



TOWN OF HARTFORD SELECTBOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, March 12, 2024, 6:00pm
Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street,
White River Junction, VT 05001

This meeting was conducted in person at Town Hall

Present: Michael Hoyt, Chair; Kim Souza, Vice-Chair; Lannie Collins, Member; Susan Buckholz, Member; Brandon Smith, Member, Ida Griesemer, Member; John Haverstock; Heidi Duto, Will Adler; Miriam Wood; Christina Cooper Warner; Aaron Warner; Dennis Brown; Jonathan Schectman; Joie Finley; Judith Randall; Sally Mansur; Sara Campbell; Joe Denny; Scott Cooney; David Briggs; Kaytlynn Monroe; Bethaney Rocha; Joe Major.

Present on Zoom: Lana Livingston; Corey Schutzman; James King; Marcy Bartlett;

Absent: Mary Erdei, Selectboard Clerk;

JAM Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIw9r_wS5Zs

- I. Call to Order the Selectboard Meeting by Chair, Mike Hoyt at 6:00PM.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance was recited and led by Town Manager, John Haverstock.
- III. Local Liquor Control Board
Selectboard Chair, Mike Hoyt recessed the Selectboard Meeting and opened the Local Liquor Control Board at 6:01PM.
 - a. Selectboard Member, Brandon Smith made the motion to Renew the 1st Class Liquor License for Phnom Penh Sandwich Station, LLC at 7 North Main Street, White River Jct., VT 05001. Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz seconded the motion. 5 were in favor and 1 recused (Souza). The motion passed.
 - b. Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz made the motion to Renew the 2nd Class Liquor License, Tobacco and Tobacco Endorsement for Summit Stores, LLC d/b/a Three Cat Coffee, 18 & 42 Sykes Mountain Avenue, White River Jct., VT 05001. Selectboard Member, Ida Griesemer seconded the motion. 5 were in favor and 1 recused (Souza). The motion passed.
 - c. Selectboard Member, Ida made the motion to Renew the 2nd Class Liquor License, Tobacco and Tobacco Endorsement for Summit Stores, LLC d/b/a Quechee Mobile, 3479 Woodstock Road, White River Jct., VT 05001. Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz seconded the motion. 5 were in favor, 1 recused (Souza). The motion passed.

Selectboard Chair, Mike Hoyt closed the Local Liquor Control Board and opened the Local Cannabis Control Board at 6:05 PM.

- IV. Local Cannabis Control Board
 - a. Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion to the Approval of: VT Cannabis Control Board (CCB) Application of #S-000005836, Tea House, LLC. Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Chair, Mike Hoyt closed the Local Cannabis Control Board and reopened the Selectboard Meeting at 6:07PM.

- V. Order of Agenda – Sara Campbell, applicant for HCOREI, will be attending in person after 7:00PM.

VI. Selectboard

1. Public Comment

David Briggs, White River Jct., has been attending the recent Selectboard meetings to introduce and update the Board to his project that will redevelop the Coolidge Block in downtown, WRJ. He met with the Planning Commission to say that “here is a project that he is attempting to do.” He got a good response from the Planning Board. He thinks the project would be best to work through the Town Manager’s Office.

Marcy Bartlett, Wilder, congratulated the new Selectboard Members and thanked them for their willingness to serve. She inquired of Brandon Smith his views on working with the Police Department. Chair Hoyt suggested she contact him outside of the Selectboard Meeting. She also asked the Board to fly just the American Flag and the VT State Flag exclusively on Town property.

Joe Major, WRJ, welcomed the new members. He asked that the Hometown Heros project be on the Selectboard agenda for March 19th. He will have a presentation and proposal.

Aaron Warner, Hartford, spoke about an item on the agenda, the flying of the Pride Flag. He is not in favor as he sees this is for a specific group and not all people.

2. Selectboard Comments and Announcements

Kim Souza suggested that Board Members email the Town Manager and the Chair with any questions they have on the agenda in advance so the Town Manager can respond to the Board – before the meeting. She also urged the Selectboard Members to submit their commission reports to the Town Manager’s office prior to the meeting. This way they will be included in the written minutes. She also suggested a process of making motions and seconds during the meeting by starting at one end of the seating and progressing along the line.

Ida Griesemer thanked the voters for the faith they have in her.

Brandon Smith in looking forward to working with the Police Department and thanked everyone he has encountered during his campaign. He encourages everyone to reach out to him with any disagreements.

3. Appointments

- a. **Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza made the motion to Re-appoint John Heath to the Planning Commission for a three year term beginning March 12, 2024 and ending March 11, 2027. Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.**
- b. **Selectboard Member, Brandon Smith made the motion to Re-appoint Jay Zanleoni to the Hartford Business Revolving Loan Fund for a three year term beginning March 12, 2024 and ending March 11, 2027. Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.**

- c. Selectboard Member, Ida Griesemer made the motion to Re-appoint Michael Gabrielle to the Hartford Business Revolving Loan Fund for a three year term beginning March 12, 2024 and ending March 11, 2027. Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.
- d. Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza made the motion to Appoint Dennis Brown to the Hartford Historic Preservation Committee for a three year term beginning March 12, 2024 and ending March 11, 2027. Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.
- e. Selectboard Member, Ida Griesemer made the motion to Appoint Joseph Denny to the Parks & Recreation Commission for a three year term beginning March 12, 2024 and ending March 11, 2027. Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.
- f. Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza made the motion to Appoint Sara Campbell to the Hartford Committee on Racial Equity and Inclusion (HCOREI) for a two year term beginning March 12, 2024 and ending March 11, 2026. Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.
- g. Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion to Re-appoint Matt Osborn as Acting Zoning Administrator Officer beginning March 23, 2024 for a three year term ending March 22, 2027. Selectboard Member, Brandon, Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

4. Town Manager's Report

Town Meeting Recap

Congratulations to our newest Selectboard members, Sue Buckholz, Ida Griesemer and Brandon Smith and best wishes to the Selectboard members who have concluded their service—Dan Fraser, Ally Tufenkjian and Rocket.

The Town's proposed FY 25 budget was approved by the voters. The budget includes several new positions: A Crime Data Analyst and Community Outreach position within the police department; a Housing and Development specialist within the Planning Department; a part-time Community Nurse funded in the amount of \$75,000 as a pilot project and a Public Information Officer.

The voters also approved the proposed charter changes, with the exception of the proposed 1% sales tax, which was narrowly defeated.

The proposed \$1,300,000 bond for improvements to Fire Station No. 2 in Quechee was approved. Two of three proposed L.O.T. uses were approved—the Fire Department ambulance and Villages' beautification proposals. The proposed use of \$225,000 in L.O.T. funds for improvements to Lyman Point Park was narrowly defeated.

There are two new members of the Hartford School Board. School District votes on the School budget, bond and proposed charter revisions have been postponed to April __.

Welcoming and Engaging Community Cohort

The Town Manager has forwarded an important survey to all of the 195 members of staff and boards, commissions and committees. This brief survey was compiled by Abundant Sun and the responses will provide valuable data to the Town of Hartford and to all members of the Welcoming & Engaging Cohort. There was a solid survey compliance, with 132 of 195 responses

submitted, for a 67.7% response rate.

Gates Street/Fairview Terrace

The Town Manager has met with Bryan Gazda and Chris Holzwarth of DPW for a site visit and met with the design engineers on Monday, March 11 to discuss their work and anticipated timeline for final design and cost estimates with an eye to a potential bond vote this fall.

Wilder Hydro Dam License Renewal

The public comment period has opened with respect to the renewal by the Federal Energy Regulatory Agency (FERC) of the Wilder Hydro Dam's license to operate. Such a time only occurs every 40 years or so, so the Town would be wise to seek public input and Selectboard approval of Town comments. Toward that end, the Town staff is working to host such a public outreach effort. The Connecticut River Conservancy plans to address the Selectboard at its meeting on April 2.

Selectboard Overview (March, 2024)

As the Hartford Selectboard has three new members, a brief status report on governmental operations is in order:

Personnel

The Town has experienced significant staff turnover in recent years. However, the Selectboard, with the assistance and support of Acting Town Manager Gail Ostrout (Finance Director) and Assistant Acting Town Manager Paula Nulty (HR Director), was able to fill the positions of Police Chief, Department of Public Works Director, Assessor and Town Manager in recent months.

Selectboard

New members have been given orientation materials. Both incumbent and new Selectboard members are encouraged to participate in training sessions conducted by the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT). In addition, Dominic Cloud of VLCT will soon facilitate a Selectboard workshop on how to conduct Effective and Efficient Selectboard meetings. At an upcoming meeting, the Selectboard will have the opportunity to consider making changes to its Rules of Procedure.

Of special importance is Vermont's Open Meeting Law, and it bears a close reading and follow-up training. The idea is that the Town's business must be conducted in an open and transparent manner. Beware of unintended quorums (the presence of 4 or more Selectboard members) as no Town business can be discussed in such situations unless a meeting has been duly warned to allow for the presence of the public.

Generally speaking, "executive sessions" are meetings of the Selectboard, sometimes with invited guests (such as the Town Manager, for example) which occur outside the presence of the public for special purposes to frankly discuss legal matters involving the Town; contractual matters in which Town strategy ought not be divulged; and/or personnel matters which could cause unwanted impacts to staff privacy interests. It is vitally important that what takes place during executive sessions remain private—once Selectboard members lose faith in each other to keep such matters confidential, there can be a loss of mutual trust and a chilling effect on candid discussion.

Significant Pending Matters (not exhaustive, by any means)

Transfer Station Feasibility Study by Sanborn Head

Curbside Recycling Program/Contract

Engineer Design Work on Fairview Terrace by Dubois & King

Wilder Water Line Replacement Design Engineering by Dufresne Group

Repairs to Wilder Footpath Bridge

Architectural Design Work for Accessibility and Rehabilitation of Bugbee Senior Center by Studio Nexus

Parking Meters to be installed in White River Junction, with an accompanying enforcement Ordinance

Town-wide Property Revaluation by Tyler Technologies, overseen by Town Assessor

Community Safety Study by Strategy Matters

Welcoming and Engaging Community Cohort participation via VLCT and Abundant Sun

Recruiting and Retention within Police Department and Department of Public Works (Highway, Water and Wastewater)

Significant Activity Reports Link:

<https://www.hartford-vt.org/Archive.aspx?ADID=474>

5. Board Reports, Motions & Ordinances

a. Request to Fly Pride Flag at Town Hall

Kim Souza moved that in compliance with the Hartford Town Hall Flag Pole Policy, that the Selectboard approve the raising of the progressive pride flag from July 20 until July 27, 2024. 2nd by Sue Buckholz. 5 in favor. 1 opposed (Collins). 1 absence (Erdei).

b. Discussion of Fire Marshal Staffing presented by Fire Chief, Scott Cooney.

c. Remarks from National Grid

d. Assign Selectboard Members as Committee Liaisons - Draft

Boards, Committees & Commissions	2024 Liaisons	Meeting Day	Meeting Time	Staff Contact
Aquatics Center Oversight Committee	Sue Buckholz			None
Conservation Commission	Mary Erdei	1 st Monday of the Month	7:00 PM	Matt Osborn
Design Review Committee	Brandon Smith	Thursday: see specific schedule	5:00 PM	Jo-Ann Ells
Energy Commission and Climate Action Steering Team (sub comm of the Energy Commission)	Ida Griesemer Mike Hoyt	4 th Thursday OTM 2 nd Wednesday OTM	5:00 PM	Dana Clawson
Hartford Business Revolving Loan	Sue Buckholz	Qrtly 1 st Wed. of Mo.	8:30 AM	Lori Hirshfield
Hartford Committee On Racial Equity & Inclusion (HCOREI - 2 seats)	Applications Required • Received: Mary Erdei	Wednesday	6:00 PM	None
Hartford Community Coalition	Lannie Collins	3 rd Wed. every other Month beg. 9.15.21	4:30 PM	Scott Hausler
Hartford Tree Board	Ida Griesemer	Wednesday	6:00 PM	Scott Hausler
Historic Preservation Commission	Lannie Collins	3 rd Wednesday of the Month	5:00 PM	Matt Osborn
Hartford Committee on Housing and Homelessness	Applications Required	3 rd Thursday of the Month	6:00 PM	Lori Hirshfield
Parks & Recreation Commission	Sue/Mary ??	2 nd Thursday of the Month	5:30 PM	Scott Hausler
Planning Commission	Kim Souza	Monday: see specific schedule	6:00 PM	Jo-Ann Ells
Resilient Hartford	Ida Griesemer	4 th Wed of the Month	5:00 PM	Matt Osborn
School Board	Liaison: Mike Hoyt 1 st Alternate: Kim Souza 2 nd Alternate: Mary Erdei	2 nd & 4 th Wednesday of the Month	7:00 PM	None
Sister Cities	Mike Hoyt	4 th Tuesday of the Month	5:00 PM	None
Zoning Board of Adjustment	Lannie Collins	Wednesday: see specific schedule	6:30 PM	Jo-Ann Ells
Upper Valley Leadership Committee	Town Manager/ SB Chair			None

- e. Ratify the Chair's Approval of: Payroll ending 3/2/2024; AP Manifests of 3/1/2024 and 3/7/2024 on March 6, 2024.

Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza made the motion that the Selectboard approve and ratify Selectboard Chair Mike Hoyt's Wednesday, March 6, 2024 approval of Accounts Payable and Payroll, consisting of: AP Manifests of 3/1/2024 and 3/7/2024 and Payroll ending 3/2/2024. Selectboard Member, Ida Griesemer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

VII. Commission Reports

Kim Souza

The Planning Commission met on March 11th and were presented with a sketch plan review of the Coolidge Block by David Briggs. Matt Osborn was approved unanimously as the acting zoning administrator by the PC.

Following the Planning Commission meeting, the Town Plan Steering Committee met to kick off the update of the Economic Development chapter. The group was introduced to the Better Cities team members who have been contracted with to facilitate the chapter update and discussed the overall approach to the project.

There is a community forum on Economic Development on Thursday, March 14 at the Bugbee Senior Center beginning at 6pm. All are encouraged to attend!

VIII. Consent Agenda: Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza made the motion to approve the meeting minutes of 3/7/2024 and the meetings of: 4/2/2024; 4/16/2024; 4/30/2024 and workshop of 3/27/2029 Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

(NOTE: 2/20/2024 minutes tabled- not a quorum at this meeting)

IX. Executive Session: Review Status of Pending Legal Matters

Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion to move to find that there are legal matters involving the Town and premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Town and/or persons at a substantial disadvantage. Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion that the Selectboard go into executive session to discuss pending civil litigation and attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services, as set forth in V.S.A. 3133(a)(1)(E) and (F). Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza made the motion to close the Executive Session at 8:29PM. Selectboard Member, Ida Griesemer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

X. Adjourn the Selectboard Meeting

Selectboard Member, Sue Buckholz made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30PM. Selectboard Vice Chair, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.



Mike Hoyt, Chair
3/12/2024 meeting