

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 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 - *absent*
Derek Richardson

Others Present

David Upson, Town Manager
Casey Rowell, Finance Director
Tom Fadden, Road Foreman
Kristen Leahy, Zoning/Floodplain Admin.
Rena DiGregorio, Hardwick Electric
Emily Finnegan, CC NRCD
Margie Prevot

Others Present

Renaud Demers
Maureen Demers
Michael Miller - *Zoom*
Sue Rivard
Eric Remick
Teddy Wenneker
Paul Cillo

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 – *none*

6:01 P.M. – 6:02 P.M. Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of May 21, 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 May 21, 2026.

6:02 P.M. – 6:08 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson

David shared that next week Monday – Thursday from 8-10 a.m. each day he will be at Hazen Union High School teaching the J Term class. This class helps students learn about local government and what is going on in Town.

David attended the Trails meeting earlier this week where he discussed where the Town is at with reorganizing recreation in the Town and asked for their input since Trails is considered a subcommittee of recreation. They discussed getting surveys from trail users about recreational opportunities in Hardwick.

David also attended the first Buffalo Mountain steering committee meeting. There were 9 people who attended, and they went over organization, communication, and some preliminary information. He is optimistic about it being a good process.

David reported that a fair amount of his time has been taken up by various issues in town with cars, trash, and dogs. The Town needs an animal control officer. Please reach out if you are interested in taking on this important role.

David mentioned that the expansion of the parking lot at Treatment Plant Rd is complete. It is a public parking lot. The staff at the accelerator building has been using it, but it is available for anyone to use. It can be considered an unofficial parking space for LVRT users as well.

David met with staff of Bernie Sanders office to discuss the process for congressionally delegated spending (CDS) funds for the Hardwick Rescue Squad (HRS) building. They also met with HRS to discuss the process while they were here.

David reported that we have submitted an updated source protection plan to the State.

David shared that the slope stabilization survey is still open to seeking community input about what they would like to see happen there. He indicated that we may have to do an in-kind repair on School St. It was obligated as a full in-kind repair, not just architecture and engineering. The design is almost done. We would have to go back to FEMA if we wanted to do anything different than the in-kind repair. At the next Select Board meeting, we should have more information and the full survey results.

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

Tom has been away on break for a couple of weeks. The crew painted the rest of the downtown crosswalks that they were able to as well as parking spot lines. They were not able to do the one by the post office with the construction.

They did grading in the East Hardwick area, including Ward Hill and Mountain View. They continue to do various side roads here and there as needed. Town Farm Road, Morin Rd., and the entire length of Tucker Brook Rd. have been graded as well.

This week, the crew is working on flood hazard mitigation items on Belfry Rd, which will be finished next week. In the coming week, they plan to finish installing 60' of culvert on Mackville in order to finish a Better Backroads grant that the Town has.

Tom shared that it has been challenging to find a street sweeper. The one we had was only used for a few hours and basically did not work. We had to return it. He is continuing to explore options. Derek mentioned that Marcus Brown in Lyndonville offers this service. Tom will give him a call.

6:13 P.M. – 6:20 P.M. Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Report – Given by Renae DiGregorio

Renae reminded everyone that HED still has a 2025 rate case pending before the Public Utility Commission (PUC). She explained that interpretation of PUC Bulletin 5.1 has been challenging. During its review of the rate case, the PUC determined that HED was not applying solar net metering credits at the correct point in the billing cycle. HED has since corrected the issue.

Renae reported that HED will be conducting a two-year historical review and making billing adjustments to affected accounts, which are expected to result in a slight benefit to customers. She also noted that some net metering credits had been shared among accounts, which is not permitted under PUC requirements. HED has

updated its billing practices to address this issue, and the changes will be reflected on June bills. Customers who may be affected have been contacted in advance.

For the Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) project, Renae reported that both office staff and field crews have been working on the installation of system infrastructure necessary to support the new metering system. While a specific installation schedule has not yet been established, implementation is expected to begin in the fall. HED will be required to provide advance notice to customers prior to meter installation.

Renae mentioned that Scott Johnstone has been looking into a battery alternative for peak consumption times.

Renae reported that the system study has been completed. The study identified significant infrastructure investments that will be needed over the next decade. She noted that the Board can expect a more detailed presentation on the study findings in the near future.

6:20 P.M. – 6:23 P.M. Item #1 – Select Board to consider approving the HED operating line of credit continuation with Union Bank in the amount of \$1,174,000 (combining two lines into one) - *Action needed*

Renae reviewed a proposal to consolidate HED's two existing Union Bank Current Expense Notes into a single non-revolving note of \$1,174,000. The consolidation is intended to streamline administration and reporting while maintaining sufficient short-term borrowing capacity. The Board was asked to approve the continuation note effective June 2026.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the continuation of HED's operation line of credit with Union Bank.

6:23 P.M. – 6:25 P.M. Item #2– Select Board to consider appointing Teddy Wencker as an alternate to the Hardwick Planning Commission for a 3-yr term - *Action needed*

Kristen explained how the alternate positions work. They do attend the meetings and would vote in the event that their vote is needed.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to appoint Teddy Wencker as an alternate to the Hardwick Planning Commission for a 3-yr term.

6:25 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. Item #3– Zoning & Floodplain Administrator Kristen Leahy to report on current activities and initiatives

Kristen reminded the Board that she provided the Hardwick Recovery & Resilience portfolio in their shared folder. It also appears on the website and has been a helpful tool for showing the State what we are working on.

Kristen reported that we closed on both of the East Hardwick flood buyout properties. She is working on the Request for Proposal (RFP) for demolition. As a side note, after the demolition, the area of the property may provide some on-street parking for the Rail Trail. There is also potential for future stormwater projects.

Kristen reported that we have received forty three responses on the School St. stabilization survey. Not only did it provide insight on the School St. area, but it also brought attention to where Main St. connects to Route 16. Concerns centered around the sightline and safety of exiting that street to Route 16. The hope is to work with the state and regional planning on the safety of that intersection.

Kristen indicated that the Municipal Plan survey is open until tomorrow and she shared that they have received 250 responses. The Hardwick Planning Commission will start looking at the results once it has closed.

Kristen explained that Hardwick is at the intersection of 4 counties. In light of this, she has connected with both Lamoille Emergency Management and Central Vermont Emergency Management, so she can get cross information from those towns.

Additional details are included in the meeting attachments.

Upcoming public outreach and education events:

Granite Street Historic District Presentation with SLR International – June 10, 2026

Neighborhood resilience planning and flood mitigation concepts

Atkins Field Conversation: Dredging Discussion – June 22, 2026

Atkins Field Conversation: Flood Insurance Workshop – July 20, 2026

Special Presentation: Strategic Wood Addition with Jud Kratzer – August 26, 2026

Fall Watershed Forum Series – September 2026 Three presentations focused on watershed and resilience topics

Kristen won a national award from the Association of State Floodplain Managers. This is a huge accomplishment since she is the first person in New England to ever receive the award. Congratulations, Kristen!

6:32 P.M. – 6:45 P.M. Item #4 Select Board to discuss the Jackson Dam design scope of work and cost estimate and potential next steps – *Action needed*

Emily Finnegan from the Caledonia County Natural Resources Conservation District (CC NRCD) asked the Board if they had any follow up questions after Jessica spoke at the last meeting. Ceilidh said that the information provided was extremely helpful, including the letters that were given in this evening's packet.

These letters outline what CC NRCD, and the Town would be responsible for in the next phase. A sample support letter provided by the Select Board that could be presented to a funder, as well as a timeline for tasks was provided. (see attachments). There was also an outline of the steering committee.

Ceilidh read aloud a specific statement from the support letter that is important because it clarifies that this is not deciding about the future of Jackson Dam. "This letter should not be interpreted as a final decision regarding the future of Jackson Dam or endorsement of a specific final design or project outcome. Rather, it reflects the Select

Board's support for continued information gathering, coordination, technical evaluation, and exploration of potential future pathways related to the site."

Kristen commented that this is the path to getting the answers about our options. The goal would be to have a non-binding question at Town meeting to get input from the community. In addition, this is truly a phased approach that would potentially take place over the next decade.

Ceilidh also commented that CC NRCD is not looking for any monetary commitment from the town. They have a few different funding sources they will seek for the project.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to approve CC NRCD proceeding with the Jackson Dam scope of work and potential cost proposal to obtain more information. Derek abstained.

Emily was also hoping to get approval of the concept of a steering committee. Ceilidh suggested that they have an item for the next meeting to create a steering committee. David said that it seems reasonable to have Emily move forward with the steering committee. He thinks we should move forward with the organization of a steering committee.

Upon motion by Shari Cornish, seconded by Tim Ricciardello, the Select Board voted to have Emily move forward with the organization and structure of a steering committee for Jackson Dam. Derek abstained.

6:47 P.M. – 7:11 P.M. Item #5 – Finance Director to present the FY27 Water & Sewer expense budgets for the Select Board to consider approving - *Action needed*

Finance Director Casey Rowell presented the proposed FY2027 Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund expense budgets and associated capital improvement plans. The Board reviewed the proposed budgets, including anticipated operating, maintenance, debt service, and capital expenditures, and discussed the timing of future water and sewer rate recommendations. The detailed budget proposed is included in the meeting attachments.

Ceilidh asked about the time frame for the projects because it does not show on the capital plan. David explained that a lot of these funds would just get design work off the ground. We do not have the funds to do all these projects at once. Unfortunately, even though we continue to put money away, it still puts us in a reactive state where we would have to respond to something such as a reservoir roof giving way.

Sue asked if we ever considered using non-potable water for places like car washes and hydrants. David explained that we are not in a position to do this, but he likes the idea.

Ceilidh would like to see us address the priority projects in the water and sewer funds at the Select Board retreat.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Derek Ricahrdson, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the FY27 Water & Sewer expense budgets, as presented .

7:11 P.M. – 7:19 P.M. Item #6– Finance Director to present the FY26 Budget through May 31, 2026, to show where we stand with one month remaining in the fiscal year

Finance Director Casey Rowell reviewed the FY2026 budget status through May 31, 2026, and provided an overview of revenues, expenditures, and projected year-end results. The Select Board discussed the Town's financial position with one month remaining in the fiscal year. Revenues are tracking to be ahead of budget, and expenses are on track as well. The detailed report is included in the meeting attachments.

7:19 P.M. – 7:22 P.M. Item #7– Select Board to review and consider approving the audit engagement with Sullivan Powers & Co for the Town's FY26 audit - *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to approve the audit engagement with Sullivan Powers & Co for the Town's FY26 audit.

7:22 P.M. – 7: P.M. Item #8– Select Board to discuss forming a committee to evaluate Town meeting and Australian ballot for future meetings – *Possible Action needed*

Ceilidh said that the Board heard from a lot of people at the Special Town Meeting as well as in the Town meeting survey that people want to look at how to make it more accessible to as many people as possible. Forming a task force was mentioned and the Board wants to start pursuing this now.

Renaud Demers wants to know who decides if an item is an Australian ballot or floor vote. The Select Board is responsible for the warning, so anything that is not specified by statute or the Town Charter is decided by the Board.

Paul Fixx contacted David about a local forum at the Highland Center for the Arts that is about Australian ballot voting and Town meeting formats because there are several local towns going through the same thing.

Maureen Demers shared data she got from the Secretary of State based on 2025 data. There were 2,333 registered voters in Hardwick. At Town Meeting, 239 votes were cast for the Town budget, which is only about 10% of the registered voters. Based on the yes and no votes, only about 7% of the population voted to pass the budget. The school vote is done all by Australian ballot and 33% of registered voters weighed in. David wanted to clarify that the school votes are commingled with other towns in the same school district, so that is not entirely accurate.

She shared some data about how many towns vote for certain items via Australian ballot. She feels that it does not matter when the meeting is held but the reality is that you will get more voters when the vote is by Australian ballot.

Ceilidh said the window for getting this task force formed is narrow as the budget conversations start in just a few months and Town meeting preparations are well under way come January. We need to get moving soon.

Maureen does not think that sitting in a meeting for hours is productive. People should be able to vote privately. David said that there should be a middle ground and a committee that can work to make it better. There is an opportunity to accomplish something that works for most of the residents. Maureen said she is not sure the Town meeting survey is relevant anymore if we are talking about doing an Australian ballot because it focused on location and time of the meeting.

Sue Rivard felt frustrated with people not being able to speak their minds freely when rules are changed mid-meeting and suddenly, they have to stop speaking. Ceilidh said that Robert's Rules are complicated and maybe it would be helpful to have a cheat sheet about what actions mean.

Maureen said that we are really isolating voters by doing it the way we are. She thinks that people will not necessarily speak freely at Town meetings because they are business owners, and they do not generally feel comfortable speaking up.

Sue suggested that they have a variety of members on the new task force who represent both views of how the meeting should be done and whether it should be an Australian ballot.

Shari and Ceilidh commented that it was meant to be a task force, not a committee, to include a couple of Select Board members and community members. The plan will be for the Town Manager's Office to make a Front Porch Forum post seeking volunteers for the task force who will evaluate the process of Town meeting and voting for future budgets/questions/appropriations, etc. Interested candidates should send letters or emails to the Town Manager to express their interest in serving on the task force. Appointments to the task force will start at the June 18 meeting.

Shari envisioned that this task force would also look at ways for additional informational meetings to be held or to promote the budget creation season to keep people informed. She does not think people know about when we are having budget discussions.

7:50 P.M. – 7:51 P.M. Item #9 – Select Board to review and sign the 26-27 Lamoille County Sheriff's Department Dispatch contract – *Action needed*

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted unanimously to sign the 26-27 Lamoille County Sheriff's Department Dispatch contract.

7:51 P.M. – 7:59 P.M. Item #10 Select Board to consider appointing members to the Buffalo Mountain Steering Committee- *Action needed*

There are currently five seats left to fill. Six people submitted their names for consideration. One of them is willing to be an alternate. The steering committee document does not outline an option for alternates. Rachel Kane already serves on the Hardwick Conservation Commission and attends the meetings anyway.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted unanimously to appoint the following people to the Buffalo Mountain steering committee:

Dylan Laflam

Eric Remick

Tyler Buswell

Margie Prevot

Marie LaPre' Grabon

Select Board Reports: Shari reported that the floors in the new addition at the Town House floors are getting coated with polyurethane this week. NEKarts is paying for this. Shari also shared that she attended the Downtown Historic Preservation conference today and got a lot of valuable information, as well as good networking opportunities.

Ceilidh shared that the annual East Hardwick Children’s Parade will be held this Saturday, June 6 beginning at the Hardwick Chiropractic office. Line up is at 10:30 with the parade starting at 11:00. The parade ends at the Grange and pets are also welcome.

New Business: Casey explained that the bid release for the demolition of the two flood buyout properties will be on June 11, with bids being due on June 26. The next Select Board meeting after the due date is not until July 16. She asked if the Board would be willing to have a quick special meeting just to select the contractor between June 29 and July 1. The Select Board agreed to July 1 at 8:00 a.m.

Old Business: Shari asked about rescheduling the Select Board retreat. Rather than doing a doodle poll for times, Ceilidh suggested we add this to the June 18 agenda to pick a date, potentially in September.

Ceilidh wants to follow back up on the Gazette building and cemeteries that Danny Hale brought up at the last meeting. She suggested maybe these could be talked about at the retreat. David shared that he met Danny and the cemetery sexton at the cemetery earlier this week. There are some maintenance items to complete, including stone straightening and fixing the road.

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

8:13 P.M. Exited Executive session.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board authorized the Town Manager to engage with AmeriGas to take ownership of property they own on Charlevoix Street.

8:13 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