

MINUTES SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING
8:00 A.M. FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2026
MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3RD FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM

Select Board

Eric Remick, Chair
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Vice Chair - *Zoom*
Shari Cornish - *absent*
Tim Ricciardello - *Zoom*
Danny Hale – *via Phone (joined late)*

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Finance Director
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk/Treasurer
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator

Special Meeting

8:06 A.M. –Select Board Chair to call meeting to order

8:06 A.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – none and also no communication from the audience

8:06 A.M. – 8:26 A.M. Item #1 Select Board to revisit the discussion about the location of the 2026 Town meeting – *Possible action needed*

At the previous meeting, the Select Board voted to have the 2026 Town meeting at the Town House. The staff asked to revisit this discussion in light of a few new factors that have come to light. The Civic Standard had planned to offer childcare as well as lunch, snacks and beverages. We will have to forgo these two options due to space restrictions. There are normally 6 tables set up in the lobby area, but there will only be room for two at the most.

David shared an email he received from Orise Ainsworth (long-time moderator) sharing that she did not think that it was a good idea to have the meeting there. Amanda mentioned that at the 2023 Town meeting, a couple of people spoke up after hearing that the 2024 meeting would be held at the Town House to say that while it was a beautiful building, it was not as accessible for people, and the parking wasn't good either. They said that it was not a good idea to have it there. There was no straw vote about the topic at that meeting, just a couple of people speaking up with their opinions.

There was discussion about the voting layout and accessibility. We don't have to have voting at the same place as the meeting, but we do it as a convenience to the voters because many people come to vote and then stay for the meeting. Tonia has concerns about the flow of voters coming through, especially when a large group of people typically come in at once. Tonia explained that she has to be at the Town House for more than 14 hours, since the voting is there too. The lighting is not great for checking people in. They had to use flashlights the last time they had an election there. The space is dark and dreary, and the School is bright and well lit. She could hold the voting elsewhere, but that's not what is convenient for residents. It's typical for 50+ people to show up 15-20 minutes before the meeting starts and she's not sure where they are all going to be able to line up.

Last year's town meeting had about 173 people. We do have the ability to take rows of seating out in either the front or back. The floor at the Town House is 257 people. In addition, the balcony should be open. The voting

will also be up on the stage behind where the Select Board is going to sit. Unfortunately, with the curtain down and Tonia taking minutes, she won't be able to see the voting. She was able to get Alberta to take a day off from her new job to come and help with the voting, which is a huge relief knowing that she won't be able to see what is going on behind the curtain.

The group discussed pros and cons of the facility, including the parking, layout, and acoustics. Town meetings used to be held there every year for many years until they moved to the School. There is parking along Creamery Rd. as well as some along the building. Eric thinks that the acoustics are better at the Town House.

Ceilidh said that it sounds like the staff doesn't want to have it at the Town House. Casey said that it doesn't matter to her either way, but she wanted to see nostalgia (because we used to have it there) and personal feelings taken away in the decision making so that the Town does what is most convenient for those attending the meeting. She further added that the building is beautiful but not necessarily conducive to space and logistic needs of the meeting.

The Board would like to have the Town Meeting at the Town House this year and then put an item on the warning to ask the voters what they want for next year. It's been several years since it's been at the Town House, so we should try it to see how it goes.

There is no action needed, since they already voted at the last meeting and are not changing that.

8:26 A.M. – 8:29 A.M. Item #2 Select Board to review and consider approving the Warning for the 2026 Town meeting – *Action needed*

Tonia stepped out of the meeting to add the new item to the warning. No changes other than adding " Shall the Town hold the 2027 Town Meeting at the Hardwick Elementary School or the Hardwick Town House?" as an article on the warning.

8:27 A.M. *Danny joined the meeting by phone while she was away*, and Eric let him know that they had just reviewed the warning that was sent out to them ahead of time and that Tonia just went to make the adjustment of asking the voters where they wanted the meeting to be held next year. Tonia returned a few minutes later with the revised warning.

Upon motion by Ceilidh Galloway-Kane and seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the warning with the addition of the article previously discussed.

No Select Board Reports, New Business, Old Business -

8:29 A.M. Eric Remick, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: _____
Casey Rowell, Finance Director

Minutes approved by: _____
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Select Board Vice Chair