

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MAY 7, 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
Casey Rowell, Finance Director
Tonia Chase, Clerk/Treasurer
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman
Kristen Leahy, Zoning/Floodplain Admin.
Ross Connelly
Renae DiGregorio, Hardwick Electric

Others Present

Tracy Martin - *Zoom*
Michael - *Zoom*
Danny Hale - *Zoom*
Paul Fixx - *Zoom*
Rachel Kane

Regular Meeting

6:09 P.M. – Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Select Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

6:09 P.M. – Set/Adjust Agenda – Add a second Executive Session pursuant to 1 VSA § 313 for a real estate matter to include the Town Manager.

Upon motion by Larry Fliegelman, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to amend the agenda as stated.

6:10 P.M. – 6:14 P.M. Communication from the audience –

Rachel Kane asked whether speed bumps could be installed in the village during the summer months to help slow traffic. David asked which area she was referring to, and Rachel stated that she was concerned about the downhill approaches to East Hardwick.

David stated that motorists need to be more aware of their speed when entering village areas. He also noted that Rachel could request a traffic study through Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA). Larry asked whether a traffic study would also be needed for additional signage near the rail trail. David commented that signage is only effective if motorists are paying attention. He noted that Doug Morton at NVDA would be the contact person if Rachel wishes to pursue the matter further.

6:14 P.M. – 6:14 P.M. Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of April 16, 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 April 16, 2026.

6:14 P.M. – 6:21 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David reported that two environmental remediation studies have recently begun. A Phase II assessment has started at the proposed VT Huts location at 9 South Main Street. The Town signed an agreement granting permission for property access to conduct the study. In addition, work has begun on a Phase I assessment on Creamery Road.

David also reported that he drafted an RFP for 100% design and construction documents for the wastewater treatment plant. The draft was sent to consultants, and he is currently reviewing their comments.

David stated that the design for the Fisher Folly Bridge has been completed and that work is underway in the permitting process.

David reported that the pedestrian bridge project remains on schedule and is actually slightly ahead of schedule. The contractor has reached the lowest required elevation and is approximately halfway through installation of the micropiles. Rain has not impacted the project; however, sandbags will be installed for water control. The wall is in place, and the footing for the wall will be poured over the micropiles. Engineering plans are also being submitted to tie the new wall into the existing wall. The bridge is expected to arrive in July and be installed in early August.

Shari asked about the non-functioning crosswalks and the parking spaces adjacent to the jersey barriers. She suggested painting over the white lines and covering the two-hour parking signs, as people continue attempting to park along the barriers. David stated that the Town can communicate with CCS regarding the issue.

6:21 P.M. – 6:26 P.M. Road Foreman Report – Given by Tom Fadden

Tom reported that the crew completed grading on Mackville Road and Hopkins Hill Road. Bridgman Hill was also completed within the last couple of weeks, along with work on West Hill, Tucker Brook Road, and Kate Brook Road. The crew also completed the West Woodbury section that the Town maintains annually under contract.

Tom reported that the crew repaired the water main break on So. Main St. with the help of Gravel Construction. Unfortunately, after those repairs were completed, another break occurred near Jiffy Mart. The crew responded at 10:00 p.m. to complete the repairs overnight to minimize disruptions. They also replaced the hydrant near Buffalo Mountain Market.

Additional hydrant repairs were completed on the corner of Vermont Avenue and near Slapp Hill.

Tom reported that the crew has started roadside mowing and painting crosswalks. They also relocated the radar sign near the Buffalo Mountain Co-op because it was repeatedly being struck by delivery trucks.

Shari asked about the crosswalks near the laundromat intersection. Tom explained that traffic cannot be stopped in that area due to the ongoing construction. Shari expressed concern about pedestrian safety. Tom noted that completing the work at night is not a practical option because the paint requires warmth and sunlight to dry properly.

6:26 P.M. – 6:28 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to consider approving several liquor and tobacco licenses - *Action needed*

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the following liquor and tobacco licenses:

First Class license for:

Positive Pizza, Inc. d/b/a Positive Pie
The Cork & Fork LLC

Second Class Licenses for:

VISAT 117 CORP d/b/a Hardwick Gas & Convenience Store **NEW**
Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC
GSB, LLC d/b/a D&L Beverage & Deli
Buffalo Mountain Co-op, Inc.

Third Class Licenses for:

Positive Pizza, Inc. d/b/a Positive Pie
The Cork & Fork LLC

Outside Consumption Permit for:

Positive Pizza, Inc. d/b/a Positive Pie

Tobacco License:

VISAT 117 CORP d/b/a Hardwick Gas & Convenience Store **NEW**
Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC
GSB, LLC d/b/a D&L Beverage & Deli

Tobacco Substitute Endorsement:

VISAT 117 CORP d/b/a Hardwick Gas & Convenience Store **NEW**
Hardwick Convenience & Deli, LLC
GSB, LLC d/b/a D&L Beverage & Deli

The applications that are renewals have no violations.

6:28 P.M. – 6:29 P.M. Item #2 – Select Board to consider approving a banner application for Craftsbury Chamber Players - *Action needed*

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve the banner application for the Craftsbury Chamber Players.

6:29 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Item #3 – Select Board to consider approving a banner application for Hardwick Farmer’s Market where is application - *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the banner application for the Hardwick Farmer’s Market.

6:30 P.M. – 6:34 P.M. Item #4 – Select Board to review and consider approving a company for the RFQ for –the Lamoille Riverbank Stabilization and Flood Mitigation Study and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract - *Action needed*

Kristen reported that the Town received six Requests for Qualifications (RFQs), five of which were considered excellent submissions. She noted that it was encouraging to have so many strong candidates. Kristen explained the selection process and noted that Stone Environmental has an urban planner on staff. She also explained that the study area extends from Hay’s over to the Cottage Street Bridge.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract with Stone Environmental.

6:34 P.M. – 6:39 P.M. Item #5– Select Board to review and consider approving a company for the RFP for –the Confluence Floodplain Restoration Project and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract - *Action needed*

Kristen reported that, similar to the RFQ process, the Town also received several strong proposals for the Confluence Floodplain Restoration Project.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract with SLR Consulting.

6:39 P.M. – 6:50 P.M. Item #6– Zoning and Floodplain Administrator to give some updates from her office

Zoning and Floodplain Administrator, Kristen Leahy, provided updates on several topics from her office including flood mitigation planning/work, the municipal plan survey, flood buyout program/demolitions, floodplain map updates, and watershed and community initiatives. The detailed report can be found in the meeting attachments.

Caledonia County Natural Resources Conservation District (CC NRCD) is applying for Clean Water funding to support early-stage planning and feasibility work for floodplain mitigation on the two FEMA buyout properties on Route 14 (Judkins & Millitech). Kristen asked the Board for a general consensus to proceed with pursuing this and they agreed.

Shari commented that FEMA had not provided the Town with an opportunity to appeal the Section 106 determination associated with 42 South Main Street. Kristen responded that any consideration of next steps or potential appeals would occur after FEMA award materials and associated conditions are received.

6:50 P.M. – 6:59 P.M. Item #7 – Select Board to consider approving a Debt Management Policy (new) and review the Town's debt schedule - *Action needed*

The Finance Director presented a debt schedule outlining all current Town debt obligations, including the projected payoff dates and annual principal and interest payments for each obligation. The schedule also included the estimated annual payment for the proposed highway garage bond, contingent upon voter approval of the borrowing later this year.

In addition, the Finance Director presented a proposed Debt Management Policy for the Select Board's review. The debt schedule and proposed policy are included in the meeting attachments.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to approve the new Debt Management Policy.

6:59 P.M. – 7:02 P.M. Item #8— Select Board to consider adopting the new Road & Bridge Standards released in January 2026 and complete the Certificate of Compliance after adoption - *Action needed*

In 2019, the Town adopted updated bridge and road standards. The Select Board completed the annual certificate of compliance with those standards at a previous meeting in order to meet annual financial plan deadlines. Since that time, David, Casey, and Tom met with the District Coordinator to review the updated standards released in January 2026. In order to remain eligible for future FEMA reimbursements, the Town must adopt the revised standards and complete a new certification of adoption.

David explained that the primary changes from the previous version involve the minimum roadway thickness requirements and the types of materials to be used. The updated standards also include driveway access requirements and recommend establishing a formal process for approving curb cuts.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to adopt the new Road & Bridge Standards released in January 2026 and complete the Certificate of Compliance.

7:02 P.M. – 7:06 P.M. Item #9 — Select Board to review the roadside mowing bids and consider selecting a contractor and authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract - *Action needed*

Casey explained that the contract amount falls within the Town Manager's purchasing authority; however, David wanted to seek the Select Board's input because only two bids were received despite advertising in multiple locations. He noted that one bidder is an experienced mowing contractor based in Michigan, while the other is a local company who does excavating and culvert work.

Following discussion, the Select Board generally agreed to proceed with the local contractor, contingent upon satisfactory reference checks.

7:06 P.M. – 7:15 P.M. Item #10 – Select Board to consider authorizing the "Allonge for Attachment to Note" for the Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Union Bank note from 2024 to amend the annual payment amount – *Action needed*

Renae DiGregorio, Controller for Hardwick Electric Department (HED), explained that she discovered a discrepancy in the amortization schedule for a note held with Union Bank. After discussions with the bank, it was proposed that the note be amended to correct the annual payment amount, which is approximately \$1,000 higher than stated in the original note documents. The HED Commissioners have already approved and signed the amendment and Select Board authorization is also required.

Renae also provided several updates regarding HED operations. She reported that the long-awaited new bucket truck has been delivered. The crew is very excited about the new vehicle and is currently working on lettering it.

Regarding the Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project, Renae stated that approximately 3,500 meters are expected to be delivered on Monday. Installation has not yet begun, as the project is still in the software development phase. HED continues working through implementation challenges and is targeting a late fall rollout. She noted that the public will be notified well in advance of meter integration and installation. All customer meters will ultimately be replaced. The crew is currently installing DCUs (data collection units/antennas that communicate with the meters). HED has also been working with Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) on implementation of the AMI system.

Renae further reported that HED recently worked with PLM Engineering of Massachusetts on a study of their overall system. She explained that the study evaluated HED's capital infrastructure and identified a number of recommended system upgrades. The anticipated investment is estimated to be in the seven-figure range and would likely be implemented over an 8- to 10-year period. The study will be shared with the Select Board.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to approve the "Allonge for Attachment to Note" for the Hardwick Electric Department Union Bank note from 2024 to amend the annual payment amount.

Ceilidh asked whether any Commissioner seats would be expiring soon. It was noted that one two-year term and one three-year term will expire on June 30. Existing Commissioners may request reappointment for another term. The Town Manager's Office will advertise the positions in June to solicit additional interest, and appointments are expected to be made at the July meeting.

7:15 P.M. – 7:18 P.M. Item #11 Select Board to discuss writing a letter to the Legislature about Act 181 – *Possible Action needed*

Ceilidh explained that the Select Board had received correspondence requesting that the Town submit a letter to the Legislature regarding concerns with portions of Act 181 and Senate Bill 325.

Kristen noted that recent legislative developments may repeal the portions of S.325 that had generated concern, including the "Road Rule" and Tier 3 provisions. However, the repeal has not yet been finalized. Tim stated that he would consider supporting a letter if those provisions are not ultimately repealed.

Following discussion, the Board agreed that it may be best to wait for additional legislative action before determining whether to submit a letter.

7:18 P.M. – 7:35 P.M. Item #12 Select Board to discuss the current Recreation policy

The Select Board discussed the Town's current Recreation Policy and committee structure.

Shari expressed concerns that the policy is outdated and noted that the Trails Committee currently exists as a subcommittee of the Recreation Committee, which creates challenges when there are no active Recreation Committee members or Recreation Coordinator. She stated that the document reads more like bylaws than a policy and suggested rescinding the current policy, combining recreation-related budgets, and potentially creating a Parks and Recreation Committee structure. Shari also referenced the Town's flood buyout properties and related green spaces. Kristen clarified that plans already exist for those properties.

Tracy stated that she would be willing to volunteer and assist with recreation efforts. She explained that she had researched how other towns structure recreation programs and found that approaches vary significantly. She agreed with Shari's concerns and noted that the Town did not have the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail when the current policy was created. Tracy stated that having clearer direction and responsibilities for a committee may make it easier to recruit members.

The Board discussed the fact that funds remain in the Recreation budget for FY 2026–2027 despite there currently being no committee members available to oversee programming or activities. Discussion included creating an inventory of the Town's recreational assets and potentially forming a task force to evaluate future recreation needs and opportunities.

Kristen further clarified that plans already exist for flood buyout properties from a mitigation perspective. Tracy noted that there are two separate considerations: mitigation planning and determining how the Town intends to utilize those public spaces in the future.

David suggested that he and a Select Board member attend upcoming Trails Committee and Hardwick Conservation Commission meetings to gather feedback and discuss possible future recreation structures.

Paul asked whether the Town had publicly advertised for Recreation Committee members. It was noted that requests for volunteers had been published in Front Porch Forum several times without generating interest.

7:35 P.M. – 7:57 P.M. Item #13 Select Board to review the draft changes of the Town's Economic Development Loan Policy prior to it being reviewed by the Town's attorney

Shari noted that the Town's Revolving Loan Fund was originally funded through a grant received in the 1990s. She explained that there had previously been an Economic Development Committee associated with the program. David stated that he had researched the matter and found that, although the committee existed, final loan approval authority remained with the Select Board.

The Select Board reviewed a marked-up draft of the Town's Economic Development Loan Policy containing several proposed revisions. Proposed changes discussed included:

- Adding an emergency loan provision for businesses experiencing temporary financial hardship or cash flow challenges;

- Allowing housing development projects, including workforce housing, when tied to economic development objectives;
- Permitting the Town of Hardwick to apply for Revolving Loan Fund assistance for economic development initiatives when the fund balance exceeds \$100,000;
- Establishing criteria for small unsecured loans of \$5,000 or less, including minimum creditworthiness standards;
- Clarifying that startup businesses must provide a business plan, while existing businesses may provide other supporting documentation appropriate to the request;
- Revising loan term language to allow longer amortization periods for larger or more complex projects when necessary for feasibility;
- Updating the interest rate provision to establish rates at 1% above the Town's money market account rate, with a minimum interest rate floor of 3%;
- Adding clarification regarding residential construction eligibility and emphasizing that loans are intended for business or economic development purposes rather than personal residential financing; and
- Making general formatting, clarification, and administrative updates throughout the policy.

Derek suggested creating a separate emergency loan fund with a higher interest rate to reflect the increased lending risk associated with those types of loans.

David stated that the primary goal of the fund is to support local businesses and economic development rather than generate revenue for the Town.

Shari noted that the Hardwick Downtown Partnership (HDP) did not exist when the policy was originally created. She explained that many downtown organizations have economic development offices that assist with promoting and administering similar loan programs. Shari suggested considering a role for both HDP and the Town's Community Development Coordinator in reviewing loan applications in an advisory capacity, while maintaining final decision-making authority with the Select Board.

While the Board generally supported the proposed revisions, members agreed to allow additional time for HDP to develop language related to Shari's recommendations. The Board noted that there is no immediate urgency to adopt the revised policy and that the draft policy will still need to be reviewed by the Town's attorney before final consideration.

Select Board Reports:

Tim thanked the road crew for their hard work, including responding to recent water main breaks and working overtime when needed. He also acknowledged the overall work they do for the Town and noted that contract negotiations for the next three-year agreement are nearing completion. Tim stated that the Town is fortunate to have such a dedicated crew.

Larry asked whether there were any items that should be brought back to the Planning Commission for discussion. Shari suggested that the recent recreation discussion would be appropriate for Planning Commission review and input.

Derek commented that the recent water break repair was handled well and stated that he appreciated the Town working with an experienced operator from Gravel Construction for assistance.

Derek also asked about repayment of the \$200,000 in Economic Development funds used for the Yellow Barn property purchase. David explained that the project involved a complicated New Market Tax Credit structure. He stated that the funds will likely be repaid over time rather than in a lump sum as originally anticipated.

New Business:

Shari asked for an update regarding the Town website. Casey reported that she and Maya have been discussing updates to the website in order to meet ADA compliance requirements by April 2028. The Town is currently speaking with multiple companies and obtaining proposals for the work, which is expected to result in an addition to the FY28 budget. Shari suggested that we still consider looking at some cleanup of the current site.

Old Business:

Shari asked for an update on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail trailheads. David reported that Gravel Construction is currently working on improvements to the parking area near the wastewater treatment plant. Once that work is complete, the contractor will move to the Depot trailhead area.

8:05 P.M. *Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to enter an Executive Session pursuant to 1 VSA § 313 for a personnel matter to include the Town Manager.*

8:20 P.M. Exited Executive session. *No action taken.*

8:21 P.M. *Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to enter an Executive Session pursuant to 1 VSA § 313 for a real estate matter to include the Town Manager.*

8:27 P.M. Exited Executive session. *No action taken.*

8:27 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