

## Hardwick Electric Commission

### Regular Meeting

*Minutes – January 20, 2026*

**Attendees:** Commissioners: Michael Ambrosino, Chair, Renaud Demers, Roger Prevot, Jake Lester, Myles Kamisher-Koch; Staff: Scott Johnstone; Guests: Erik Remick, Selectboard Chair; Public: Stuart Arnold.

Chair Ambrosino called a Regular Meeting of the Hardwick Electric Commission to order at 6:00 pm at 20 Church Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor meeting room, in Hardwick having declared a quorum present.

There were no changes to the agenda offered.

The approval of minutes was next on the agenda. Commissioner Prevot moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on December 16th. Commissioner Ambrosino seconded the motion, and all voted favorably.

Public Comment: Mr. Arnold offered an update on progress in Greensboro in establishing a task force to explore the future operations of Caspian Dam. Commissioners noted that HED needs to meet and align with the Selectboard prior to any further action.

Next on the agenda was to have Commissioners sign an update current expense note. At the last meeting this loan was approved and signed. However, since the Selectboard did not then act, the dates on the document were incorrect, necessitating the re-signing of a new document.

The Budget for 2026 was next on the agenda. Mr. Johnstone noted that HED's previous Controller had this budget about 98% complete prior to her retirement. Only a couple changes were made. First, the updated VPPSA power supply budget was lowered significantly. This arose largely as a power supply contract they have in place for Hardwick recently became approved for renewable energy credits in Maine, thereby, creating a revenue to reduce the power supply budget. Secondly, the costs for the AMI project were fully included in the budget. VPPSA plans to carry the costs for AMI for two to three years, billing each utility a portion of their share for the project until all local costs have been paid. While it is not clear if it will be 2 or 3 years, it was clear this will occur. As such, the most conservation position was taken and the amount was reduced by half.

Mr. Johnstone noted that there was and is not too much in the capital budget. He recommended not changing this for 2026 since we are planning a "deficiency study" that will catalog both all of the issues with our system as well as help us to prioritize them.

Coupled with the technology road map adopted a year this will provide a solid foundation to then begin to lay out a capital improvement plan. Finally, with the transitions of both the manager and controller, Mr. Johnstone suggested this budget should be viewed as a starting point against which to measure progress. All agreed keeping an eye on and potentially amending the budget in the spring will be important.

Commissioner Prevot moved to approved the 2026 budget with the provision that a review of the budget be brought to the Commission at the end of the first quarter to determine if any modifications may be necessary. Second by provided by Commissioner Ambrosino and all voted affirmatively.

The Commissioner next took up a review of the financial report. Many thanks were expressed for Karen Field stepping in to get this report in order.

The General Managers report was the next item of business. Items within the report were discussed as were a few others including:

Mr. Johnstone noted that HED has been miscalculating net metering credits for many years, as many as seven. Plans are in place to correct this going forward as well as to recalculate past credits and make corrections.

The Wolcott Dam penstock repairs are estimated at \$6.8 million. FEMA seems comfortable with this number, though it is under review. If this is signed off on, HED should receive 95% of the funding as reimbursable funds. The risk is what could occur if the federal government provides us approval and then, mid-way through the project pull back on the funding.

The general manager noted that the engagement letter for this year's auditors has been signed.

Lastly, he noted there was recent testimony on the health of the municipal electric utilities in the legislature, which he participated in. Overall, the legislature seemed satisfied with what they heard, for now.

At 7:17 pm a motion was made by Commissioner Ambrosino to go into executive session under VSA 313 (a)(1) (E), (a)(2) and (a) (3) and to include the general manager in the executive session. Commissioner Lester seconded and all voted in the affirmative.

At 7:54 pm the Commission returned to open session.

At 7:54 pm a motion was made to adjourn the regular meeting by Commissioner Prevot. Seconded by Commissioner Demers and passed unanimously.

Recorded by:

Date



Feb 17, 2025

Commissioner

Date