

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 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- *Zoom*
Derek Richardson

Others Present

David Upson Jr., Town Manager
Amanda Fecteau, Payroll Administrator
Mike Henry, Police Chief
Danny Hale- *Zoom*

Others Present

Heidi Krantz
Scott Beck
Michael Miller- *Zoom*
Norma Wiesen
Tracy Martin

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. – 6:11 P.M. – Communication from the audience- Scott Beck reported that there is a significant statewide effort underway to secure additional transportation funding for road maintenance. This need is being driven in part by the growing use of electric vehicles, which contributes less fuel-tax revenue, as well as increased travel overall. The state's goal is to pave 200–300 miles of roadway annually; however, only 56 miles are scheduled for paving this year. Scott also reported that the Legislature chose not to pursue school redistricting and instead is shifting more decision-making authorities back to towns and individual school districts. He noted that five elementary schools across the state will be closing this year due to declining enrollment and small student populations. Ceilidh asked what type of support the state is providing to the school districts. Scott responded that the state is helping with conversations on how to move forward in the future.

6:11 P.M. – Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of June 4, 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 June 4, 2026. Larry abstained.

6:11 P.M. – 6:22 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson Jr.

David reported that the CDBG-DR team has begun meeting. Kristen Leahy, project manager for the CDBG-DR grant, has requested Select Board participation in project discussions.

David also stated that Philip, the Town's general project manager, continues to work on grant closeout, the Fire Station project, the Wastewater Treatment Plant design, and other ongoing construction projects.

David and Tracy recently taught a J-Term class at the high school as part of the equity project and are working to increase participation next year.

The Buffalo Mountain Committee has appointed officers and continues to meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.; meetings are open to the public.

The Hardwick Gazette is hosting an event called Strengthening Democracy with Susan Clark at the Highland Arts Center on June 22, 2026, at 5:00 P.M. Dinner will be provided.

Derek asked about the bridge project and David stated that it remains on schedule. The bridge is expected to be installed by August. High water has not impacted the project's timeline.

6:22 P.M. – 6:26 P.M. Hardwick Road Foreman Report – Given by David Upson Jr

David reported that a culvert on Bunker Road recently failed and was replaced with a larger culvert. The ditch was also stone-lined to improve drainage and reduce future erosion. Crews also reinforced culverts on Belfry Road and continued ditching and road crowning work on Mackville Pond Road.

Staff worked with Hardwick Electric dealing with power issues at the Treatment plant. Staff also responded to dirty water complaints, which have now been fixed.

Ceilidh asked about roadside mowing, and David indicated it is scheduled to begin in July.

Derek followed up from last meeting and asked about the street sweeper, and David mentioned that Edward recently met with the street sweeper contractor, and work is underway.

Shari also asked if hanging the summer banners soon was on schedule, and David confirmed.

6:26 P.M. – 6:28 P.M. Item #1 – *Select Board to consider approving a Manufacturers Tier 3 renewal for Green Mountain Scientific Corp. – Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Riccardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve a Tier 3 Manufacturers' renewal for Green Mountain Scientific Corp.

6:28 P.M. – 6:28 P.M. Item #2– *Select Board to consider approving a Tier 1 small cultivators' renewal for Root to Vitality Cannabis LLC & for All Bliss Cannabis LLC– Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Riccardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve a Tier 1 small cultivators' renewal for Root to Vitality Cannabis LLC & for All Bliss Cannabis LLC.

6:28 P.M. – 6:31 P.M. Item #3– *Select Board to consider approving a water and sewer connection for 166 Highland Avenue- Action needed*

There is a building lot on Highland Ave, which has recently been subdivided, and the new owners are planning to build a house.

Upon motion by Tim Riccardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to approve a water and

sewer connection for 166 Highland Avenue, pending the state's wastewater permit approval.

6:31 P.M. – 6:50 P.M. Item #4- Select Board to review and consider approving the MOU with the Hardwick Downtown Partnership– *Action needed*

Shari explained that this is an annual review between the Town and the Downtown Partnership, and the only big change is changing it from annual review to a three-year contract.

There was discussion regarding funding levels of \$1,500 and \$2,800. The \$2,800 allocation supports downtown beautification efforts, including trees, plants, and lighting. The \$1,500 in-kind contribution reflects Town resources such as staff time, office space, and copying services. Shari suggested removing the phrase "per year or as appropriated by voters" to clarify that the \$2,800 is included as part of the Town's annual budget.

Tim also asked about the local option tax as it was referenced in the contract, yet it was voted down at Town Meeting this past March. Shari explained while Hardwick does not currently have a local option tax, it could be considered in the future.

Tim requested clarification regarding the Town's Economic Development Loan Fund and the level of support expected from the Downtown Partnership. Shari explained that the Partnership helps promote the program. Heidi Krantz, Downtown Partnership Coordinator, agreed, and stated that when she has conversations with business owners, she shares that it's a valuable resource for local businesses. Tracy reported that she researched how other communities administer similar loan programs and found that many towns have dedicated committees that review applications and oversee policies. The Select Board previously discussed this topic and plans to revisit it on August 6.

David asked when the Town will need to reapply for the Downtown Designation. Heidi said she would look into the timeline and noted that with the recent legislation, including Act 181, it may affect the process, and potentially, the Town might not have to reapply.

Heidi also noted that the Downtown Partnership's strategic plan is available on its website.

Upon motion by Tim Riccardello, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board approved the proposed MOU with the Hardwick Downtown Partnership as written, and authorized the Town Manager to sign the new MOU.

6:50 P.M. – 7:09 P.M. Item #5- Select Board to review and discuss the draft Public Engagement Policy

The Select Board reviewed a draft Public Engagement Policy based on a model policy developed by VLCT and adopted by several Vermont municipalities. The draft was previously presented to staff for feedback. Staff noted that many projects, particularly grant-funded projects, already have specific public engagement requirements. Concerns were raised that the proposed policy could create additional administrative burdens and introduce uncertainty in situations where public engagement is already occurring. Staff suggested developing a procedure rather than a detailed policy to ensure public notification requirements are met while maintaining transparency and consistency.

The Select Board discussed splitting this and creating a one-to-two-page policy that identifies the most

important principles of public engagement and then creating a procedure where staff members and the Select Board can check off what channels were used. It was emphasized that all questions are asked fairly and ahead of decision making and that opportunities are accessible to all residents.

Ceilidh noted that the policy may work better for committees and organizations rather than staff projects. She explained that many staff projects are already part of the Town budget or have grant requirements that include public involvement, while committees and organizations may be working on projects that are outside of the budget process.

There was discussion regarding how projects should be defined and whether different engagement requirements should apply based on project size, cost, or scope. Tim expressed concern that excessive public engagement requirements could delay decision-making and noted that the Select Board serves as the Town's elected governing body. He encouraged residents to participate through Select Board meetings.

Ceilidh mentioned that she feels there would be more participation if the Town addressed the zoom meeting issues and if HCTV would broadcast live. Amanda stated that she and Casey have been working on the zoom issues over the past two meetings, and the problem appears to be improving.

Larry volunteered to work on revisions and prepare another draft for a future Select Board meeting.

7:09 P.M. – 7:28 P.M. Item #6- Select Board to review and revise the Economic Development Coordinator Job Description – *Action needed*

Shari explained that the position was previously known as the Community Development Coordinator and expressed her desire to fill the role quickly. While the Town currently budgets for a part-time position, she believes it should eventually become a full-time position and include economic development responsibilities. Shari also noted that she had spoken with Ben Doyle, who indicated there may have been grant funding available in the past to support the position for one year; however, neither Shari nor David have been able to locate this grant opportunity.

Changing the position from part-time to full-time would require discussion during budget season as it would add about \$30,000 - \$40,000 to the budget. David noted that the grant funding landscape has changed and that many opportunities are now more difficult to secure. Ceilidh commented that the town faces several challenges including housing development and may not currently have the administrative capacity to manage all of these efforts without additional support. She also noted that, given the number of grants the Town manages currently, it may benefit from pursuing additional grant opportunities when appropriate instead of constant schedule. Ceilidh suggested that the funds currently allocated for a part-time position could potentially be used to hire a consultant when the Town needs assistance applying for specific grants.

Heidi stated that the position presents an opportunity for greater economic development collaboration between the Town, and the Downtown Partnership. Larry noted that the discussion ties into broader conversations particularly if the Town considers moving the position from part-time to full-time.

Tim suggested advertising the position as currently budgeted and continuing the discussion during the upcoming budget season. Ceilidh disagreed and raised broader concerns about staffing needs and long-term

organizational planning. Tim recommended continuing the conversation at the Select Board retreat. David mentioned the possibility of shifting focus back towards hiring a Public Works Director.

The Select Board agreed they would like to hear from staff regarding their input prior to the August 6 Select Board meeting.

7:28 P.M. – 7:42 P.M. Item #7- Select Board to consider forming a Better Connections Task Force for East Hardwick Village- *Action Needed*

This item was brought forward by the Planning Commission Chair acting as an individual resident, not on behalf of the Planning Commission, and this task force would represent the next step for the East Hardwick Village work.

Shari suggested either forming a task force or having the East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO) take the lead. Tracy noted that EHNO does not wish to serve as a formal task force and would prefer more of the Select Board's guidance, as this is a Town project.

Ceilidh asked Amanda to develop a standard task force or committee template to provide clearer structure with three to four goals, meeting outline, and number of members needed. Tim expressed frustration with the number of task forces and committees.

David stated that projects of this nature should be tied to a capital plan, with committees bringing forward recommendations that the Select Board can then incorporate.

Shari noted that similar work for this project has already gone through community engagement and emphasized that, as a small town, task forces can help move projects forward.

The Select Board asked David to look further into the specific goals before moving forward with another task force.

7:42 P.M. – 7:46 P.M. Item #8- Select Board to consider setting a date and time for a Select Board retreat to go further into Town projects – *Action Needed*

The Select Board agreed to have the Select Board retreat on Friday, September 25, from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

7:46 P.M. – 7:49 P.M. Item #9- Select Board to Review and consideration of the proposed Jackson Dam Steering Committee structure and public engagement approach. *Action needed.*

Upon motion by Tim Riccardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board approved the create the Jackson Dam Steering Committee and to have residents send in letters of interest if wanting to be part of the committee.

7:49 P.M. – 7:53 P.M. Item #10- Select Board to Review and consideration of the proposed Former Buyout Property Planning and Stewardship Framework. *Action needed*

Kristen put this document together to inform the public about the process of each buyout. Shari mentioned

that it still doesn't show the maintenance plan, but David disagreed. See attachment for further details.

Upon motion by Tim Riccardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board authorized the Former Buyout property Planning and Stewardship Framework as the Town's guiding approach for evaluating, maintaining, planning, and seeking funding for former buyout properties.

7:53 P.M. – 7:58 P.M. Item #11- Select Board to choose a vendor for FY27 fuel purchases of heating oil, propane and diesel – *Action needed*

The Town put this out to bid and received two bids. See the original costs from each vendor. However, David has been in communication with both companies due to the daily decreases in diesel costs. David explained that the companies would like the contract signed by midnight tonight in order to lock in for July 1; however, the Town can wait to lock in the specific costs.

Ceilidh asked if there was enough in the budget. David explained that diesel would most likely be over, and heating oil and propane would depend on how cold the winter is.

Upon motion by Tim Riccardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board authorized the Town Manager to sign the contract with Irving, and to wait to lock in the price by the end of the month.

Select Board Reports –

- Shari explained that the Downtown Partnership is planning a bridge event for the Fall Festival weekend, which is October 10.

New Business –

- David reported that he had a resident request that the speed limit on Dimick Road should be changed from 35mph to 25mph. In order to do this, the Town would have to open the ordinance. David explained that there are other roads in town where residents have the same requests as well. The Board generally agreed to open the ordinance and discuss the roads further.

Old Business –

- David explained that the Town has already received 5 letters of interest for the Town Meeting task force. The Town Manager's office will put two items on the July 16 meeting- to create the task force, and to appoint members.
- Shari stated that the Recreation Committee meetings are still showing up on the Town website and asked for a status as there are currently no members. David removed the meetings during this conversation. Shari also stated that she would like the Town Manager's office to do an audit of the website.

8:05 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