

MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, March 19, 2026
HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING
20 CHURCH ST. 3rd FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM

Select Board

Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Chair
Shari Cornish, Vice Chair
Tim Ricciardello
Larry Fliegelman
Derek Richardson

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Casey Rowell, Finance Director
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman
Kristen Leahy, Floodplain Administrator
Renae DiGregorio, HED

Others Present

Andrew Gilbert
Kristine McAllister
Rachel Kane
Bob Edebohls
Emily Lanxner
Matt Renaud
Joe Nudell
Ben Patoine

Regular Meeting

6:00 P.M. Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:00 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – None

6:02 P.M. – Communication from the audience – Emily Lanxner stated that a non-binding resolution was passed at Town Meeting. She noted that at the end of the resolution, there is a request for the Select Board to draft a memo confirming that Hardwick voted to pass it. She asked whether there is a process for creating this memo and whether any Select Board members would be willing to take it on.

Ceilidh responded that Emily should submit the resolution in writing, along with a sample memo, to the Town Manager's office. The office can then bring the request before the Select Board for consideration.

6:04 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of March 5, 2026

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the regular Select Board meeting of March 5, 2026, as written.

6:05 P.M. – 6:10 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David congratulated both the Hazen varsity girls' and boys' basketball teams for winning the Division III championships.

The Town Clerk's Office will be fully staffed beginning April.

Concerns were raised about unsafe downtown bypass traffic, particularly excessive speeds on side streets. The Police Department will increase patrols in these areas and begin issuing tickets. It was also noted that traffic lights are currently set to two-minute intervals.

Regarding the local option tax, it was noted that the Town should better communicate that it did not pass. Several neighboring towns have adopted the tax.

An update on FEMA matters was provided. The wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) discussion is currently on hold. However, FEMA Region 1, based out of Boston, will continue reviewing the proposal and is expected to provide feedback within the next two weeks.

A Town Meeting survey is available online, and officials are encouraging more residents to participate.

The Community Development Coordinator, Tracy Martin, is working with Hardwick Recue on Congresswoman Becca Balint's CDS request for the Essential Service Complex. Outreach to Senator Bernie Sanders's office is the next step.

A joint meeting between the Select Board and Hardwick Electric Commissioners regarding the Jackson Dam Study is scheduled for next Thursday, March 26 from 5:00–7:00 P.M.

6:10 P.M. – 6:13 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that they have been working with the grader as weather permits and are addressing potholes as quickly as possible. He noted that the pit has been functioning well. Recent maintenance includes a brake job on Truck#4 and a hydraulic overhaul on the loader. Water issues, including frozen lines and leaks, have been repaired, and road signs have been fixed.

Tom also mentioned that the town banners will be changed soon.

6:13 P.M. – 6:19 P.M. Hardwick Electric Department Report – Given by Renae DiGregorio

Renae started as the Hardwick Electric Department last month as their new controller.

All utilities in Vermont are undergoing a state assessment focused on public safety, efficiency, financial health, and capital planning. This process is ongoing and constructive for local electric departments.

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project is starting this fall, led by VPPSA. Residents will have the option to opt out, and further information will be provided. AMI technology is expected to offer multiple benefits.

HED now has a Geographic Information System (GIS) for mapping inventory, assets, and outages—a resource the utility has never had before. The system is live, and crews are becoming familiar with it. A recent outage demonstrated how the system can notify crews more quickly. David asked whether the AMI project would require changing each meter. Renae confirmed that, to her understanding, the project involves swapping out the existing meters at each location.

Renae also noted that there was a joint special Select Board meeting between the Hardwick Select Board and HED on March 26 at 5:00 P.M.

6:19 P.M. – 6:20 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to complete the annual Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and approve the completed Annual Financial Plan to be submitted to VTrans for our highway aid – *Action needed*

David explained that this is an annual report required to establish our eligibility for grant-in-aid funding for the town's highways.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the annual Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and the Annual Financial Plan to be submitted to VTrans for our highway aid.

6:20 P.M. – 6:21 P.M. Item #2 – Select Board to consider approving renewals of a couple liquor and tobacco licenses - *Action Needed*

First Class license for:

Bpali, LLC d/b/a Caja Taqueria

Tobacco License:

DG Retail, LLC d/b/a Dollar General

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the first-class liquor license for Bpali, LLC d/b/a Caja Taqueria and the Tobacco License for DG Retail, d/b/a Dollar General.

6:21 P.M. – 6:22 P.M. Item #3 – Select Board to appoint Andrew Gilbert to the Development Review Board (DRB) for a 1-year left on a three-year term, expiring June 2027 – *Action needed*

Andrew Gilbert introduced himself and expressed interest in assisting the Town.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to appoint Andrew Gilbert to the Development Review Board (DRB) for a 1-year left on a three-year term, expiring June 2027.

6:22 P.M. – 6:56 P.M. Item #4 – Select Board to discuss forming a steering committee or task force for the Buffalo Mountain Town Forest purchase.

Ceilidh expressed that at Town Meeting there was a vote to purchase Buffalo Mountain and turn it into a Town Forest. It is now the Select Board's responsibility to appoint members to a steering committee. Before this occurs, the Select Board would like to create a Buffalo Mountain Town Forest Steering Committee Creation and Governance to determine the number of members, whether members have to be Hardwick residents, whether interested committee members should fill out an application or whether a letter of interest will suffice, and whether there should be terms for the committee members.

Ceilidh mentioned that in the draft it states there will be 17 members.

Tim said that he would like to see interested members fill out the application that is provided in the draft file.

Derek asked why the Town is creating a steering committee right now as there are currently new petitions for a revote on this subject. He feels that the Select Board is diving too deep. Derek stated that the petitions have been turned in, and Tonia confirmed that they have not.

Amanda reported receiving six emails expressing interest, noting that some were simple statements of "I'm interested" while others provided more detail. She emphasized that town staff need clarity on what information to request. There was discussion about whether to accept letters of interest or formal applications. Shari recommended using a formal application, while Ceilidh suggested that applicants also attend meetings to explain their interest and provide context for why they want to serve. Larry is concerned that going back to those individuals and asking them to fill out an application might drive them away, but the Select Board agreed that they want to have a fair and transparent process.

Derek emphasized prioritizing taxpayers versus general Hardwick residents, while Tim supported limiting eligibility to Hardwick taxpayers.

Ceilidh stated that she talked to Wolcott and learned that Wolcott has been inviting professionals to their meetings to help guide their steering committee members.

Joe Nudell asked for clarification on the steering committee members and asked if renters who live in Hardwick could be part of the committee. Tim stated that the application should state resident and/or taxpayer. Joe also suggested that representatives from VASA, Center for an Agricultural Economy, and Hardwick Rescue should also be part of the committee.

Ceilidh stated that the Select Board will finalize the document at the next Select Board Meeting.

6:56 P.M. – 7:02 P.M. Item #5 – Select Board to considering setting a date and time for a Select Board retreat to go further into Town projects – *Action Needed*

The Select Board discussed using the Library or the Civic Standard as a location.

The timing was also a concern; November and June were also mentioned as options.

The time was decided and it will be from 12 P.M to 4 P.M.

Amanda agreed to send out a survey to determine the best date and the preferred location.

7:02 P.M. – 7:16 P.M. Item #6 – Discussion on Bridge #31 (East Main Street) survey results.

Kristen prepared a survey regarding Bridge #31. The results are included in the attached packet. A total of 138 surveys were returned, most from outside Hardwick. The next step is to determine the specific cost of the project, though the Select Board discussed what additional information they need.

Tim noted that the bridge is not a current priority since most survey responses came from outside Hardwick. Kristine McAllister, who lives nearby, expressed support for the bridge, noting that the detour is sometimes inconvenient, and inquired about funding. David explained that FEMA would cover 90%, the State 5%, and the

Town 5%. Ceilidh highlighted daily usage concerns, noting that the alternative bridge has poor sight lines and can become effectively one lane when large vehicles pass. Kristen added that most concerns from the survey focused on the Greensboro bridge and traffic there, and she sent that information to the nearby Town Clerks.

David clarified that the FEMA Public Assistance project had begun after a bridge failure, with design costs already obligated; the final design would then need re-obligation. Kristen emphasized that it is premature to make decisions and that the survey is intended to provide information.

Derek commented that if the other Town's residents are pushing for it, why shouldn't those nearby towns help pay for the bridge.

Ceilidh asked about the next steps and FEMA timeline. David will provide updates regarding the design, submission for reimbursement, and obligation process when the time comes. Kristen suggested sending a memo to the other three committee members. Tim asked David to contact our Town's Regional Planning Commission.

Kristine McAllister, Hardwick Postmaster, also noted that her rural mail carriers are rerouted, adding several miles to travel. Rachel Kane questioned the necessity, noting that the Town's 5% share is still significant, though she acknowledged that contributions from other towns would help. Bob Edebohls mentioned concerns about the section connecting to Greensboro. Kristine added that the school zone may warrant additional funding support. Larry requested more details on Option 2, noting a draft sketch exists and raising the possibility that if a bridge is removed, a new one may not be rebuilt. Kristen will provide further information on how that space would be used if the bridge is not rebuilt, and how river flooding might impact the area.

7:17 P.M. – 7:20 P.M. Item #7 – Select Board to consider approving the Bylaw updates- *Action Needed*

There was a public hearing held before this meeting. Please refer to the PowerPoint and minutes for further details.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted 4-0 to approve the Bylaw updates. Tim abstained.

7:20 P.M. – 7:26 P.M. Item #8 – Select Board to hear from Kristine McAllister with Hardwick Post Office about a new economic development loan request.

Ceilidh explained that the Economic Development Loan Fund is a revolving loan fund that sustains itself.

Kristine, owner of Hardwick Post Office, raised concerns about the condition of her property, noting that the driveway is an eyesore and the sidewalk is uneven. She is proposing a new layout as part of improvements previously identified in the Mill Street Scoping Study. The project would involve removing years of asphalt, excavating the area, and installing a new base layer and fixing the drainage system. Kristine has obtained estimates and is requesting assistance for a downtown façade improvement.

Derek asked whether moving forward now would conflict with the timeline of the Mill Street Scoping Study.

Kristine responded that if the study proceeds later, the remaining work would primarily involve the sidewalk, which is the Town's responsibility. She added that she would prefer to eliminate the sidewalk and install pillars instead.

Kristine confirmed that before moving forward with this project, she needs approval from the Postal Service commissioners.

Ceilidh clarified whether sidewalk costs were included in the estimates, and Kristine confirmed that yes, they were, and currently the plan is she would cover the cost of replacing the sidewalks.

7:26 P.M. – 7:27 P.M. Item #9 - Select Board to hear from Shari Cornish with Whistle Emporium about a new economic development loan request

Shari, owner of Whistle Emporium, stated that she received an exceptionally large invoice and is seeking to borrow funds to cover the cost, with the intention of repaying the loan over time.

Select Board Reports-

- Larry mentioned that the Hardwick Municipal Plan survey is live, and the Planning Commission asks that these surveys help with the Town Plan, so it's encouraged to take it.
- Larry noted that on May 1 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Hazen Union Hatchery Club will be cleaning up Cooper Brook and they're looking for volunteers to help. Gathering is at Atkins Field.

New Business-

- Ceilidh would like to add a discussion regarding Caspian Beach next week at the joint meeting with Hardwick Electric.
- Derek expressed concerns regarding Act 181. Shari suggested having a presentation at a future Select Board meeting regarding this act. David is going to reach out to a representative to see if they are available. Derek and Renae both expressed concern about the tiers and how they will impact Hardwick residents. Kristen responded saying that she feels only Tier 1 will impact the Hardwick Town resident.

Old Business –

- Ceilidh made note that she signed the Town Health Officer and the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District Appointment forms- previously approved at the March 6 meeting.
- Shari wanted to remind everyone about the LVRT Connector Loop and would like to talk about this at a future meeting so that everyone understands the loop.
- Shari asked about trailhead construction and David said that the Town has a contract with Gravel Construction.

7: 41 P.M. Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 VSA 313 for a loan contract discussion to include the Town Manager, Finance Director and Kristine McAllister-owner of the Hardwick Post Office.

7:56 P.M. Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to exit Executive Session.

Upon motion by Larry Fliegelman, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to approve the

economic development loan for Kristine McAllister in the amount of \$28,500.

7:57 P.M. *Upon motion by Larry Fliegelman, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 VSA 313 for a loan contract discussion to include the Town Manager and Finance Director.*

Shari left the meeting at 8:02 P.M. so the rest of the Select Board could discuss her loan request.

8:26 P.M. *Upon motion by Larry Fliegelman, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to exit Executive Session. No action taken.*

8:27 P.M. Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: _____
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator

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