

A regular meeting of the Hardwick Select Board was held on Thursday, May 19, 2005 at 6:00 P.M. in the 3rd floor meeting room of the Hardwick Memorial Building.

Members Present:

Patricia Coultas
Brad Ferland
M. Tod Delaricheliere
Todd Deuso
Charles Volk

Others Present:

Daniel Hill, Lynda Brochu
Nathan Meunier, Roger LeCours,
Chief James Dziobek, Wade Cochran,
Aaron Cochran, Dan Hale,
Ashley Barnes

6:00 P.M. M. Tod Delaricheliere called the meeting called to order.

6:00 P.M. Todd moved to approve the regular Select Board minutes of May 5, 2005

Patricia Coultas seconded

M. Tod said there should be a motion that the Board recessed their meeting to go to the Sewer Treatment Plant. Lynda Brochu, Administrative Assistant, said that the first "Old Business" should have been "Select Board Reports."

Motion passed unanimously with the corrections as stated

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA: Dan added four items to the agenda:

- No cover is now needed on the town garage salt pile
- Thank you to Dona Bessette for tilling the community garden
- Ken Davis wants permission to use Wright Farm Road
- Second Class liquor license request from Buffalo Mountain Coop

6:04 P.M. Patti moved to accept the additions to the agenda as presented.

Brad Ferland seconded
Motion passed unanimously

COMMUNICATIONS FROM AUDIENCE: None

MANAGER'S REPORT

Request from the Local ATV Club

Dan Hale was present to deliver a draft of a policy concerning the use of ATV's on Hardwick roads. Dan Hale told the Board that he wasn't looking for a decision, but just wanted to get the "ball rolling" in order have the Board adopt an ATV policy. Dan said that he took the existing snowmobile policy and changed very little. The Board

questioned why every paved and unpaved road would have ATV access, when the Snow machine policy does have exceptions. Dan Hale stated that item "E" concerning helmet requirements should not have been crossed out. Dan Hale said that judgement should be used on where ATV's should be accessing trails. Patti said she needed something more specific about which roads would be open. Chief Dziobek agreed for enforcement reasons. Dan Hill questioned if ATVs could use town roads to access VASA trails, when the ATVs can't even get to the trails without using state highways, which would still be illegal. Dan Hale said that the less roads open, the less problems for him and the local VASA club. M. Tod requested that Mr. Hale provide a map of what roads they were requesting access to. Todd asked Chief Dziobek about the current enforcement of ATVs on public highways. Lynda asked Dan Hale when the roads would open. Dan Hale answered that ATVs typically ran from May to deer season. The Board agreed to add this discussion to a future agenda in July and asked Dan Hale to come up with some sort of map. Dan Hale asked for permission to replace a bridge located behind Ray Salls on Buffalo street. Dan Hill said he did not believe the town owned that piece of land. This item will also be included in a future board meeting.

Police Department Resignation

Dan told the Board that Wade Cochran has submitted his resignation effective May 27, 2005.

Police Department Discussion with Chief Dziobek

Aaron Cochran, Wade Cochran, Ashley (Skip) Barnes, and Chief Jim Dziobek introduced themselves to the Select Board and the Select Board introduced themselves to the Police Officers. Chief Dziobek passed out the Hardwick Police Department goals and objectives to the Board members.

Chief Jim Dziobek requested the Board waive the experience requirement in our job description for a sergeant. Of the fifteen people who responded for the current opening, only three were viable candidates and two of those three were from out of state. Chief Dziobek would like to see it made possible to allow his current officers the opportunity to apply for the sergeant's position.

6:37 P.M. Todd moved to waive the three year experience requirement for the Sergeant's position for in house employees.

Patti seconded

The Board discussed how the three year requirement became part of the policy.

Motion passed unanimously
Chief Dziobek started to review the manual of goals and objectives. M. Tod

asked to talk with the police officers who were present instead of going over the manual. M. Tod asked the three officers what their average day or week looked like as a police officer in Hardwick. Aaron Cochran answered that there is no such thing as an “average” day. Aaron reviewed his last twelve hour shift. Aaron also said that the family life takes a toll too as being a police officer is “not an easy job.” He told of many a late dinner or missed engagement. Patti asked what their feeling were about regionalization. The officers agreed it would be nice to be up to full staff and that regionalization would be great if people listened. Brad said that this is not an easy issue. He added that he was glad that the officers and the chief came to tonight’s meeting. Brad said that the Board was trying to manage both sides - them as employees and the taxpayers. Brad said it is a challenge to find the right balance, especially now when the town was facing a deficit. Brad said that as a town, we need to make sure everyone knows what we do.

The Board discussed with Chief Dziobek the perception that the police department performed traffic control duties more than anything else. Chief Dziobek and the Board discussed why officer’s leave the department, a problem for the last 20 years. Chief Dziobek told the Board that the message that the Select Board sends out is what the “guys in rank” read. The Chief feels that they will then look for a more secure place to work. The Board and the Chief also discussed: safety, single coverage, job burnout and the tight budget. Chief Dziobek asked the Board what direction the department is going to move? Patti said that the town’s people have consistently approved the COPS officer funding. She added that the proposed regional police study should cover all police issues, not just the regional police aspect. Chief Dziobek told the Board that it is only fair that his staff understand what the future holds. The Board discussed the top three issues facing the community. The Board discussed how they could show their support for the police department. The Board told Chief Dziobek that it was important for the officers to get out to meet people in the community. Chief Dziobek discussed the citizens police academy and being more active in the Chamber of Commerce.

Dan Hill said that the Board needs to set a direction and then give it time to work. Patti said she wants to fill all of the existing vacancies and be proactive in finding grant money to fund the regional police study. Chief Dziobek agreed that the study would be necessary to have other town’s buy in to the regional police concept. Brad said he was torn about filling the positions until we get word about the grant funding. Chief Dziobek said that he didn’t realize that his department positions were contingent upon receiving grant money. Brad said that it wasn’t. The Board discussed the next steps about writing a grant for the study. The Board discussed filling the two vacant positions. Dan Hill said that he would recommend filling the Sergeant’s position and the vacant officer position. Aaron Cochran spoke up that the police department needs the Board’s support. Patti told Aaron and the officers that the Board will support them.

Discussion of Current Budget

Dan reminded the Board that enclosed in their packets was the latest revenue

and expense report. This report brings us thru the first week in May. Dan said that he now feels that the potential deficit is closer to \$80,000. Dan went on to say that by using the current surplus and not funding the capital fund 100%, we can start “fresh” July 1st so as not to raise taxes. Dan said that we are starting delinquent tax collections sooner than last year and the different departments are controlling overtime. M. Tod said that he has been receiving compliments on the roads.

Hardwick Electric Questions

Dan said that at the last meeting, it was asked why Hardwick Electric bills on a monthly basis rather than for a longer period. Eric Werner gave several reasons for their current practice. It is used to help provide consistent cash flow. They have substantial power purchases to make each month and the cash reduces the necessity of borrowing. They have tried other methods of billing but their customers don't like to have estimated bills which happened when we read meters every other month and because the monthly bill is a significant amount of money, people prefer to pay each month so they can keep their own household budgets straight. It is also easier for HED to manage a delinquent account when it is for a month or two versus one or two quarters.

Request for a Highway Upgrade

Dan told the Board that Tim Cleveland has requested that the Town upgrade a section of Town Highway #24 from a class 4 road to a class 3 as he is going to build a house there. Town highway # 24 is Billings Lane and is the entrance to our gravel pit.

7:53 P.M. Todd moved to authorize the Town Manager and Road Foreman to inspect Town Highway #24 and complete specifications in order to upgrade Billings Lane (TH #24) to class 3.

Patti seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Reparative Justice Update

Dan told the Board that the process of expanding the role of reparative justice in both Hardwick and Greensboro was going well. They are establishing a Citizens Advisory Board to oversee the operation and the hiring committee has just completed interviews for the position of director. Lew Shattuck accepted the position of Director. He will be working 20 hours per week to manage the program. Dan told the Board that if they have volunteers in mind for the citizen advisory board to please call Lew Shattuck directly.

Delinquent Tax Update

Dan told the Board that there is approximately \$180,000.00 in delinquent for this year. The outstanding delinquent taxes from previous years is now about \$7,000.00. Brad asked for an explanation of how the school's receive their money. He also asked whether we borrow money from other funds.

The Board thanked Dona Bessette for tilling the town community garden.

8:01 P.M. Todd moved to approve a second class liquor license for the Buffalo Mountain Coop.

Charles seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Select Board Reports: Todd Deuso reported that the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District has committed spending \$500,000 on new equipment and recycling facilities. Fees are expected to be increased next year. Todd and the Board asked Dan to find out what the costs would be to get out of CVSWMD after the \$500,000 has been spent.

New Business: Charles asked whether town employees were required to wear ear protection. Dan and Lynda both answered, "yes." Charles asked Dan when the road crew would have time to bring fill to the bike park. Dan said that Tom would be getting back to Dan with the road crew schedule.

8:07 P.M. Brad moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Union Negotiations with Dan Hill, Town Manager.

Charles seconded
Motion passed unanimously

8:15 P.M. Out of Executive Session - No action taken

8:16 P.M. M. Tod moved to go into Executive Session for legal to include Dan Hill, Town Manager.

Todd seconded
Motion passed unanimously

8:21 P.M. Out of Executive Session - No action taken

8:22 P.M. Patti moved to adjourn the meeting.

Charles seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Minutes approved by:

M. Tod Delaricheliere, Chair
Minutes taken by: Lynda N. Brochu