

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2026**  
**HARDWICK MEMORIAL BUILDING**  
**20 CHURCH ST. 3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR AND VIA ZOOM**

**Select Board**

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

**Others Present**

David Upson, Town Manager  
Casey Rowell, Finance Director  
Tonia Chase, Clerk/Treasurer  
Mike Henry, Police Chief  
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator  
Maureen Demers  
Jacob Perry  
Renaud Demers  
Orise Ainsworth  
Ken Blair  
Jack Travelstead  
Mary Whitaker  
Valerie Hussey  
Joe Rivard  
Miranda Brown  
Audrey Grant  
Ken Davis  
Joe Nudell  
Eric Remick  
Phil Mercier  
Michael G. - *Zoom*

**Others Present**

Roberta Foster  
Justin Foster  
Donna Perry  
Jennifer Deyo  
Steve Deyo  
Tiffany Perry  
Jeffrey Perry  
Ashton Allen  
Ben Patoine  
Norma Wiesen  
Rachel Kane  
Hannah Redmon  
Norma Spaulding  
Sue Rivard  
Claire Hill  
Andrew Gilbert  
Wilfred McAllister, Jr.  
Paul Fixx  
Lynette Fontaine  
Danny Hale - *Zoom*

**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

**6:00 P.M.** Communication from the audience – Hannah Redmon with Trust for Public Land shared that the VT Housing and Conservation Board has committed \$465,000 for the town forest purchase.

There was brief comment about items that are not on the agenda, and this is where they would be talked about. People asked if they could comment on agenda items and Ceilidh said that yes people can engage in discussion when those items come up.

**6:04 P.M.** – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of March 19, 2026, the Bylaw Public Hearing minutes of March 19, 2026, and the Special Meeting minutes of March 26, 2026

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of March 19, 2026, the Bylaw Public Hearing minutes of March 19, 2026, and the Special Meeting minutes of March 26, 2026 .*

**6:05 P.M. – 6:11 P.M.** Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David shared that we received an offer for the wastewater plant of \$8.2M to elevate the structure in its current location. We have until April 15 to accept the offer. He has a couple of meetings scheduled with FEMA and the state partners to discuss if we should accept the offer. This is the amount that the engineers came up with.

David has had meetings with prospective project managers to oversee the box culverts and bridges that we are rebuilding.

David also mentioned that we need to hire an engineer to do a dry flood proof evaluation for the fire station, including the cost to do that. We continue to work with FEMA on the damage to the lift stations.

David shared that the Community Development Coordinator is working on an Economic Development Administration (EDA) project proposal for the funding stack for the wastewater plant if we decide to relocate it and is also looking at U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs.

David reported that the Town has submitted three congressionally delegated spending (CDS) proposals for each of the national delegates for the Essential Services Complex.

David gave an update on the retaining wall, reporting that all the pilings have been drilled. They will start excavating over the next couple of weeks. We can expect to see dump trucks in and out on the Main Street side when that starts. They drilled micro piles on the Daniels Rd. block side today.

Ceilidh asked about the April 15 deadline related to the wastewater treatment facility. David explained that the current offer is a fixed-cost offer, meaning that if unforeseen issues arise, the Town would not be able to return later to request additional funding. He added that state consultants have advised that if the Town does not accept the offer, the funding would still be obligated, allowing for potential negotiation at a later stage. If the Town does accept the offer, the intention would still be to relocate the facility; however, the Town would likely rely more heavily on USDA funding. David noted that the USDA currently has approximately \$42 million earmarked for wastewater projects in Vermont.

**6:11 P.M. – 6:14 P.M.** Hardwick Police Department Report – Given by Mike Henry

Mike reported that the simulcast repeater system for the police radios is finally coming together after almost a year. The dark fiber has been linked from West Hill to the Police Department, so Burlington Communications will be able to finish the system installation.

Mike reported that Steve Mitchell is attending a two-week training, and an additional officer is scheduled for training next week. Ariana continues her Academy training and is currently in week 8 of the 17-week program.

Shari asked about any updates about people speeding on the side streets to avoid the traffic lights in town. Mike said that they are doing directed patrols on West Church St. Mike said that having specific times is helpful. They usually focus on certain times like when school lets out.

**6:14 P.M. – 6:15 P.M.** Item #1 – Select Board to consider liquor license renewals for Agri-Mark/Yellow Barn and House of Pizza - *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Larry Fliegelman, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the following liquor license renewals:*

First Class License: Hardwick House of Pizza, Inc.

Second Class License: Agri-Mark, Inc. d/b/a Agri-Mark/Yellow Barn

**6:15 P.M. – 6:18 P.M.** Item #2 – Payroll Administrator to give an update on the progress of the Town Meeting survey

Amanda reported that she created a survey to gather feedback on preferences for future meetings. To date, 94 responses have been received. The survey will remain open until May 31, with both paper and online options available.

In light of the revote, Amanda noted that it is helpful to review this feedback to determine preferred meeting times and days. Based on responses received so far, Saturdays are preferred over weekdays. Respondents also preferred evenings if they were going to be a weekday.

She also noted that while surveys tended to show the Elementary School as the preferred location, voters approved of holding next year's Town Meeting at the Town House, and the meeting must be held there in accordance with that vote.

**6:18 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.** Item #3 – Select Board to discuss setting a date for a reconsideration vote of Article 7 from Town Meeting to contribute \$25,000 towards the acquisition of 329+/- acres on Buffalo Mountain – *Possible Action needed*

Tonia explained that she received a petition for a reconsideration vote about Article 7 from Town meeting. She has evaluated the petition, and it is a valid request with the required number of signatures.

See the meeting attachments for a detailed summary. The Select Board needs to have a special meeting within 60 days of receipt of the application which was March 26.

Orise Ainsworth shared procedures about paper ballots. She provided a handout (in attachments) with information about paper ballots. The Town Manager read that aloud later in the meeting. Her opinion is that the paper ballot was not done unlawfully at Town meeting. A motion was not needed. Someone just needed to request a paper ballot, and 6 others could agree and we would have to have had the paper ballot.

Roberta Foster expressed concerns about the vote being done from the floor instead of Australian ballot. She wants the revote to be in the evening so people who work can actually attend. She wanted the revote to be by Australian ballot as well, but it was made clear that the revote has to be done in the same manner as the original format which was from the floor. However, a paper ballot can be requested.

*Larry Fliegelman made a motion to hold the reconsideration on Article 7 from Town meeting on May 19, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. Derek Richardson seconded motion.*

Ben Patoine asked what would happen following the vote. David explained that the purchase would proceed even if the article is voted down, as the Select Board has already voted to accept the property as a Town forest. If the article does not pass, the \$25,000 will need to be sourced from elsewhere.

Hannah Redmon confirmed the same understanding. It was also noted that a lack of Town contribution could affect funders' willingness to support the project.

Sue Rivard referred to the December 18 meeting minutes where she expressed concern that the Town had agreed to take ownership of the property prior to full public discussion and questioned voting to allocate funds before residents fully understand potential uses of the property. She recalled that the Town Manager was going to look into the process for acquiring property as it was thought at that time that a vote was needed. It turns out that the statute that the Manager was thinking of was actually for selling property not acquiring it.

An audience member commented that if the vote were allegedly done unlawfully then why would we do it the same way again? Its legality is an opinion, and it is going to a reconsideration vote anyway. Ceilidh said that people can still request a paper vote.

David read the handout that Orise provided about paper ballots. There were questions about the process at the original meeting . David explained that the body of the voters can change the way the voting happens, and they agreed upon the change at the March 3 meeting.

Claire Hill asked how the Town knew that the people at Town meeting who voted were truly registered voters. In the past, it has essentially been done on the honor system, but with the paper ballot at the Town meeting, each voter was checked in. The number of votes on paper received was consistent with the attendance at the meeting. Since people have expressed concern, Tonia is going to implement a new procedure for checking in and getting a colored index card to vote with. The color of the card will not be known until check in. People will raise their cards to vote.

An audience member asked about the number of new registered voters. Tonia reported that there have been 715 new registered voters in the last 5 years.

Paul Fixx comment that people want this revote to be on Australian ballot but need to understand that it cannot be done any other way. It must mirror how the original vote was done.

Renaud Demers asked how many voters there are in the town. Tonia reported that there are 2,333. He feels strongly that the forest item should have been on Australian ballot so everyone could have a chance to vote. He commented that the Select Board should not be on one side or another. They should stay neutral and put something like this topic on a ballot so the majority of registered voters can actually cast a vote.

Joe Nudell asked if anyone knows the cost of running a special meeting. We do not specifically have the cost.

Ashton Allen asked about having the reconsideration vote at Town House. He thinks the Elementary School is a better option. We have to have the reconsideration vote at the Town House because it has to be at the same place as the original vote. He was encouraged to complete the Town meeting survey. Next year's Town meeting will also be held at the Town House because voters chose that as the location for next year. It would need to be voted on again to change the location.

Jennifer Deyo wanted to clarify that the only real consideration is if the Town is going to contribute the \$25,000 because the purchase is already in the works. David confirmed that it is the case. The transaction will still move forward if the contribution is voted down. The funds will just need to be found elsewhere.

The property will be given to the town. Ceilidh went through the process when the Select Board agreed to take the property as a town forest in July 2025.

Phil Mercier has questions about whether the land will be tax exempt and what will happen with recreation activities such as hunting and riding ATVs. Ceilidh said that the tax revenue will go away because the Town does not tax itself. However, trails and public access can also generate tourism dollars for the community as a whole. There is a steering committee that will make proposals about the use and present to Select Board later on. The Select Board will collaborate with the steering committee on a stewardship plan for the property taking into consideration need. An audience member commented that the land loss is very permanent.

Rachel Kane said it is an estimated \$5,000 in tax loss revenue to the Town. Someone else spoke up and said it was \$6,300 according to the most recent tax bill.

*Original motion fails unanimously.*

*Larry amended the motion to hold the reconsideration on Article 7 from Town meeting on May 19, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Town House. Derek Richardson seconded motion. Motion passes unanimously.*

**7:00 P.M. – 7:18 P.M.** Item #4– Select Board to consider holding a special meeting to vote on the following two items which petitions have been received for: “Shall the Town of Hardwick vote to require that all public questions, town budget and appropriations currently voted from the floor at Town Meeting be voted by Australian ballot beginning with the next Annual Town Meeting?” and “Shall the Town of Hardwick vote to change reconsider votes that were voted on floor to Australian Ballot?” – *Possible Action needed*

We received petitions for both of these items. The second item we cannot act on because it has not happened yet.

Roberta asked if the reconsideration vote could be Australian ballot because it was done unlawfully initially. The opinion that it was done unlawfully does not matter at this point because a reconsideration vote is happening. It needs to mirror the way the original vote was done; however, a paper ballot can be requested.

*Upon motion by Larry Fliegelman , seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted by majority to hold a special meeting to consider the petition “Shall the Town of Hardwick vote to require that all public questions, town budget and appropriations currently voted from the floor at Town Meeting be voted by Australian ballot beginning with the next Annual Town Meeting” on May 19 at 6:30 at the Town House.*

*Ceilidh - yea*

*Derek – yea*

*Larry – yea*

*Shari - nay*

Ben Patoine asked why the Select Board cannot decide to do everything Australian ballot. That is up to the body of voters.

Shari said that we would essentially be doing away with town meeting if we do everything by Australian ballot. Elected officials would be the only thing they still vote for from the floor. There was discussion about including all floor votes to be on Australian ballot, including the elected officials and appropriations. Orise shared that Fairfax has a Saturday Town meeting to educate the voters about all of the items on the warning and then have the voting on Tuesday Town Meeting Day to vote on all the warning items.

Paul encouraged the Select Board to hold an informational meeting between now and the special meeting. He also suggested keeping the elected officials from the floor at least for next year.

Eric Remick said that he thinks that the special meeting would have less turnout than a typical town meeting and suggested waiting until the 2027 town meeting for that item. The Select Board is required to act on the petitions received within 60 days, so it is not an option to wait.

Joe Nudell asked about the number of ballots cast on Australian ballot on March 3 compared to the number of people who attended Town meeting. Tonia responded that ballots cast was 505 compared to about 300 in attendance at the meeting.

Rachel Kane commented that it is a pretty serious decision about doing away with the Town meeting if everything is switched to be done by Australian ballot.

Ceilidh said we can discuss it at a future Select Board meeting before the vote.

**7:18 P.M. – 7:22 P.M.** Item #5 – Select Board to review three new policies [Federal Grant Compensation, Payment & Cash Management, and Travel Cost] and consider approving – *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to adopt the Federal Grant Compensation Policy, Travel Cost Policy, and Payment and Cash Management Policy.*

**7:22 P.M. – 7:25 P.M.** Item #6 — Select Board to consider authorizing engagement of Monaghan Safar PLLC for bond counsel services related to the Highway Garage project and approve execution of the engagement letter – *Action needed*

We will not be ready to apply for the summer bond pool but need to engage the attorney for the next winter bond pool that would close in March 2027. Fees are charged as we use them. There is not a fee just to engage them.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to engage Monaghan Safar PLLC for bond counsel services related to the Highway Garage project.*

**7:25 P.M. – 7:31 P.M.** Item #7 — Select Board to consider supporting an Apartheid-Free Community pledge letter (follow up from Town meeting resolution) – *Action needed*

At Town meeting, a non-binding resolution was made about this. Emily Lanxner requested that the Board sign the support letter provided that can be sent to the Governor. The sample letter was provided.

Orise explained that it is non-binding and that they do not have to do this. They do not have to act. The Select Board decided not to take any action on the non-binding resolution.

Paul suggested that if someone wants to ask for this that they provide for a letter at Town meeting.

**7:34 P.M. – 7:40 P.M.** Item #8– Finance Director to give FY26 Quarter 3 budget update

The Finance Director provided the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter budget update for this fiscal year (through March 31). See attachments for the details.

Paul asked about Bridge #31 and if that is still being evaluated for replacement. David explained that FEMA is paying for the final design and we will present it to them to see if they approve a replacement.

**7:40 P.M. – 7:46 P.M.** Item #9 – Select Board to consider approving a water connection application for JP & Sons Properties LLC for 481 Rte. 14 S, subject to receipt of appropriate state permits – *Action needed*

Larry asked for an explanation. David explained that per our water ordinance, an application and \$500 fee is required to connect to our water system.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to approve the water connection application for JP & Sons Properties LLC for 481 Rte. 14 S, subject to receipt of appropriate state permits.*

**7:46 P.M. – 7:47 P.M.** Item #10 – Select Board to consider participating in the SFY27 Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid program and authorize the Town Manager to sign the letter of intent – *Action needed*

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to participate in the SFY27 Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid program and authorize the Town Manager to sign the letter of intent.*

**7:47 P.M. – 7:55 P.M.** Item #11 – Select Board to consider approving the final report for the Mill Street Scoping Study - *Action needed*

The final report has been issued. It was approved by VTrans, and minimal changes were made since the last version that the Select Board saw. The presentation will be in the meeting attachments.

*Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted by majority to accept the final report for the Mill Street Scoping Study.*

*Ceilidh – yea*

*Shari – yea*

*Larry - yea*

*Derek – nay*

**Select Board Reports:** none

**New Business:** David talked about how he had speed bumps installed on West Church Street back when he first started for the Town. He just went ahead and put them in without public engagement. He then received a lot of feedback about why it was done and it made him realize that it was important to get buy in from the community first and include them in the process.

The Mill Street Scoping study was a good example of this. A ton of public engagement was done during that scoping study. The town has a lot of great committees and individuals who have great ideas for projects and are passionate about their causes. However, we really should set a benchmark for projects and require a certain amount of public engagement. If more public engagement had been done for the forest, people would not be feeling this way. He would like to see the town create a policy that requires public engagement for a certain asset received or divested.

Tiffany Perry commented that a lot of the meetings about the forest were held in the afternoon when people who work could not attend. These meetings should be in the evening so more people can attend.

Joe Nudell agrees that a policy that committees could conform to would be good . He commented that the Conservation Commission held 3 public information meetings about the forest. David pointed out that those meetings were held after they asked the Select Board to accept the property, not prior.

Jeff Perry asked about the price of the highway garage and that it should not be that costly. Paul commented that there is private donor money for the town forest.

Ceilidh suggested that we add the policy David talked about as a future agenda item.

Tonia reported that she is excited to welcome a new Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer. Kendra Parks will start on Monday, April 6.

Paul Fixx reminded the Board that he feels strongly that an informational meeting should be held before the special meeting.

**Old Business:** Ceilidh reported that the Select Board held a special joint meeting with the Hardwick Electric Department Commissioners last week regarding the Jackson Dam. She expressed interest in holding a follow-up joint meeting in executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 to discuss a real estate matter. Amanda will distribute a poll to the Select Board and Commissioners to determine availability.

**8:10 P.M.** Ceilidh Galloway-Kane , Select Board Chair, adjourned the meeting.

Minutes taken by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Casey Rowell, Finance Director

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