues, and making it negatively affect Hardwick business owners. Michelle also questioned the impact on the town's tax base if that land is taken off the grand list.

Eric stated that he doesn't view the town as being in crisis; he supports preserving the existing trail and will follow up with the Conservation Commission.

David said that trails, including ATV and snowmobile access, bring economic benefits and prosperity to the town. He emphasized that our town is definitely not in trouble- we have a thriving community, and we seem to come together and figure it out together. Sue noted that another business closed this past Friday and agrees that "we" (as the whole town) should be making big decisions like this.

David stated that the town has made a \$20,000 financial commitment related to the project.

Ceilidh proposed that this topic be added as a future agenda item, and that the Board review all relevant documents and prior meeting minutes on this subject.

Joe brought up concerns regarding LVRT and future access for all commercial use including ATV access.

Danny reiterated that he had raised these concerns at the July 10th meeting, stating that he felt the process was being rushed. He emphasized the importance of the Select Board hearing public input and taking time to consider the full picture, including how the project might positively or negatively impact the town, local businesses, and commercial-use trail riders.

6:21 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of September 4, 2025

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of September 4, 2025, as written. Eric and Tim abstained.

6:22 P.M. – 6:31 P.M. Town Manager's Report – Given by David Upson

David delivered the Town Manager's Report, Highway Report, and Police Department Report in place of Tom and Mike, who were unable to attend.

David first thanked the Downtown Partnership and the Conservation Commission for their work with the new trees in the downtown area.

Flood buyouts are progressing, and demolitions are moving forward. The State has hired a contractor for the demolition work. The Brush Street property is scheduled for next month. Ceilidh asked about installing a

guardrail post-demolition. David noted that the Town must comply with FEMA regulations, but a temporary barrier will be installed until slope stabilization is completed.

All documents related to the pedestrian bridge project have been submitted, and the Town is waiting to get notice to proceed from USDA. Eric asked about pedestrian bridge funding—David confirmed that funding is secure. The contractor has signed the contract, and the Town will purchase the bridge once the Notice to Proceed is received. David also has been discussing future plans for traffic control, which may involve multiple traffic lights. More to come on this.

The Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) & Fire Station are moving forward with FEMA, and significant progress has been made. David hopes for decisions within the next few weeks.

David reported that the cemetery sexton has installed a railing at the Main Street cemetery and is also working on green burials.

The Highway Department has been ditching Hopkins Hill Road. Work continues on the 24-meter pits—46 pits remain, with plans to resume work next summer as they need to prepare for the winter season.

Crews have also been addressing a sewer issue and have been painting crosswalks around town.

Lastly, David reported that the Hardwick Police Department has been responding to multiple deaths in the community and that work is underway on the repeater building to improve communications.

6:31 P.M. – 6:33 P.M. Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Report – Given by Renaud Demers

Renaud reported that HED expects updates on the Wolcott Hydro project before their November meeting, including views and opinions from relevant parties.

Renaud also reported that the Craftsbury Circuit Cutting project will begin on Monday. Work will start near the Corner Store and end near the three-phase line on Craftsbury Common. The project is estimated to take approximately 8 weeks, and this work is intended to open up the line for better protection and reliability.

HED is currently undergoing personnel restructuring and updating job descriptions as part of internal reorganization efforts.

Eric mentioned that a joint meeting between HED and the Hardwick Select Board is scheduled for Thursday, September 25th at 5:30 PM.

6:33 P.M. – 6:33 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to authorize David Upson to be the Town's voting delegate for the annual meetings of VLCT, PACIF & VERB – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello the Select Board voted to authorize David Upson to be the Town's voting delegate for the annual meetings of VLCT, PACIF & VERB.

Casey Rowell joined the meeting on Zoom

6:33 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. Item #2 – Select Board to hear from Theron Lay-Sleeper and Terry Reilly on current Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) information and talk further about Hardwick's Trash Ordinance

Theron, General Manager, stated that the recent Hardwick Hazardous Waste Collection event successfully collected approximately \$13,000 worth of household hazardous waste.

Going forward, hazardous waste services will be offered three days a week at a new facility in Berlin, located at 300 Granger Road. The facility will hold an opening event soon.

Theron also stated that their grants program is being reopened, with multiple opportunities available for towns.

They are currently focused on flood debris management, and working with member towns to develop a plan, and will reach out to towns with specifics within the next year.

Eric asked if the Berlin facility will take all waste like the Stowe facility does, and Theron said no. They have a limited staff, so even though they will collect hazardous waste and landfill items, they do not take everything.

Terry was hired in 2025 to be the Solid Waste Administrator and Enforcement officer, and with this position he would like to be more visible around towns, assist facilities (like All Metals Recycling for example) with obtaining and maintaining proper certifications and focus on education and compliance, working collaboratively with facilities and towns,

David brought up the current Town's trash ordinance, which was adopted in 2016. More specifically section 5B raises some concerns about how to implement the ordinance. Under the fourth amendment you cannot go onto someone's property without a warrant. In this situation, you can get a health order signed by a judge, but that is not what this specific ordinance is stating. Theron advised to talk to a lawyer.

Ceilidh asked their opinion whether updating the ordinance makes sense or if we should do without it since currently, we can't enforce the ordinance. Terry advised to rewrite the ordinance and work with VLCT. David asked if the other Town's that they represent have trash ordinances, and Theron is going to check into this.

There was concern about a legal lawsuit if the Town goes onto someone's property and gets rid of their personal property. Danny asked that the Town Manager's office rewrite the ordinance and have a draft at the second meeting in October.

David asked if there was a grant available for legal assistance in order to get rid of waste. Theron stated not at the moment, but that he would follow up on this as this would be a great opportunity in order to help municipalities out.

7:01 P.M. – 7:15 P.M. Item #3 – Select Board to review and consider approving the FY26 water and sewer

rates presented by Finance Director, Casey Rowell – Action needed

The Finance Director presented the proposed water and sewer rates. The water base rates will increase by \$12/quarter for *residential* and \$34/quarter for sewer due to higher operating costs for sewer. See the attachments for complete details. There was some discussion about creating more rate categories. Casey stated the Town could, but it wouldn't make sense as the Town already has different categories in which they are continuing to collect overall data. There was also discussion about increasing the overage use, but overall, they would like to see less of the weight on the actual base amount.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the FY26 water rates, as presented.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the FY26 sewer rates, as presented.

Casey Rowell left the meeting

7:15 P.M. – 7:26 P.M. Item #4 – Select Board to review and consider approving a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Hardwick Downtown Partnership for ongoing support of the organization's goals – *Action needed*

Shari mentioned that that this MOU will be presented annually and will eventually follow the same fiscal year.

Shari stated that the only change was Section IV- #9- "Consider establishing a local tax and allocate a conservative 5% of the overall tax revenue to Hardwick Downtown Partnership (HDP) to support continued efforts toward the overall Scope of Services."

Motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Eric Remick, to approve the MOU. Motion fails.

Ceilidh- Yea

Eric- Yea

Danny- Nay

Tim- Nay

Shari- Abstained

After further discussion, Danny and Tim both voted against the motion, citing concerns with the wording of Item #9. Danny expressed that his primary concern was related to revenue generation, noting that as written, the town would not benefit from the 5% allocation. The board discussed ways to reword the item to ensure it is more equitable and clearly stated.

Number 9 will now state: "Consider establishing a local tax and allocate a portion of the local option tax revenue to Hardwick Downtown Partnership (HDP) to support continued efforts toward the overall Scope of Services."

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted 4-0 to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Hardwick Downtown Partnership with the proposed

changes to item 9 for ongoing support of the organization's goals. Shari abstained.

7:27 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. Item #5 – Select Board to review and consider approving a firm for the Gravel Pit blasting.

David explained that the Town received two quotes. One from Kingdom Gravel, and one from Capital Rock. David stated that Kingdom Gravel's quote was \$29,900 which included mobilization fees and will handle the crushing of the rock in the spring. Austin Gravel will be brought in by Kingdom to assist. Capital Rock will blast but not crush and their quote was \$29,300. This is 5,000 cubic yards of rock.

David stated that he would recommend Kingdom Gravel as they have done the crushing in the past and will work with the Town in order to get the product that we want.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, the Select Board to approve Kingdom Gravel, and authorize the Town Manager to sign any contracts that are needed.

7:30 P.M. – 7:36 P.M. Item #6 – Select Board to review and accept the bid for the kiosk installation of the trailheads

David explained that the town received one bid from Gravel Construction in the amount of \$4,740. Tracy stated that they would have to place stamatt at both the trailheads- near the Memorial Park, and near the Hardwick Historical Society (HHS); however, the pad near the HHS would be bigger.

There were concerns about where this money was coming from, and what the timeline was as some members felt like this item was sprung onto the board, therefore, they didn't have information to review before the meeting, therefore they asked for this to be placed on the next Select Board's agenda.

Tracy stated that HHS is doing a project to raise up and replace rails, in which Gravel Construction is also doing. They would like both projects to coincide with one another. Tracy also stated that in order to do the kiosk project, they will need to reroute the rail trail and will need special permission to do so, which may take time.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted 3-2 to authorize the Town Manager to allocate the money and accept the bid of \$4,740 from Gravel Construction.

Eric- Yea

Shari- Yea

Tim- Yea

Ceilidh- nay

Danny- nay

Select Board Reports:

- Shari mentioned about the new trees going up. Danny asked about them being identified, and Tracy said there's a map in which she would place on the website.
- Shari mentioned that there was training on the lift at the Town House and things are progressing. She's looking forward to having Town Meeting there. Ceilidh mentioned that she has spoken to Rose about

Town Meeting to figure out the new Moderator.

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- Ceilidh reported that she talked to Jackie Cassino about Rail Trail signage, tree cutting, and Jackie agreed and will look further into adequate improvements and information for crossing roads.

New Business:

- Ceilidh stated that the Equity Committee is in the process of bringing all of the Town's organizations and staff together to determine who they serve and determine how to make things more equitable.

Old Business:

- Eric asked about the Public Works position and David stated that we did not hire anyone as he would like to rethink the job description. He also said that he's been having conversations with Sarah from HED to collaborate and have the new candidate manage projects for both organizations. Danny said that David needs to figure out what he specifically needs in order to complete the project and to take some of the weight off our current staff. David stated that FEMA projects are coming to a close and the funds are not as readily available, so there's concern as to how much this new position will be able to do specifically. This will be discussed further at the joint HED meeting on the 25th.
- Eric mentioned that he's noticing a lot more visitors at the Memorial Park, which is great. David mentioned that there is work being done and the fountain is being turned back into a flower bed.

7:47 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