

**MINUTES REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING
6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 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- *Zoom*
Tonia Chase, Town Clerk
Kristen Leahy, Zoning/Floodplain Admin.
Emily Finnegan
Stew Arnold

Others Present

Renae DiGregorio, HED
Cheryl Michaels
Gary Michaels
Patrick Kane
Paul Brierre
Christopher Roy- *Zoom*
Michael Miller- *Zoom*
John Schweizer

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 – Patrick Kane publicly thanked David for taking the time to review additional details of the Town Garage project with him. Patrick believes there may still be opportunities to reduce costs. David acknowledged that Patrick's comments and suggestions were helpful in identifying potential cost savings. There is a public hearing scheduled for October 22 at the Parker Ladd Community Room at 6 P.M.

6:04 P.M. Select Board to approve the minutes of the Regular Select Board meeting of October 1, 2026, the Special Meeting minutes of October 7, 2026, and the Informational Meeting minutes of October 8, 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 October 1, 2026, the Special Meeting minutes of October 7, 2026, and the Informational meeting minutes of October 8, 2026.

6:04 P.M. – 6:13 P.M. Town Manager Report – Given by David Upson Jr.

The Town met with NVDA to discuss bridge structures and how funding priorities are determined. The priority list was last updated in 2022, and the Town is helping the Regional Planning Commission update it. The Senior Traffic Planner has begun collecting traffic counts and speed data between Belfry Road and Cedar Street.

An EWP final inspection site visit was conducted for three properties- Brush Street, Route 14, and Mill Street. The team was pleased with the work completed to date.

A walkthrough of the pedestrian bridge was held with SE Group, USDA, and CCS. A few additional items need

to be addressed, but overall, the project is progressing well. Three new benches were installed, and additional

signage will be put in place.

Regarding the MERP grant, there have been improvements completed at Public Safety Building, including installing two new heat pumps. The plan is to remove the oil boiler and install a propane system. Once installation is complete, the next step is to proceed with the insulation at the Memorial Building.

Shari asked how the new plantings around the bridge would be protected from snow removal and road salt, particularly near the new brick surface. David stated that using green salt in the area is being considered, but space must also be available for snow removal. This remains a work in progress, and David is discussing the matter with the Road Crew.

Shari asked about the bike racks. David noted that once the Town has control of the site, additional improvements can be made as needed, including placing additional bike racks.

Shari raised the need for bike repair stations at the pedestrian bridge trailhead and in East Hardwick. This work has not yet been completed, and a plan will need to be developed for next spring.

Shari noted that only one sidewalk marker was present. It was clarified that three markers are in place, although Shari would like them positioned near the crosswalks. Ceilidh stated that this could be addressed in the spring.

Ceilidh thanked the Road Crew and everyone who helped make the multi-day pedestrian bridge opening a success.

6:13 P.M. – 6:13 P.M. Hardwick Police Department Report – Given by David Upson

David stated that the Hardwick Police Department had been managing the issue of people running red lights near the pedestrian bridge. The lights have since been removed, and the department has been busy handling other cases and traffic control.

6:13 P.M. – 6:18 P.M. Hardwick Electric Report (HED) – Given by Renae DiGregorio

Renae thanked the Hardwick Police Department officers who attended the Harvest Supper at Hardwick Elementary School, and took the time to connect with community members, especially the children.

Work has begun on capital funding projects. Renae has also followed up on Route 14 culvert project that David asked her about on October 1, where he thought this should be FEMA work. HED typically submits for reimbursement once the work is complete, and a small portion of the funding may be reimbursed.

There was no update on the 2025 rate increase, which remains pending.

The engineers have presented the deficiency and electrification study. The report will be presented to the Commissioners next Tuesday and will be discussed further at an upcoming Select Board meeting.

Approval was received for the waste gate repair at the Wolcott Hydro Plant. HED had hoped to combine the Penstock project and the waste gate repair, but FEMA did not approve combining the two projects. The project

must be completed by the end of 2027.

Scott has been communicating with state representatives, dam committees, and related associations regarding the local dams. Further discussion with the commissioners is scheduled for next Tuesday.

Larry asked about the closing on the new property. Renae stated that it is scheduled for tomorrow morning. Inventory checks have been underway, and HED will begin developing a plan to move the crew to the new location. The goal is to complete the move as quickly as possible, ideally before winter.

6:18 P.M. – 6:19 P.M. Item #1 Select Board to consider liquor & tobacco license renewals for M&M Beverage - *Action needed*

Second Class Licenses for:

NU Beverage, LLC d/b/a M & M Beverage

Tobacco License:

NU Beverage, LLC d/b/a M & M Beverage

Tobacco Substitute Endorsement:

NU Beverage, LLC d/b/a M & M Beverage

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to approve the liquor and tobacco license renewals for M&M Beverage, as stated above.

6:19 P.M. – 6:22 P.M. Item #2— Finance Director Casey Rowell to give the first quarter FY27 budget update

The Finance Director gave the quarterly budget update. Both revenues and expenses are tracking right about where they should be. See attachments for the detailed reports.

Ceilidh asked if Casey was considering the price of diesel. Casey is watching the diesel prices closely.

6:22 P.M. – 6:56 P.M. Item #3— Select Board to discuss collaborating with Greensboro and creating an MOU to work together on a maintenance action plan for returning the Caspian Lake Dam to the state's satisfactory safety rating

Stew Arnold discussed concerns regarding the Caspian Lake Dam, including its safety rating and the potential consequences of further deterioration. The State has rated the dam as being in poor condition, raising concerns about downstream safety, shoreline property owners, and potential impacts extending into the Lamoille River. Hardwick Electric Department (HED) holds the deed to the dam, while portions of the dam are located on Town of Hardwick property.

The Town of Greensboro would like to see repairs completed to improve the dam's condition to a satisfactory rating. A task force is considering several options, including removing, repairing, or replacing the dam.

Replacement would be costly, and Stew noted that completing preliminary repairs could provide additional

time to develop a more comprehensive long-term solution. Stew encouraged Hardwick to participate in the task force. Stew read a proposed motion: Endorse the task force maintenance action plan and join the Town of Greensboro in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work toward this goal.

Tim asked who would be responsible for the costs. Stew stated that HED and Hardwick have responsibilities related to the dam, and he saw an opportunity for Greensboro to support the effort. Renae noted that HED cannot simply pass costs on to ratepayers without regulatory considerations. Tim expressed concern that the costs could ultimately fall on Hardwick taxpayers. Renae asked whether Greensboro was interested in owning the dam, and Stew said that was a possibility, although dam ownership comes with significant responsibilities. He also noted that continued inaction could lead to additional penalties, as the State may have the authority to fine municipalities.

Ceilidh asked about item three in the memo, which referred to a commitment to share planning costs without committing to future expenses. Renae noted that the costs of dam ownership and deferred maintenance can be substantial. She also explained that HED operates under significant regulatory requirements and may be unable to commit to an MOU or funding without demonstrating a benefit to its ratepayers.

David asked whether the Town of Greensboro had evaluated the potential impact on property tax revenue if the Caspian Lake Dam were removed and lake levels changed. Stew indicated that the immediate focus was on safety repairs, which could potentially change the dam's classification. The broader economic and hydrological impacts had not yet been fully explored.

Larry asked how long the repairs might last, and Stew acknowledged that he did not know. He maintained that the proposed work was a worthwhile investment.

Kristen expressed interest in seeing a hydrology study to understand the potential impacts on Hardwick. Stew confirmed that no such study had been completed. Paul Brierre noted that hydrological changes could affect downstream areas. Kristen also noted that Greensboro Select Board meeting minutes had not shown support for committing funds toward cost-sharing.

Ceilidh reiterated that valuable information was still missing, including a cost-sharing agreement, a hydrology study, and additional supporting details. She emphasized that the Board needed more information before making a financial commitment, particularly with budget season approaching and no current line item for dams.

Tim asked what Stew was requesting from the Board. Stew restated his request for Hardwick to endorse the task force action plan and work with Greensboro on an MOU. Paul suggested obtaining a hydrology study and an engineering assessment of the repair alternatives to better understand the costs and options. He estimated that a study could cost approximately \$30,000, potentially shared between the two towns, or divided among Hardwick, Greensboro, and HED.

Patrick Kane expressed concern that the proposal was moving too quickly and that the Board could not responsibly commit to financial obligations without knowing the costs. He acknowledged the value of the

beach but questioned how the proposed work would affect shoreline property owners and the broader

community.

Stew asked whether the Board could move forward with drafting an MOU. Tim felt the proposal remained too vague and that several questions were unanswered. Larry did not see harm in continuing discussions. Renae asked whether the proposed agreement would commit the Town to maintaining or repairing the dam. Ceilidh clarified that the immediate step could be to formally agree to work with the Town of Greensboro toward a potential MOU, rather than committing to repairs or future funding. Renae added that other associations were also actively involved in the issue and that the commissioners would discuss it the following week. She emphasized that any commitment could carry significant fiscal responsibility for Hardwick.

Upon motion by Larry Fliegelman, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted three to two to agree in principle to join with the Greensboro Select Board in creating an MOU concerning how the two towns will work together on the future of the Caspian Lake Dam. Motion carries.

Ceilidh- yay

Larry- Yay

Shari- Yay

Derek-Nay

Tim-Nay

6:56 P.M. – 7:01 P.M. Item #4– Select Board to review the Granite Street Historic District Neighborhood Resilience Plan – Formal Acceptance of Planning Process - *Action needed*

Following the flooding in July 2023 and July 2024, residents of the Granite Street neighborhood began exploring ways to reduce future damage and help residents remain safe in their homes. Residents have worked with SLR and received positive feedback. Kristen noted the significant effort that has gone into developing the planning document. She clarified that it is not an official planning document and is not being proposed to go into the Town Plan but is being presented for acknowledgment as a community planning document.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Derek Richardson, the Select Board voted to formally accept the Granite Street Historic District Neighborhood Flood Resilience Plan as a municipal planning and reference document.

7:01 P.M. – 7:13 P.M. Item #5— Select Board to review the Request from CCNRCD and the Jackson Dam Steering Committee members to place a question on the March 2027 Town Meeting ballot by Australian ballot. *Action needed.*

Emily Finnegan explained that the request is to place a question regarding the future of Jackson Dam on the 2027 ballot and have a vote via Australian ballot. The Task Force will work with the Town Clerk to develop the proposed question and provide it to the Select Board and HED for review, as residents continue to ask about the dam's future.

Shari questioned how the Board could approve a ballot question without first reviewing the wording. Emily explained that more than \$200,000 has been raised for preliminary design work and that the public engagement process has been working toward establishing a framework for moving forward. She noted that

while a final decision cannot be made at this time, there should be sufficient information available by Town Meeting to help residents make an informed decision.

Ceilidh expressed support for moving forward with the general concept of placing a question on the ballot, while acknowledging that the outcome of Town Meeting is still unknown. She also expressed appreciation for Emily and the organization's efforts to raise funds for the project. Larry and Tim agreed that additional information and the proposed wording were needed before making a commitment. Derek felt it was too soon to move forward without knowing the outcome.

The Task Force will prepare a draft question for the Select Board to review by November 5, allowing time for edits or approval, with the goal of finalizing the question on November 19.

Renae asked whether the downstream impacts on Pottersville were known. Ceilidh suggested discussing the matters further with Emily after the meeting.

Renae also proposed holding a joint meeting with HED to discuss the dams and help ensure everyone is on the same page.

No action was taken.

7:13 P.M. – 7:22 P.M. Item #6 — Select Board to review the Request for Select Board support for a planning and landscape design project for East Hardwick buyout properties, up to \$35,000 through the 2027 VOREC Community Grant. *Action needed.*

The Board discussed a Vermont Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (VOREC) grant opportunity. The Town has previously used VOREC funding for the pedestrian bridge project. This year's funding opportunity is a smaller grant intended to support the planning of property buyouts, with no local match required.

The Town has finalized a preliminary landscape design estimated at approximately \$30,000. The proposed planning work would build on the Better Connections initiative and include three properties, including the property recently cleared by the East Hardwick Fire District. The State views the Town as well-positioned to move forward with the next phase.

David noted that the Town must have no open VOREC grants to qualify and is currently closing out its previous grant, making the timing important.

Cheryl, representing East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO), expressed full support for the project and submitted a letter of support, which was read aloud. Ceilidh suggested placing the topic on a future agenda for further discussion.

Cheryl raised concerns that the VOREC process had begun before a task force committee was formed in order for further input. David clarified that the proposed grant is for planning and includes public engagement. Cheryl acknowledged this but emphasized that there is a distinction between planning and making changes to the properties.

Ceilidh reiterated that the topic should return as a future agenda item. David explained that the Better Connections plan would be incorporated into the planning process if the grant is awarded.

Upon motion by Tim Ricciardello, seconded by Larry Fliegelman, the Select Board voted to support staff moving forward with a VOREC pre-application for the East Hardwick Resilient Public Spaces Planning Project, with an anticipated request between \$25,000 and \$35,000 and no required municipal match.

7:22 P.M. – 7:26 P.M. Item #7 — Select Board to discuss marketing plan for the Bond vote

David provided an update on the bond vote mailer. The 6-by-11-inch cardstock design is expected to be finalized tomorrow, with estimated printing and mailing costs of \$1,700–\$2,200. The Town is exploring potential USPS options as well, but overall hopes to distribute the mailer during the last week of October. The mailer will go to all residents in the 05843 and 05836 ZIP codes, with costs covered by the garage capital funds. The goal is to raise awareness of the bond vote and encourage participation. Since the mailer could not be included with the ballots mailed to everyone by the State, residents will need to vote at the polls or request an absentee ballot for this item.

A poster will be displayed at the Fire Station on Halloween, and a separate poster will be printed at Spark. HCTV has video information from the last informational meeting, and information regarding the next information meeting and the bond vote will also be shared on Front Porch Forum.

Select Board Reports- Shari stated that there is a news clip on WCAX representing Hardwick.

New Business- David will schedule the joint meeting with HED.

Old Business- Shari asked if the crosswalks will be painted next week with the warm weather. David said yes, and the crew plans to put up another crosswalk sign as well.

Ceilidh thanked all members of the Town Meeting Task Force for their work. The task force will present to the Select Board on November 19. Larry praised the group's conversations and the variety of perspectives shared. Shari added that the public engagement held last night (October 14) was helpful.

7:28 P.M. *Upon motion by Larry Fliegelman, seconded by Shari Cornish, the Select Board voted to enter an executive session pursuant to 1 VSA §313 for a real estate discussion to include the Town Manager.*

7:41 P.M. Exited Executive Session. *No action taken.*

7:49 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