

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026
HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3rd FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

Select Board

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

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Finance Director
Kristen Leahy, Zoning/Floodplain Admin.
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Jan Mueller
Larry Fliegelman
Robbin Towns
Teri Oughton

Others Present

Scott Johnstone, HED
Eric Jonathan
Miranda Brown
Bruce Larrow
Izaak Whitehouse
Derek Richardson
Rachel Barnett

Regular Meeting

6:03 P.M. – Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:03 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Remove Item #2 and move the other items up accordingly. This will be presented at the February 5 meeting instead.

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

6:04 P.M. Communication from the audience –

Izaak Whitehouse mentioned that he would like to see a skatepark out behind Atkins Field. Eric told him that the Center for an Agricultural Economy owns that land and suggested he connect with them. Another idea is to connect with the Skateboard Collective Group through Civic Standard.

Jan Mueller spoke regarding the prior meeting's discussion of the Equity Committee. He noted that he is a member of the Equity Committee and has served on it for two years. He stated that he speaks with many residents and that both he and others are concerned about the affordability of living in Hardwick. He indicated that he has reviewed the Town budget and was troubled by how the amount allocated to the Equity Committee was handled. Jan referenced the work of the Hardwick Equity Project and said he would like to see improved communication between the Equity Committee and the Select Board regarding the committee's activities. He emphasized that the committee has been working hard and in good faith and asked that its work be discussed in that same spirit. He expressed concern about the manner in which the Equity Committee was raised by a Select Board member near the end of the prior meeting and stated that he felt the issue was not handled in good faith. He concluded by expressing hope that future Select Board members will carefully consider how the Board communicates, deliberates, and reaches its decisions.

Bruce Larrow asked for clarification about the election process and choosing a Chair and Vice Chair. Eric explained that at the Select Board organizational meeting after Town meeting, the Board will choose a Chair and Vice Chair.

6:12 P.M. – 6:14 P.M. Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of January 8, 2026, and the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of January 16, 2026

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of January 8, 2026, and the minutes of the Special Select Board meeting of January 16, 2026, as written.

6:14 P.M. – 6:16 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David started off by thanking the Finance Director, Casey Rowell, for her time and effort in finishing this year's Town report.

David said there was an unveiling of the Essential Services Complex last night over at the library. There were about 25 people who attended, and the presentation and discussion lasted for about an hour. If you were unable to attend, it was recorded by HCTV and will be available on their website.

David and Casey finished the last of the Community Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) webinar series. The series was recorded and he sent the recordings to the Select Board and encouraged them to view them.

David shared that the pedestrian bridge project continues to progress. The schedule was shared recently and shows an early March start. Comcast still needs to remove wires near the construction area, and this should be done by January 28.

David shared that we received an offer today of \$3M from FEMA for the wastewater plant. He met with the State consultants from Guidehouse, and we are pushing back as we are not happy with it.

6:16 P.M. – 6:19 P.M. Police Department Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike reported that Ariana Morris has continued to work on completing Field Training (FT) hours while she waits for Level III Academy to start on February 2. She will be at the Academy for about 17 weeks and then finish her FT hours. She should then be able to be on her own around August as a full-time Level III certified officer.

Mike shared that we have started doing VAST Patrol on the local snowmobile trails. George Sheldrick, part-time officer, is heading that up and doing most of the patrolling. We have patrolled for about 40 hours so far this season.

Miranda Brown asked for clarification on the field training of the new Officer. Mike explained that it takes about a year for an officer to be on their own between attending the Academy and the required field training hours for a Level III officer.

6:19 P.M. – 6:24 P.M. Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Report – Given by Scott Johnstone

Scott wanted to announce a couple of internal promotions that happened at HED recently. Ryan Hall was promoted to Working Foreman and Cole Leroux was promoted from Third Class to First Class Lineman.

Scott reported that they are working on hiring a replacement for the Controller. They have a good candidate and are working towards an offer. He is hoping to have more about this at the next meeting.

The estimate for repairing the Wolcott Hydro Dam from flood damage is about \$6.5M. They do not have an offer yet, but FEMA seems to agree with that estimate. They continue to work through the process with FEMA.

Scott wanted to address the articles that have been in the newspaper about a possible merger with Morrisville Water & Light. He wanted to clarify that a merger can mean a few different things, including the possibility of sharing a manager, sharing a line crew or finance team, or the idea of totally coming together. The idea is to increase efficiency and meet the ever increasing regulatory requirements. If any of these options would do that, then he suggests that the Town/HED should strongly consider it. There will be an open and public discussion about this coming.

With Hyde Park Electric Department recently getting into serious financial trouble, the State has started investigating if municipal utilities make sense at all. He testified about this at the State level. He feels that there is no reason to believe it is not an effective model, especially since costs are lower and outages are shorter. HED is a good utility and well served.

6:24 P.M. – 6:26 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to approve a certification of approval for All Metals Recycling to be a salvage yard – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve All Metals Recycling to be a salvage yard.

Robbin Towns said that All Metals has been located in Hardwick for a long time, that it has been a positive community partnership, and that the company has no plans to relocate.

6:26 P.M. – 6:31 P.M. Item #2 – Select Board to receive the proposed bylaw updates from the Planning Commission and set a public hearing date – *Action needed*

The Select Board was presented with the proposed bylaw updates by Kristen Leahy on behalf of the Planning Commission. See attachments for the summary. They will hold a public hearing on March 19 at 5:00 p.m. for the bylaw updates.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted for the hearing to be on March 19 at 5:00 p.m.

6:31 P.M. – 6:34 P.M. Item #3 – Finance Director to give FY26 Quarter 2 budget update

The Finance Director provided a Quarter 3 budget update through December 31, 2025. See meeting attachments for the details. Revenues and expenses are both on track to meet budget at this point.

6:34 P.M. – 6:35 P.M. Item #4 – Select Board to approve the Annual Mileage Certificate for our Highway Aid – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Danny Hale, the Select Board voted to approve the annual Mileage Certificate for our highway aid.

6:35 P.M. – 6:36 P.M. Item #5– Select Board to set a date for the Pre-Town meeting Budget Informational Meeting - *Action needed*

The proposed hearing date and time is at 5:30 p.m. on February 19 right before the regular Select Board meeting. This is an opportunity for people to ask questions about the budget prior to Town meeting. The Board generally agreed to hold the informational meeting on February 19.

Select Board Reports: Eric commented that it is going to be very cold this weekend. Stay warm!

New Business: David stated that staff have discussed the possibility of holding Select Board meetings at the Parker Ladd Community Room due to its better acoustics. Eric suggested testing the space first before making any decisions. Casey recommended waiting until the new Select Board members are seated in March and then holding a meeting at the library to see whether the sound quality improves.

Danny expressed frustration with the current sound system, noting that he has been unable to hear well when joining meetings via Zoom. It was noted that while in-person attendees can hear Zoom participants clearly, those attending remotely have difficulty hearing speakers in the meeting room, especially when more than one person is speaking at the same time.

Casey noted that the Town has invested a significant amount of money in audio-visual equipment, including the Polycom/TV setup and the OWL device, yet remote participants are still unable to hear what is being said clearly. The Board agreed that staff should continue working toward a solution to improve meeting audio quality.

Old Business: Tim Ricciardello responded to comments made earlier in the meeting by Jan Mueller regarding the discussion of the Equity Committee at the prior meeting. He stated that he did not act in bad faith when he raised the issue. He noted that he had attended an Equity Committee meeting and had spoken with Town staff about the committee's budget, as well as with local residents before making comments at the last meeting.

Tim said he is willing to speak with anyone about his perspective, including the ideology and reasoning behind the suggestions he made at the last meeting.

6:42 P.M. Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: _____
Casey Rowell, Finance Director

Minutes approved by: _____
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair