

A regular meeting of the Hardwick Select Board was held on Thursday, February 5, 2004 at 6:00 P.M. in the 3rd floor meeting room of the Hardwick Memorial Building.

Members Present:
Sherry Lussier
M. Tod Delaricheliere
Patricia Coultas
Charles Volk

Others Present:
Daniel Hill, Lynda Brochu,
Roger LeCours, Alberta Miller
Steve Wallach, Lesa Cathcart
Eric Werner, Sue Cross, Joe Wood,
Chris Camerra, Nathan Meunier,
Mark Delaricheliere, Jan Howard,
Jean Hackett, Sue Holmes,
Lewis Shattuck

6:00 P.M. Meeting called to order.

6:01 P.M. M. Tod Delaricheliere moved to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2004 regular Select Board meeting.

Patricia Coultas seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Communications From Audience: The Listers (Jean Hackett, Jan Howard and Mark Delaricheliere) were present to discuss the Town's forthcoming reappraisal. Jean spoke on behalf of the Listers. She described all of their efforts so far in organizing a town wide reappraisal. Bids were opened on January 6th. Four proposals came in. The Listers looked at all of the proposals very carefully and after interviewing three of the candidates, they are recommending that the Board award the reappraisal contract to New England Municipal Consultants Limited out of Hampton Falls, New Hampshire. Jean gave many reasons for the Listers recommending this company: professionalism, public relations, the bid was all inclusive, software and N.E.M.C.L. would over see the entire project. Jean told the Board that this process will take approximately two years and she reviewed the time line.

6:16 P.M. M. Tod moved to award the reappraisal bid to New England Municipal Consultants Limited in the amount of \$129,400.00 as recommended by the Listers.

Patricia seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Manager's Report

Hardwick Electric Request for Bonding Authority

Dan told the Board that Eric Werner and Joe Wood were present to ask for authority to go after a bond to consolidate debt of the Hardwick Electric Department. Eric told the Board that he is looking to refinance six bank notes into a bond. By

refinancing into a thirty year bond, the Electric Department could see a \$30,000.00 savings.

6:21 P.M. M. Tod moved to approve the refinance of the six loans into a bond note.

Patricia seconded

M. Tod asked Eric if he intended to keep the line of credit open. Eric answered that they would be keeping a line of credit open for short term financing needs. Eric explained that the line of credit helps with the power supply cost fluctuations. The Board questioned Eric and Joe about the solvency of HED. Eric assured the Board that they have enough of an equity base and therefore have no insolvency concerns. Eric explained that the current electric rates are not high enough to cover capital improvements that are needed every year. Sherry questioned Eric about why there always seemed to be some reason that Hardwick Electric has financial problems. Joe Wood explained that the Electric Department has to adjust to events and absorb the cost of purchased power if it goes up. HED is unable to “run” to the Public Service Board for a rate increase every time the cost of power increases. The Board discussed a capital improvement plan with Eric.

Motion passed unanimously

Discussion of GASB 34

Dan reminded the Board that his office has been working to complete our GASB 34 asset list to complete our compliance with these new accounting standards. At this point, Hardwick will be prepared to comply beginning with FY ‘05 as required. Dan said that in talking with our auditors, Sullivan & Powers, he recently learned that because HED is a wholly owned asset of the Town, we need to include their numbers in our overall accounting presentation at the end of each year. The problem for HED is that they operate on a calendar year basis as dictated by the Vermont Public Service. VPS is not receptive to Hardwick Electric Department changing their fiscal year. Dan explained that today, he received new information from Eric explaining that we may have found a solution. It may be acceptable for a subsidiary to have a different fiscal year than the main governmental unit. If it is “impracticable” to correspond with the main governmental unit.

Eric and Dan will continue to work with their auditors to solve this issue.

Sherry questioned Eric about the HED monthly report, which stated that there had been an environmental project settlement. Eric explained that three years ago the Jackson Dam gates were opened too quickly and silt was washed downstream, causing the Agency of Natural Resources to fine the HED. The fine was delayed in order to give the Town of Hardwick the opportunity to vote on the issue of removing Jackson Dam and thereby eliminate the fine all together. Because the towns people chose to keep the dam, HED and ANR reached an agreement to spend \$15,000, in lieu of a cash

settlement, towards shoreline improvements to the Elmore branch of the Lamoille River, down stream from the Pottersville dam. The Select Board and people in the room discussed the fine, proposed shoreline project and dredging. Sherry questioned Eric about the cause of the ice jam in December. Eric explained that a message was left on Bill Picken's answering machine that the loons had left Hardwick Lake, but because Bill was away that week, the gates were opened late. The Board discussed the loons and the ice jam. Sherry and Dan agreed that the Agency of Natural Resources and all the other special interest groups, who wanted Jackson Dam removed, will continue to strong arm the town and the electric department until the dam is removed.

Water & Sewer Budget Discussions

Dan told the Board that they had received the proposed budgets for both water and sewer for FY '05 in their Select Board packets, along with a Letter of Transmittal for each budget. Dan went on to say that combined, they mean an increase of \$1.00 per month for a household to cover their water and sewer.

7:20 P.M. M. Tod moved to approve the Sewer Budget of \$224,341.00.

Patricia seconded
Motion passed unanimously

7:21 P.M. M. Tod moved to approve the Water Budget of \$167,276.

Patricia seconded

M. Tod questioned Dan and Lynda about the increase in permit fees and the decrease in water testing.

Motion passed unanimously

Woodbury Trails Committee Appointments

Dan told the Board that the first meeting of the new committees for Hardwick and Woodbury to continue work on rules and regulations for the new trail using the old Hardwick/Woodbury rail line, took place last week. There has been one change in the Hardwick committee as it was decided to have John Patoine sit on both committees as he is the direct link to Swenson Granite who owns the land. If acceptable, the committee would like the Select Board to appoint the following people to serve a 4 year term on Hardwick/Woodbury Trail committee to represent Hardwick: Charlie Volk - Select Board, Lucien Avery - Non motorized users, Dan Courchaine - Snow machine users, Dan Hale - ATV, John Patoine - Member at large & Swenson Representative.

7:25 P.M. M. Tod moved to appoint Charles Volk, Lucien Avery, Dan Courchaine, Dan Hale and John Patoine to the Hardwick/Woodbury Rail Line committee, as recommended.

Patricia seconded
Unanimous

Police Appointment

Dan told the Board that he would like the Board to appoint Travis Bingham as a Special Police officer. Travis has a BA in Criminal Justice from Castleton and is the brother of Cory Bingham, one of our regular officers.

7:26 P.M. M. Tod moved to appoint Travis Bingham to the Hardwick Police Force as a Special Officer.

Patricia seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Police News

Dan told the Board that we participated in a special seat belt campaign during the Thanksgiving time along with other agencies in our area. As a result of that work, we have received two new radar units for our cruisers. The value of these is approximately \$2,500.00 and they will replace outdated equipment.

He also advised the Board that we have just joined New England State Police Information Network (NESPIN). This allows us to access a much larger data base of information in doing checks on people. It also allows us to borrow expertise and equipment from this group at no charge. This will be a big help in drug work we want to do. The cost of joining this group is only \$50.00 per year so it is a good investment.

Liquor Licenses

Dan told the Board that he had three liquor license renewals

7:28 P.M. M. Tod moved to approve a second class liquor license for Perry Oil.

Patricia seconded
Motion passed unanimously

7:28 P.M. M. Tod moved to approve a first class liquor license for Wok n House.

Patricia seconded
Motion passed unanimously

7:29 P.M. M. Tod moved to approve a first class liquor license for the American Legion.

Patricia seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Zoning Administrator Report

Dan told the Board that they had received Nancy Kish's Zoning Administrator's report for January in their Board packets.

Contract with Corrections Department

Dan told the Board that he has met with a representative of the Corrections Department and the town has signed a one year contract with them so we can use a small amount of their labor force. They supervise a number of individuals who have been assigned community service instead of jail time. We can use them to help us do a number of things such as splitting wood, cutting brush, sweeping and painting at a cost of \$10.00 per day they work. We call them in when we need them for specific jobs and we can cancel the individual or the contract itself at any time.

Hardwick Electric Report

Dan told the Board that they had received Eric Werner's report to the commissioners for January in their Board packets.

Dan updated the Board about the Smith Farm Road culvert. We have received a stream alteration permit.

Dan reminded the Board that the next scheduled Select Board meeting on February 19th will be the pre Town Meeting.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Select Board Reports: Sherry told the Board that Governor Douglas had attended a play at the Town House last week. The play was performed by Hazen students and written by the gentleman who painted the Town House curtains - Charles Henry.

7:35 P.M. Sherry moved to adjourn.

M. Tod seconded
Motion passed unanimously

Minutes approved by:

Todd Deuso, Chair

Minutes taken by: Lynda N. Brochu