



**TOWN OF HARTFORD
SELECTBOARD MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

6:00pm Hartford Town Hall

171 Bridge Street, White River Junction, VT 05001

**This meeting was conducted in compliance with
Vermont Open Meeting Law with electronic participation.**

Present via Zoom: Joe Major, Selectboard Vice Chair; Kim Souza, Selectboard Clerk; Ally Tufenkjian, Selectboard Member; Dennis Brown, Selectboard Member;

Present at Town Hall: Dan Fraser, Selectboard Chair; Tracy Yarlott-Davis, Town Manager; Lana Livingston, Administrative Assistant.

Absent: Julia Dalphin, Selectboard Member was absent.

Note: Rachel Edens, Selectboard Member resigned from the Selectboard effective date 5/14/2021. More information on filling the vacancy will be coming shortly.

CATV LINK: <http://catv.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/14539?channel=1>

The Chair read this script:

As Chair of the Town of Hartford Selectboard I find that, due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Scott as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and pursuant to Addendum 6 to Executive Order 01-20 and Act 92, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

In accordance with Act 92, there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting.

However, in accordance with the temporary amendments to the Open Meeting Law, I confirm that we are:

*a) Providing public access to the meeting by [telephone/video/other electronic means], with additional access offered through telephone, zoom and youtube.com. We are using Zoom for this remote meeting. All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if desired, participate in this meeting by <https://zoom.us/j/549799933> - Please mute your microphone, [youtube.com/catv810](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=810) – click “live now”. If you're calling in from phone dial: (415) 762-9988 Type in the Room ID: 549-799-933 followed by #. Press # a second time. Press *9 to raise your hand for public comment.*

b) Providing public notice of instructions for accessing the meeting. We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing this meeting, including how to access the meeting using telephone, zoom and youtube.com in our posted meeting agenda. [Instructions have also been provided on the town website on the “Agendas and Minutes.”]

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access.

d) Continuing the meeting if necessary. In the event the public is unable to access this meeting, it will be continued to a time and place certain.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting that are not unanimous will be done by roll call vote, in accordance with the law. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance of all Selectboard members participating in the meeting.

I. Call to Order of the Selectboard Meeting: Selectboard Chair, Dan Fraser called the meeting to order at 5:58 PM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance: was recited

III. Local Liquor Control Board: None

IV. Order of Agenda: there were no changes to the order of agenda.

V. Selectboard

1. Public Comments:

Lannie Collins from Hartford called in to ask about the status of the search for a new Police Chief. He would like to know who is choosing the attributes for a new chief and would like to see a citizen led committee to explore the options. Dan Fraser responded to say the Selectboard and Town Manager were exploring the options and no further information is available right now.

Cathy Melocik from Wilder thanked Rachel Edens for her work on the Selectboard. She also wanted to know if the trailer trucks that get stuck under the WRJ RR underpass are receiving tickets. The Town Manager did not know as that is a police function.

2. Selectboard Comments and Announcements

Kim Souza responded to Lannie Collin's question by saying that the Police Chief is an Administrative position and not a function of the Selectboard. The Selectboard has no further information on the process right now.

Kim Souza shared the HOCREI Resource Library link with the community. It is <https://hartfordvtdiversityequityresourceibrary.com/>. This was created by the Education committee of HOCREI.

Joe Major also gave his support to the HOCREI resource Library. He urged everyone to go to this site. It is truly for everyone in any compacity and is very extensive.

Ally Tufenkjian thanked Rachel Edens for her service to the town and Selectboard.

Dennis Brown would like more signage of some sort for the WRJ Underpass where trailer trucks keep getting stuck while following their GPS route.

3. Appointments:

- a. Consider the appointment of Joe Major to the Advance Transit Board for a two-year term beginning May 18, 2021 and ending May 17, 2023.

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to appoint Joe Major to the Advance Transit Board for a two-year term beginning May 18, 2020 and ending May 17, 2023. Selectboard Member, Dennis Brown seconded the motion. 4 were in favor, 1 abstained (Major) and the motion passed.

4. Town Manager's Report:

Significant Activity Report

<https://www.hartford-vt.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/211>

Town Manager's Report

Juneteenth Event – Thank You Staff

I want to send out a big thanks to Scott Hausler, Brad Vail, and Hannah Tyler for a recent meeting to determine how to support the Juneteenth event. We'll be able to support the event leaders with restroom facilities, traffic control, as well as trash and recycling service.

Hotel Voucher Program

We continue to keep watch on the changes to the Emergency Voucher program. As of May 14th, Hartford had 152 people using the program. In the three weeks, one hotel serving 28 of those vouchers will begin phasing out accepting them for payment. Staff, the Health Officer, and our community based agencies continue to keep me updated.

Summer Construction

The Town and the region are fully into summer construction projects. I want to remind everyone that you can watch for alerts on our website, facebook page, the listerv, and via email. VTrans also offers updates via email and you can sign up on their website.

Staff Email and Call Response

Summer is a busy time in Town offices. Staff have a number of deadlines and priorities from our construction work to finalizing the grand list to requests from me. In order to facilitate concentrated times to perform work, I have authorized departments to respond to emails and calls within five business days. Individuals who email a request or concern that is not an urgent health or safety issue will receive an initial reply that their email or call has been received. If there is an urgent health or safety risk, Department Directors will redirect the needed resources to inspect, review, or respond as needed.

Town Website

I am in the process of initial calls or video meetings with vendors who create and maintain municipal websites. There are a number of useful features that are now available that look helpful for residents and Town staff. I look forward to reporting more as soon as I can.

Town Hall Listening Session

On June 1 we will be holding our first Town Hall Listening Session on downtown parking via Zoom. For this meeting, participants will first learn about the history of parking studies, legislation, workshops, and staff reports. Then, facilitated by Chuck Wooster, we'll reflect and discuss the needs and wants of the community. This is a time to listen and learn from each other in one space and time.

The Fire Department calls will be available on City Watch soon. You will then be able to see both the Police and Fire calls.

5. Board Reports, Motions & Ordinances:

- a. March 2021 Financials were presented by Gail Ostrout, Finance Department Director.

Notes of Interest: We are 9 months into the 2021 as of 3.31.2021. As a whole the Town is within the expected glide path of 75%. No immediate concerns from the Finance Director as the Department Heads continue executing their budgets effectively & efficiently.

Where we are today: The Town of Hartford is financially stable. To date we have weathered the pandemic well. This is a result of solid financial decisions.

We completed our week of planning/testing with our audit firm. The audit will be presented to the board the meeting before Thanksgiving.

Department Heads have some larger projects underway such as: Communications Console Upgrade, Network Switches, Door Panel Infrastructure, Simulcast, Pool and Infrastructure Construction.

Hartford Financial Benchmark Assessment by Vermont Bond Bank was provided to the Board on 11.19.2020. A request for an updates Assessment has be requested. The presentation of the Assessment will be late July or early August. This is critical information for Capital Planning and Budget Guidance.

b. Fee Schedule FY2022 – presented by the Town Manager.

Its standard practice for municipalizes to charge fees for certain facilities and services when certain services especially benefit one group.

Hartford has not done a deep dive into the process for setting fees, calculating the full cost of providing the service, or to account for general inflation. I will be working with staff as we have capacity to provide a fuller assessment of the fee schedule for the fiscal year 2023 budget cycle.

Overall, there were increases to the fees associated with ice rentals at WABA, water and wastewater fees, and our contracts with outlying communities to provide emergency dispatching services.

Link to the Fee Schedule: <https://www.hartford-vt.org/DocumentCenter/View/5182/Fiscal-Year-2022-Proposed-Fee-Schedule>

Selectboard Member, Dennis Brown made the motion to adopt the fiscal year 2022 Fee Schedule and authorize the Town Manager to implement the new rates effective July 1, 2021. Selectboard Vice Chair, Joe Major seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

c. South Main Street Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Step Two Application

Presented by Lori Hirshfield, Director of the planning and Development Department.

The \$31,700 loan application is to the Vermont Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) for the Step II Final Design/ Engineering/Bid Process phase of the South Main, North Main and Gates Streets stormwater and sewer TIF project. The loan program requires separate applications for final engineering and construction.

Use of the state's RLF loan programs was discussed at

the 2019 TIF public hearings for voter approval of this TIF Project as one of the financing options to reduce the overall costs of the project. Bonding authorization will come from the 2019 TIF Project voter approval for this project.

The state already has approved the Town's engineering services agreement and scope of work with Aldrich and Elliot Engineering for this final engineering phase, a prerequisite for the loan application. The Final engineering plan and construction documents are nearing completion and also will be submitted to the state loan program for final approval. Staff will be coming before the Selectboard in the near future for approval of an application for the construction phase.

Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian made the motion to approve the filing of a CWSRF Step II application for the second section of the South Main, North Main and Gates Street Utility and Roadway Improvement TIF Project in the amount of \$31,700, and authorize the Town Manager to execute all necessary documents. Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

d. COVID-19 Committee Charge Revision

Proposed Revision: presented by Chair of the Committee, Kristi Clemens.

Hartford Ad Hoc Committee on Coronavirus Response Charge

Revised April 28, 2021

Term:

The term of this commission shall end upon completion of the charge; not later than March 3, 2022.

Constitution:

This advisory committee will be constituted by seven members who live or work within the Town of Hartford, including the town health officer. Each member shall have equal weight in discussion and voting.

Charge:

1. To continue to support the work of the Town of Hartford in its ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes offering support to the town and its residents as it begins its transition into the recovery phase of the pandemic. Additionally, this advisory committee will continue to work with area service providers, state officials, and content experts to generate a broad list of strategies for advancing the following goals:
 - a. To consider and recommend strategies for continuing to encourage behaviors that reduce the risk of the spread of COVID 19
 - b. To consider and recommend strategies for supporting and preserving Hartford's economy and the businesses, families, and individuals that make it up
 - d. To consider and recommend strategies for ensuring consistent food supply to Hartford Residents.
 - e. To consider strategies for communicating with Hartford residents regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, including the development of communication recommendations to the Selectboard for both COVID-19 information, as well as other town information.
 - f. To consider opportunities for supporting community health and wellness and providing opportunities for fun by supporting and creating ways for residents to connect and celebrate the resilience of our town.
2. To take actions to advance the goal areas listed above that do not obligate staff time or financial output from the Town, issue official town statements, or necessitate or request a change of activities of Hartford Residents.
3. To collaborate with parallel committees and/or delegates from the Towns of Lebanon, Hanover, Norwich, or other regional towns to discuss possibilities for regional collaboration.
4. To monitor Hartford's response to the Coronavirus outbreak with regards to the above-mentioned goals.

In order to conform to the open meeting laws, committee meetings will be warned, recorded, and open to the public.

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to approve the Ad hoc Committee on COVID-19 Charge as amended. Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

- e. Ad hoc Committee on Emergency Shelter Update
Presented by Becca White, chair of the committee.

There are 140 Vouchered Hotel Residents in Hartford.

Hotel voucher system will begin to phase out on

July 1st, making approx. 30% of current residents' ineligible.

Hartford currently hosts ~15 campers

Rule of 3rds: 1/3 of the unhoused will find housing within the system

1/3 will find housing with friends and/or family

1/3 will not find any housing

The eviction moratorium is scheduled to sunset on July 4th, 2021.

Projections provided by Senior Case Workers at the Haven indicate that, unless we take action, Hartford's unsheltered unhoused population will reach >45 individuals, approximately 3x the historical average.

We explored all public parks; land owned by the town and school (106 parcels) and have come up with no viable location.

Why? Flood plains, waste water and sewer, too far from resources like Advance Transit, inaccessible, or too close to residential areas.

We have begun exploring a partnership with a local non-profit organization for the purchase of land to accommodate micro dwellings. Staff and the Planning Commission have been supportive. **No Selectboard Action is needed.**

HADCES has discovered the following two relevant regulatory obstacles:

Hartford defines a Campground as 2 or more Campsites

Hartford prohibits residence in Recreational Vehicles (RV's) for more than 14 days/year. The recommended amendments to these regulations would bring Hartford's Zoning into agreement with the State of Vermont.

Because there is no town-owned parcel appropriate for an emergency shelter development, we respectfully recommend that Hartford alleviate the regulatory obstacles to the use of recreational vehicles to provide emergency housing for unhoused individuals:

Increase the definition of Campground to 4 or more campsites

Allow unhoused individuals to seek shelter in RV's

We ask that this recommendation be included as part of a subsequent Selectboard Agenda.

- f. Strategic Equity and Inclusion Plan. Presented by Joe Major, Selectboard Vice-Chair.

Selectboard Joe Major reported that the Town Manager and HR are working on a plan to provide training to the Selectboard and Department Heads. He is also working with the Police Department to recruit minority law enforcement officers by making coming to Hartford an attractive offer to live and work. Because of so many vacant

positions there is a lot of overtime now that can increase officer overtired and perhaps making mistakes because of that.

Kim Souza asked if anyone is looking into what the department would look like if not all the open positions were filled.

VI. Commission Meetings

Dennis Brown attended the Zoning Board meeting. They approved an application and are working on another. He also attended the joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commission. They are still working on the proposed Historic Demolition Ordinance. The Planning Commission still has some concerns. Mr. Brown also went on the Parks & Rec tour that included the Pool project.

Joe Major went on the Parks & Rec tour. The commission is working on the summer camps and mask mandates. They will have masks available for all children during the camps. UVAC also has masks available. They are trying to keep everyone safe.

Ally Tufenkjian attend the Resilient Hartford Kick Off meeting for the Clifford Park Food Forest project. The 5/12 Zoom recording of Clifford Park Food Forest Kick Off meeting link is: <https://youtu.be/C3sKucftWTc>

If you are interested in getting involved with the Clifford Park Food Forest, please reach out to: Frederica Graham at frederica.graham@gmail.com, Head of the Steering Committee for the Food Forest.

VII. Consent Agenda: Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Selectboard Vice Chair, Joe Major seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Approve Payroll Ending: 5/15/2021

Approve Meeting Minutes of: 5/4/2021

Approve A/P Manifest of: 5/14/2021 & 5/18/2021

Selectboard Meeting Dates of:

Already Approved: 6/1/2021, 6/15/2021 & 6/29/2021

VIII. Adjourn the Selectboard Meeting: Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM. Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

All Meetings of the Hartford Selectboard are open to the public. Persons who are seeking action by the Selectboard are asked to submit their request and/or materials to the Selectboard Chair or Town Manager's office no later than noon on the Wednesday preceding the scheduled meeting date. Requests received after that date will be addressed at the discretion of the Chair. Citizens wishing to address the board should do so during the Citizen Comments period.

Selectboard Signature Page.

Date: 6/1/2021

Date of Minutes: 5/18/2021

Minutes Approval Signature:  _____