

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026
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- *Zoom*

Others Present

David Upson Jr., Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Casey Rowell, Finance Director
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk
Bruce Larrow
Jamie Emmerson
Norma Wiesen
Larry Fliegelman
Jennifer Deyo
Steve Deyo
Jacob Perry
Jaden Perry
Andrew Gilbert
Margaret Bledsoe
Joe Nudell
Catherine Siefert
David O'Brien

Others Present

Hannah Redmon
Jack Travelstead
Eric Jonathan
Paul Cillo
Rachel Kane
Lydia Parker
Beth McIntyre
Lucy Zendzian
Paul Fixx
Erin Rosenthal - *Zoom*
Norma Spaulding
Kathleen Hemmens
Linda Martin - *Zoom*
Helen Beattie
Emily Hershberger - *Zoom*
Tyler LeBeau
Jake Lester
Perry Heller

Regular Meeting

6:02 P.M. Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:02 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – The Select Board would like to remove the Executive Session and move it to a future meeting.

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

6:02 P.M. – Communication from the audience- Jamie Emmerson noticed that the Town has an Economic Loan Fund and asked if the Town would be willing to use those funds for accessory dwelling unit (ADU) housing projects. Eric stated that this is something that could be considered, but Shari said that this is for more economic development. The Town could discuss later if necessary. David mentioned that the State has \$50,000 grants available for ADU's.

Lydia Parker stated that she came to bring tremendous support to the Town Forest project but could not stay until that item. She stated that it would be a wonderful opportunity for the Town of Hardwick.

6:05 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of December 18, 2025

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes, as written. Eric abstained.

6:06 P.M. – 6:12 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David reported that he has submitted a Phase II environmental request for the Brownfield program through NVDA for the Essential Services complex on Creamery Rd. He continues to participate in biweekly FEMA meetings and is still working on the reversion of bridges and culverts from design/engineering to permanent projects, while FEMA is still in the process of determining their offer to the Town for the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

CCS Constructors is planning to remove the old pedestrian bridge within the next couple of weeks. Prior to removal, David is coordinating with Comcast to relocate one of their lines. CCS has submitted the required engineering submittals, and overall, the project is progressing well.

Sunwise Surveying is reviewing the end of Richardson Road for a potential future project.

In addition, a sewer project is underway at Hideaway Acres to replace an aging line and install a new sewer hole, and residents in the area may be contacted soon as the project progresses.

A public engagement meeting for the Essential Services Project will be held on January 21 at 6:00 p.m. at the Library.

There is also a three-part webinar series for the Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP), and David and Casey attended the first session this afternoon.

Finally, Kristen, the Town's Zoning and Floodplain Administrator, has been communicating with residents regarding the Granite Street elevation project. While the original plan focused on elevating houses, the project has since shifted to elevating utilities, which will benefit more residents.

6:12 P.M. – 6:13 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that the crew has been busy plowing, salting, sanding, and doing repairs. Since November 17, 2025, the crew has been out 62 times. They are halfway through their salt budget, and their sand pile.

6:13 P.M. – 6:16 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to set the location of the 2026 Town Meeting - *Action needed*

The Select Board suggested holding Town Meeting at the Town House. Casey asked about the Certificate of Occupancy (COO), and Shari explained that a COO is still needed for the balcony, but the downstairs of the building can hold 200 people. She expects the full COO to be issued by March. Paul Fixx asked whether HCTV would be able to broadcast from the Town House, and HCTV indicated that they would need to look into that possibility.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve to

have the Town Meeting at the Hardwick Town House.

6:16 P.M. – 6:17 P.M. Item #2 – Select Board to consider approving the line of credit *increase* for Hardwick Electric from \$300,000 to \$575,000- *Action needed*

This item was on the agenda at the previous meeting, but the Board did not approve it at that time because additional information was needed. Scott and David have since been in communication, and Scott explained that the increase in the line of credit is intended to cover operating costs. Casey stated that HED does not have new documents to sign this evening but those will be available on February 5. The Board will address the motion and sign the documents at that meeting.

6:17 P.M. – 6:35 P.M. Item #3 – Select Board to get an update from the Conservation Commission on Buffalo Mountain Town Forest proposal and form a specific question for the warning – *Possible action needed*

Jack Travelstead introduced Linda Martin, Chair of the Town of Wolcott, who explained that Wolcott has owned its town forest for about three years. She noted that there are added costs for the town crew to plow certain areas, minor IT expenses to maintain information on a website, and brush hogging, which will be included as an additional cost in their mowing bid. Approximately \$1,000 was initially requested for the grand opening to cover signage; however, it did not cost as much as they thought. This year funding is going towards hand tools trail signage.

Wolcott also budgets about \$4,000 for consulting and planning related to erosion control and the development of additional trails.

Paul Fixx asked whether the forest is being managed for timber for potential income. Linda explained that it has not been pursued to date and such decisions depend on how the management plan is written.

Hannah added that the property appraisal came in at \$530,000 and that the Davis family is currently reviewing it. She proposed the ballot language as: *To protect recreational access, fish and wildlife habitat, forestry, and Lamoille River water quality, and to provide outdoor educational opportunities for schoolchildren, shall the Town of Hardwick contribute \$25,000, to be matched by more than \$700,000 of other public and private funds, toward the acquisition of +/- 329 acres of land on Buffalo Mountain to become a Town Forest?*

A floor vote was mentioned, along with plans for public meetings to present information about the town forest in general and to begin generating interest in forming a steering committee of residents to provide public input.

Rachel Kane questioned whether this was the appropriate time to form a steering committee, noting that while the Select Board authorizes committees, the Conservation Commission could initiate it. Eric commented that forming a committee would be beneficial, and Shari agreed that it would be helpful to take the lead. Ceilidh explained that letters of interest should be submitted to the Town Manager's office, after which the Select Board would make appointments, and Eric suggested directing interested residents accordingly. It was acknowledged that a committee would need to be created sooner rather than later. Linda shared that Wolcott initially formed a large committee to gather broad public input and later transitioned to a smaller committee once the town acquired the forest.

Eric Jonathan expressed concern about prioritizing revenue over a natural, holistic approach. He feels like the Town taking on this project could place additional strain on the community in multiple ways.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, the Select Board voted to approve proposed language to be added to the warning to be voted on from the floor.

6:36 P.M. – 6:39 P.M. Item #4 – Select Board to discuss changing the vault door capital line to be "vault expenses to allow for flexibility beyond just the door- *Possible action needed*

Originally the Town Clerk's office had \$25,500 to spend on the vault door project. The door cost \$8,955.00, and the concrete cutting cost \$4,200, leaving a balance of \$12,345.00. She proposed to spend that money as follows:

- ~ Purchasing 1-2 Map File Cabinet (\$650 Each)
- ~ Purchasing 4 Land record book annex shelving units (\$3,242.96)
- ~ Additional shelving, storage boxes, and cabinets
- ~ Expense for a contractor to install the door

It was asked if this was coming from capital general and Casey clarified that yes it comes from the vault line in capital general.

Shari asked if this will be an ongoing line item within the budget, and Tonia said no; this would complete the project.

6:39 P.M. – 6:41 P.M. Item #5 – Select Board to adopt the MP-1 resolutions (one for each) of the CDBG-DR grants that the town obtained from Agency of Commerce & Community Development – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to adopt the MP-1 resolutions, one for each, of the CDBG-DR grants from the Agency of Commerce & Community Development.

6:41 P.M. – 6:58 P.M. Item #6 – Select Board to discuss the balance of the Town House renovation contract and how to get the final payment paid – *Action needed*

The base bid for the project was \$281,521, and the Town originally agreed to contribute \$20,000 under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NEKarts. To date, NEKarts has contributed \$220,603.08, and the Town added an additional \$22,000 in September. There is currently an outstanding invoice in the amount of \$50,702.66.

Shari explained that NEKarts has spent approximately \$43,000 on the project leading up to and in addition to the amount committed in the MOU and the amount that the MOU covered was the amount of the original bid from the construction company. Eric asked whether NEKarts has the capacity to pay the remaining balance on the outstanding invoice, and Shari responded that they do not. Danny commented that a Public Works Director would typically have managed a situation like this.

Ceilidh asked about the \$21,129 listed in the capital building budget for the Town House, and Casey clarified that this figure reflects the balance as of June 30, 2025, and does not represent the current available amount.

Casey noted that a similar situation occurred with the library, where fundraising covered the additional costs without impacting the Town's budget. Eric asked whether NEKarts could pursue fundraising, and Shari confirmed that NEKarts continues to fundraise for the Town House. She also noted that this situation differs from the library, as NEKarts is a nonprofit that uses the building only part time.

Danny suggested that the Town pay the invoice upfront and have NEKarts reimburse the Town over time. The capital fund has the funds to pay the bill, but we typically have reserves for each building split up as guideline for what we have "saved for each building. Casey added that the funds could come from the capital general fund and then it would take approximately ten years to replenish the portion reserved for the Town House if we continued reserving \$5,000/yr for that building. Eric Jonathan asked for clarification regarding the MOU and whether either party is obligated to cover the remaining costs. David confirmed that there is an MOU between NEKarts and the Town, and Shari added that there is a lease agreement that is due to be renewed for NEKarts use of the building. Ceilidh commented that NEKarts essentially managed the project on a Town-owned building. Paul Fixx suggested that the remaining cost be split between NEKarts and the Town, since both parties agreed to the change orders.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the final payment to come out of the building capital and reflect that in the Town House capital line. Tim abstained.

6:58 P.M. – 6:59 P.M. Item #7 – Select Board to consider appointing Myles Tandy and Beth McIntyre as library trustees to fulfill the remainder of a 3-yr term expiring 2027 and 2028 respectively – *Action needed*

Casey mentioned that there was an error on the item- the appointment is just filling in until the Town Meeting in 2026- and then someone can nominate them further to complete the remainder of the 3-yr term.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve Myles Tandy and Beth McIntyre as library trustees expiring March 2026.

6:59 P.M. – 7:09 P.M. Item #8 – Select Board to discuss the possibility of taking over the management of the composting pods the Black Dirt Farm currently manages – *Possible action needed*

There are currently five composting pods located around town with that being managed by Black Dirt Farm. While there have been several composting-related projects, the current program is losing money, in part because not everyone who uses the facilities is subscribing/paying for the program.

Ceilidh has been in communication with Tom at Black Dirt Farm to determine whether he is willing to discuss the issue further. If so, Tom and David would develop a proposal to bring back to the Board. Ceilidh also spoke with Greensboro Town Clerk, Kim Greaves, who said that Greensboro offers composting only on Saturdays during trash day at a single location.

Rachel Kane shared her experience as a pod user, stating that she was never informed about how the program works, when to use it, or how to pay, and that she does not understand the process. Shari responded that there is an online subscription fee, and Rachel emphasized that there is a significant communication gap that Tom should be made aware of.

Paul Fixx noted that the Town is a member of the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District and suggested involving the district through its representative, as overseeing these issues aligns with the Town's responsibilities. David added that the Town currently does not have a formal representative, though Ceilidh serves as the alternate representative. Shari clarified that the solid waste district ran the initial program. Paul reiterated his recommendation to include solid waste management in the conversation.

Eric asked whether once a week pickup might be a workable option and suggested considering Tom's perspective on that approach.

Paul stated that composting is a legal requirement. Danny noted that the project is heavily grant-funded and cautioned that if Black Dirt's costs cannot be covered through their own compost sales, the Town cannot afford to take on financial responsibility. He added that the law places responsibility on individuals, not the Town, and said he supports having one collection site, noting that additional sites would need to be justified. David will follow up and bring the matter back for discussion at a future meeting.

7:09 P.M. – 7:14 P.M. Item #9 – Select Board to consider approving the SCRF Loan Documents for the lift stations (documents previously signed in May 2025 are invalid) – *Action needed*

Casey explained that the dates on the loan agreement and the resolution did not match. The resolution document was missing from the original package, which made the document invalid. This loan is partially forgivable through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and the balance would be FEMA reimbursement, less the town's 5% match. Having this in place is important for the FEMA negotiations.

Eric read the resolution. Please see the attached resolution for more information.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the SCRF loan documents and resolution.

7:14 P.M. – 8:23 P.M. Item #10 - Select Board to go through the FY26 draft budget and make changes as desired and then consider approving a final draft for presentation to the voters at Town Meeting – *Action needed*

The Finance Director went through the draft budget, which was put up on the screen for viewing. Topics of discussion included:

- ~ Local Option Tax as revenue
- ~ The FEMA Flood Local Share – remove it from Line Items and put additional funds in capital general bridge for the town 5% share of those FEMA projects
- ~ Spring Fest- changed the amount from \$15,000 to \$10,000 (for May 2027)
- ~ Yellow Barn Maintenance- Storm Water Permit and LVRT lease fees
- ~ Police Vehicle Maintenance- the difference- this was a one-time event
- ~ Board of Civil Authority- currently \$3- changing the stipend pay to \$25
- ~ Equity Committee- Tim suggested removing the \$1,500 and revising the resolution. There was discussion as to what the committee represented, and having the committee stand alone, not funded by the Town. The end result was reducing the \$1500 to \$500

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Ceilidh Galloway- Kane, the Select Board voted 4 to 1 to approve the FY27 budget in the amount of \$4,741,600 to present to the voters at Town Meeting.

*Eric- yea
Ceilidh- yea
Tim- yea
Shari- yea
Danny- nay*

Select Board Reports: None

New Business: Casey asked for a cover photo and dedication for the Town Report. The Select Board decided to use a painting by Brent McCoy. The dedication will be kept a surprise until the reports are made public, for a special honor.

Shari asked if there was still a location to bring their undecorated Christmas trees - Tom stated the Town Garage. She suggested that we put this on Front Porch Forum to let people know they can do this.

Old Business: Shari asked about the Town Garage and the reinforcement of the pillars. David stated that it would have to happen in the Spring.

8:29 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