

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

David Upson Jr. Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Casey Rowell, Finance Director
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman

Others Present

Bob Edebohls
Patrick Kane
Bruce Larrow
James Westermann

Regular Meeting

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

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – The Select Board would like to remove the executive session and move it to a future meeting. Casey requested that the item be removed from Old Business, as the necessary paperwork was not brought to the meeting. The item will be carried over to the next meeting.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to amend the agenda as stated.

6:01 P.M. Communication from the audience – Patrick Kane asked what the Town is doing to make up for the lost revenue from properties that have been bought out due to flooding.

Eric explained that the Grand List has grown, which helps offset some of the lost revenue, but agreed that there are potential measures the Town could look further into to address this issue.

David stated that there are two promising development projects currently in progress—Act 181 and CHIP—but both are presently in the hands of private landowners.

Patrick referenced the development and investment strategies used in St. Albans, suggesting that Hardwick could consider a similar approach. Dominic Cloud, who has been working on the St. Albans project, recently presented information to Hardwick. David confirmed that he plans to continue communication with Dominic.

Casey discussed the Municipal Buyout Program currently being administered by the State, noting that the Town has received an abatement payment and therefore has not yet lost any revenue from the buyouts yet. This program is slated to continue for several years.

Ceilidh suggested keeping housing development efforts moving forward, emphasizing that such projects take significant time. She recommended either continuing this discussion or forming a committee to bring together partners and ideas for development.

Patrick agreed that the Town should engage in appropriate ways to support growth, and David responded that the Town has already been doing so.

Patrick also remarked that the tax rate in Hardwick is quite high—among the highest in the Northeast Kingdom—and emphasized the need to grow the Grand List. David replied that this concern has been ongoing for decades, and those facts should be verified. Patrick is concerned with those facts, true or not, are in a public magazine and pushing people away from Hardwick.

6:15 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of October 16, 2025 and the Public Hearing minutes of October 16, 2025

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the regular meeting minutes, and the public hearing meeting minutes, as written.

6:16 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David reported that the Town applied to two Better Back Roads grants. The Town is currently working with engineers on the Hideaway roof and developing a plan to move forward with the necessary repairs. Details are also being finalized for the Essential Services Project on Creamery Road.

A draft plan for the School Street Slope Stabilization Project is in progress. The Town must coordinate with FEMA to determine whether to proceed with an in-kind repair or a deviation that would reduce the road to one lane. Public engagement will be scheduled as part of this process. Ceilidh asked about the possibility of not reopening the road at all, and David noted that this is also an option being considered.

An engineering report for the Town Garage has been completed. The building is settling on the steel I-beams, and the recommended short-term fix is to pour additional concrete; however, the foundation will still need further repair. The report also indicated that the structure has reached the end of its lifespan. While immediate safety measures are being taken into consideration, they do not resolve the long-term structural issues.

One of two planned kiosks for the Rail Trail has been installed. The second kiosk is scheduled for installation in the Spring.

The Mill Street scoping study, conducted by VHB, was presented on November 5 and was well attended. The study outlined three alternatives, and VTrans is involved in the review process. Danny questioned why the Town selected the specific study area and expressed concerns about reduced parking and the lack of representation of the property near the Clip Joint. Eric explained that there had been a suggestion for additional parking behind the Post Office, and VHB will be reviewing that option.

The first organizational meeting for Spring Fest was held today.

Lastly, David mentioned that he is requesting the Police Chief provide to report once a month, and the Town Foreman also provide one report per month instead of two. During budget season, both the Finance Director

and Payroll Administrator will attend Select Board meetings to participate in discussions and collaborate on the workload.

6:24 P.M. – 6:27 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that with the recent rain, it has affected the roads, and the crew is working to repair numerous potholes. Downtown cleanup has been completed, and the holiday lights are now up and functioning. However, the bridge lights remain out of service due to flooding damage; there appears to be an issue with the GFIs and underground electrical wiring. Shari noted that additional white holiday lights have been ordered and expected to be delivered next week. Tom asked if she wanted two strings for each pole, and Shari confirmed.

Tom also reported that the Public Works Department is preparing for winter operations, changing oil, mounting plow frames, and performing maintenance on trucks. There are two trucks currently being serviced and are expected to return soon.

Eric mentioned that a resident contacted him regarding an issue with a streetlight. David advised that such concerns should be reported directly to the Town Manager's Office, which they can communicate directly with Hardwick Electric, who handles the maintenance of the streetlights.

6:27 P.M. – 6:29 P.M. Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike reported that everything is going well. He plans to move a speed sign to Spring Street. Tom noted that the pole previously used for the sign is no longer in place.

Eric reported that during the Mill Street scoping study meeting, a request was made for the Town to move the radar sign further east. Mike explained that the sign is solar-powered, and the proposed location is too shaded for it to function properly.

6:29 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to consider approving a liquor license renewal for Front Seat Coffee LLC – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the first-class liquor license for Front Seat Coffee.

6:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Item #2 – Select Board to consider approving a renewal of a Cannabis Tier 3 manufacturing license for Tilia Processing LLC – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve a renewal of a Cannabis Tier 3 manufacturing license for Tilia Processing LLC.

6:30 P.M. – 6:39 P.M. Item #3 Select Board to hear from Bob Edebohls about property concerns

Bob addressed the Select Board, noting that he had come before the Board about five years ago regarding repairs needed to the waterfall that he owns. He requested that the Board visit the site at that time but stated that no one had followed up. Bob explained that he's had to close the waterfalls to the public due to ongoing

issues with the state and plugged culverts and cannot fix the issues himself. He also added that increased taxes have made it difficult for him to remain in town. He expressed concern that these conditions are damaging his property significantly; noting that his main barn is collapsing. Bob described the area as an asset to the community and urged the Town to act now to help preserve the falls.

Eric asked if the invitation to visit the property still stood. Tim noted that he had been to the property; however, Bob pointed out that he was not present, and that Tim did not get the full picture of the property. Bob described the suspension bridge on the property as the fourth tallest and second widest in the region, and the property being the most handicapped accessible. Bob explained further that the property is inspired by the design of Seven Falls, which attracts a large number of visitors. He estimated that Hardwick could similarly attract 50,000 to 150,000 visitors annually just for the falls.

Tim asked for clarification on what specific action Bob was seeking. Bob responded that the Town had previously helped save the Yellow Barn and he was now asking for assistance in preserving the falls before the Town completely loses it.

Ceilidh mentioned that she had previously toured the site prior to joining the Select Board, and Bob thanked her for her interest. He emphasized that the property is historic and that he continues to find millstones and other artifacts on the site.

6:39 P.M. – 6:58 P.M. Item #4 Finance Director and Town Clerk to discuss important deadlines for Town Report and Town meeting as well as potential for a bond vote for highway garage and/or Buffalo Mountain Town Forest proposal

Casey reported that the regular Select Board meetings in January will be held on the second and fourth Thursday, as the first Thursday conflicts with New Year's Day. The Town report is due on January 23. Therefore, Casey is requesting that the budget gets approved at the January 8 meeting. The petitions are due to the Town Clerk's office by the end of the day on January 15. With the deadlines, Casey and Tonia are asking for a Special Select Board meeting on January 16 to approve the warning.

Casey noted that the proposed bond vote will create additional deadlines, emphasizing that decisions regarding this topic be made sooner rather than later. There was a discussion about whether the Buffalo Mountain Town Forest had to be part of the ballot, or whether it could be a floor vote. Tonia stated that the date stays the same in order to include the information. Ceilidh asked if the decision needed to be made tonight, and Casey emphasized by next meeting. The Select Board would like to wait to see if the assessment of the Buffalo Mountain property will be available by next meeting as the results may or may not push the project forward.

Ceilidh raised the possibility of changing the Town Meeting date in order to get more people to attend. Tonia explained that such a change would require a vote of the Town, therefore if the date changes, it won't occur until the following year.

Discussion continued regarding the proposed bond for the new Town Garage building, estimated at \$4.50 million. Ceilidh confirmed the amount, and David explained that while the estimate includes many moving parts, it is a reasonable upper limit to account for potential contingencies. He noted that there would be three

parties planned for the new building (Highway, Rescue, and Fire) and that the garage must be built first before the Fire and Rescue departments can be relocated.

Ceilidh expressed concern about the exact figures. David stated that the project could be shovel-ready by next year, but if the bond does not pass, construction would likely be delayed until 2027. He emphasized that the current Town Garage is in major structural failure. Additionally, the Town only has \$109,000 in capital reserve funds, so the Town would need the bond to be passed to make the repairs needed.

Upon motion by Danny Hale, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve the Highway Bond to be placed on the Town warning.

Shari asked that the Select Board talk about a local option tax. Eric requested that this be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Lastly, Eric stated that he, Shari and Tonia met at the Town House to discuss if holding Town Meeting there would be reasonable. With some planning, the configuration could work.

6:58 P.M. – 7:17 P.M. Item #5 – Select Board to have a follow up discussion on purchasing a salt brine system

At a previous Select Board meeting, the Board had discussed the potential to increase salt efficiency and explored the option of a brine system to reduce salt usage. Eric confirmed the three main pieces of equipment involved: a salt brine maker, an applicator, and a tank for one of the trucks.

James Westermann, who has experience using brine through his work with a commercial snow and ice company in Morrisville, joined the discussion. He explained that he has experimented with direct brine application and truck-mounted spraying systems. James noted that each storm presents different conditions, and factors such as temperature, application rate, and mileage. The results are better if the brine solution is applied when the temperature is 20 degrees or more. With Vermont weather, the temperatures often drop lower. This could call for additional solution to ensure road remains clear. James also stated that when mixing the application together it must be exact or else the solution could become too wet, taking twice as long to fix and clear the road. James stated that it would not be practical to purchase the equipment at this moment. The brine system takes up significant room; therefore, he would wait for the new highway garage to be built. Furthermore, he looked at the current Town salt budget, which is \$90,000. He claims that the Town should be able to get through approximately 121 winter events with that amount. While he supports the use of brine, he suggested collecting more data before purchasing.

David explained that rock salt used on sidewalks often ends up being tracked into nearby buildings. Tom stated that with the current setup the equipment is currently set to the lowest output setting, but there are challenges. When the machine stops, the spinner stops, but when the machine starts up again, the spinner puts out a large amount of salt. James stated that the calibrations need to be adjusted. Tom stated that it cannot be calibrated any further.

Ceilidh suggested that the Town of Hardwick go to Hyde Park and try the brine application on the sidewalks for one or two storms to see how it specifically works.

James offered to work with the Town to fine-tune its current system.

Danny recommended that the Town implement James' suggestions and begin tracking salt usage data. The Board agreed that the discussion provided valuable information for future planning.

7:18 P.M. – 7:34 P.M. Item #6 – Select Board to discuss the Recreation Committee policy and committee structure in light of the resignation of the Coordinator

Shari started off the conversation by saying that the current policy seems more like bylaws. She does not agree that small committees should have bylaws. Danny mentioned that the Town hired a Recreation Coordinator back when the Elementary School was doing the REACH program. The collaboration unfortunately did not last very long, and the Recreation Coordinator did more events representing the Town itself.

Danny proposed consolidating the Recreation and Trails committees under one budget, noting that small committees should not need to come to the Select Board for approval on every expenditure, as this can create inequities between committees.

Eric asked for clarification on the problem Danny was trying to address. He explained that Hardwick Trails—formerly Hazen Trails—has been a long-standing, successful committee with a small budget and efficient operations. Smaller committees often have more focus and productive work, and not long meetings. Eric further expressed his concern, stating that if the Town combines the Recreation and Trails committee, then the committee would be larger, less engaged, meetings would be longer, and less work would be done.

Ceilidh suggested a model where both committees be under one budget but have subgroups that could manage the projects themselves. She suggested that each subgroup meet as often as they do now, and then both subgroups come together quarterly to oversee funding.

Shari raised concerns about why the Recreation Committee was not present. David asked if Shari had invited the Recreation Committee to the meeting and recommended reaching out via email. Shari also noted the lack of reference to Green Up Day within the policy. The Board agreed to add this topic to the next agenda for further discussion.

**7:34 P.M. – 7:39 P.M. Item #7 – Select Board to consider adopting the discontinuance of Town Highway 316 –
*Action needed***

Eric read the findings of facts related to the discontinuation of Town Highway 316.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the discontinuation of Town Highway 316.

After the motion was made, Eric stated that he would like to change "Town Highway" to "a segment." Additionally, under the road description it should say west instead of east.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to amend the original motion, and approved the discontinuance of this 0.03 segment of Highway located at 283 North Main Street.

7:39 P.M. – 7:49 P.M. Item #8 - Select Board to continue discussion of the Trash ordinance

Last meeting, the Select Board discussed rewriting the Trash ordinance and having a draft for this meeting. Danny was going to take on this task. However, a group of individuals reached out to Danny with concerns, stating that the Select Board is not doing their jobs. They asked if they could provide a draft instead.

David is concerned with the language and the definition of some of the words within the ordinance.

The Select Board agrees that this ordinance is non-compliant.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted 3-2 to discontinue the trash ordinance. Motion carried.

Eric- Yea

Danny- Yea

Tim- Yea

Ceilidh- Nay

Shari- Nay

The town staff will start the process.

7:49 P.M. – 7:51 P.M. Item #9 – Select Board to consider approving Hardwick's participation in the USACE High Water Mark Sign Project and authorize staff to coordinate with USACE and the Hardwick Road Crew on site selection and installation – *Action Needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, the Select Board voted to approve Hardwick's participation in the USACE High Water Mark Sign Project and to authorize staff to coordinate with USACE and the Hardwick Road Crew on site selection and installation.

7:51 P.M. – 8:13 P.M. Item #10 – Finance Director to present the following drafts of the FY27 budget:
Buildings, Fire Department, Highway Department, and Capital Funds

The Business Manager went through each of the above draft budgets, which were put up on the screen for viewing. Topics of discussion included:

- ~Labor and equipment cost increases in the Fire Department
- ~ Overtime, Gravel Pit, and Salt price in Highway Department
- ~ Fire Alarm/Elevator upgrade in the Memorial Building
- ~ There was a type in the Highway Building budget last year.
- ~Permits and Rail Trail lease for the Yellow Barn
- ~ Truck #4, Truck #2, New Police Cruiser
- ~ Center Road did not cost as much as the Town thought in 2025, which leaves a surplus in the road fund

See attachments for more details.

8:13 P.M. – 8:21 P.M. Item #11 – Select Board to receive a status update on the pedestrian bridge

David reported that the contracts have been signed with the contractor, CCS Constructor, to proceed with the retaining wall, which is a FEMA project. With the Government shutdown, this does not allow communication with USDA to proceed on the bridge portion of the project. USDA is giving the Town \$175,000, which includes the LVRT connector loop, but they approve all aspects of the project in order to stay in good standing for the \$175,000. We cannot proceed without their “notice to proceed.”

Shari asked if the Town has spent the \$75,000 from Historic Preservation. Casey stated no because it’s all pending USDA’s approval.

The Board discussed potential scenarios in the event of prolonged government shutdowns. Eric noted that once the government reopens, the Town may need to contact Senator Welch or Senator Sanders if internal USDA communication remains unresponsive. In a hypothetical situation, the Town could consider bypassing USDA, though this is complicated in practice. Regarding matching funds, Casey has to look further into if bypassing USDA, whether the Town would lose other funding. Casey also mentioned that USDA has had the contracts for at least a month prior to the shutdown. More discussion to come.

Select Board Reports: Shari reported that she provided a hard copy of the NEKarts 2025 report which explains upcoming goals and projects. She reported that the Town House needs a new roof and she’s unsure how much longer this project can be pushed off. Ceilidh thanks Shari for being a member for the past 22 years.

‘New Business: Shari reported that the Downtown Partnership is doing a “Fraser Fir” raffle. This is a 6’ live fir tree valued at \$495. The raffle tickets are \$20 each and tickets can be purchased at the Whistle Emporium, Jeudevine Library, or the Galaxy Bookshop. The winner will be drawn December 21, 2025.

Old Business: None

8:22 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