

# THE Hardwick Gazette

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## Economic Development Position Considered

by Doug McClure

**HARDWICK**—At the December 19 select board meeting, a single proposed budget item generated almost three-quarters of an hour of discussion, a proposal to bring on a part-time Economic Development Coordinator at a cost of \$80,000.

The reality of the select board felt the request was a good idea, with select board member Lucius Avery dissenting.

One justification for a dedicated position is that Town Manager Shaun Pildner is taking on many tasks which are not in his "beat," according to Vice Chair Daniel Hyde. Chair Eric Benick said, "Shaun's done a great job with numerous economic development projects, but he's been running from the gate. I want to even in his job description."

Pildner said that while was not complaining, just on this day he had to table everything from his regular work for two hours to attend a Yellow Barn-state-of-the-town meeting.

"All the economic development that happens loads on the town manager," said board mem-

ber Stuart Cornish, "and it should not continue to be the duty of the town manager if we want to grow economic development in Hardwick."

Avery countered by saying "my concern is with the projects already happening (the Yellow Barn's) a pretty big project for our town. Places that boom, go bust. In some ways it's a good thing to have the town manager in charge, since it slows things down."

Cornish replied with "So we should just leave all the vacant storefronts?" Avery brought up the Carey Road property and said "We haven't discussed what we want to do as a town with this property. I personally don't think an industrial park there is a good idea, and others don't, either. Maybe filling one little storefront is what we can do." Benick responded that a lot of ideas had been discussed for the Carey Road property, with nothing decided on.

Avery said he grew up in Morrisville and he's decided to pollinate there should be, like town water to Cady's Field. That's good town water, and they've decided to pollinate. When you grow-grower there's a lot of decisions that aren't going to be the right decisions. We don't need to put the gas on.

See POSITION, 5

## Advisory Committee on Intersection Redesign Proposed

by Will Walters

**PLAINFIELD**—An advisory committee to gather information about the proposed Route 2 and Main Street intersection redesign will be considered for action at the Jan. 13 meeting, select board chair Alexander Thayer said at the Dec. 19 meeting.

The purpose of an advisory committee, suggested by residents Paula Emery, Ben Avery, David Strong and Road Commissioner Brian Twinn, is to gather information and hold hearings as the project moves forward so that

the select board does not have to do this directly. Thayer noted he's concerned about how things would be coordinated with the Agency of Transportation's (AOT) timeline, as well as the role of an advisory committee engineer. Eric Pildner of AOT is expected to be at the Jan. 13 meeting.

Strong said there are several people who are willing to serve on the committee and provided the board with a draft resolution creating the committee, detailing how the committee will work and when its report will be due.

See REDESIGN, 7



The traffic in downtown Hardwick is picking up as the holidays are just around the corner.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

## Precipitous Precipitation Proves Problematic in 2019

YEAR IN REVIEW  
by Tyler Molture

**HARDWICK**—In most iterations of the meteorological year to review, a variety of weather phenomena are readily discussed, including fluctuating and notable extremes. That is the nature of weather in New England, but this year proved to be different, as many parts of our coverage areas were left to contend with heavy amounts of rain and snow for an extended period of both the beginning and end of 2019.

The first snowfall of the year came shortly after the year commenced, dumping over a foot of snow across our region on January 9 and 10. That storm set the stage for an even larger one on January 20 and 21, which added an additional foot to foot-and-a-half of snow over the region. That snow event, breaking a snowfall record at the Burlington Airport. This snow fell in a span of less than 24 hours, and was accompanied by a period of strong winds and reduced visibility. Of note, a report from the National Weather Service later stated that the storm was the "coldest" snowfall in recent memory, as snow fell at below-zero tem-

peratures during the bulk of the event, with wind chills in the 20s below zero. The most significant impact from the storm was felt by Sanduskenburg travelers. Road crews noted the strong winds and freezing conditions made treatment of the roads challenging to impossible. Services at some churches were canceled or attended remotely.

Within days, a dramatic shift from heavy snow and extreme temperatures turned into a weak January thaw with rain, ice jams, and 40-degree temperatures. Hardwick avoided significant flooding this year, but minor flooding occurred along Wolcott Street as a result of short-duration event. The proactive removal of ice from the riverbed and bursts of moderate snow set the theme for February. As winter transitioned to spring, it didn't stop another heavy snow event from making substantial impacts. This time west and dense, nearly two feet of snow.

See WEATHER, 6

## Board Discusses Local Control of Cannabis

by Doug McClure

**HARDWICK**—The final select board meeting of 2019 lasted two-and-a-half hours as the town worked to close out the year. A major topic of discussion was the legislature's expected Taxed and Regulated Market for Marijuana, which some expect to be one of the first topics taken up in January. The discussion focused on how much local control will be granted over a future retail market for cannabis.

The Cannabis Resolution brought before the town came from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT). The VLCT expressed their intent to stress the importance of local control should any legislation be passed, which is not related to supporting a taxed and regulated market. The concerns the VLCT expressed were that as the draft, the town would be the regulation of cannabis ("SGL") is slated to be fully controlled by the State, with little-to-no revenue going to the towns. The proposed State bill did not allow a Local Option tax. In essence, the State is modeling the proposed legislation after the Department of Liquor Control (DLC). Hardwick Town has 802 Spirits stores in town because it is state-licensed and state-controlled, and its revenue stream is primarily go to the State. The VLCT wanted the select

board to make a motion that states that if a cannabis-related business were "voluntarily" within Hardwick's boundaries, the town should pay the lion's share of any tax revenues and have authority equal to the state's regulation and taxation.

"It's just making sure there's some way to have this process plays out," said Town Manager Shaun Pildner. Board member Elizabeth Dow pointed out that, as written, the letter does not mean Hardwick has to take action by agreeing to support local control. She noted that "I particularly like that this requires the state to give us some notice so we can prepare for a taxed-and-regulated market."

Manager Clark Cornish does not support a taxed-and-regulated market without significant provisions for low-socioeconomic status, to him, it seemed like the town would be working similarly to traffic tickets, where sometimes the state gets all the money and the town gets nothing. The motion carried unanimously. The board expressed a desire to hear from both Sen. Joe Benning (R-Hardwick) of Lyndon and Rep. Clay Delano (D-Hardwick) of Stannard about where the legislation stands.

Chief Padden had a request for a brief town for Town Meeting of \$275,000 to replace "one of our antiques." He described the five

See CANNABIS, 5

## Making Steady Progress on Economic Development Goals

YEAR IN REVIEW  
by Doug McClure

**HARDWICK**—2019 was a year that saw Hardwick make much progress in its economic development goals. Hardwick took a bold public servant to Supervisor Lisa Fournier in February, and the town will see a lot of work on the four sections of the VLCT in Hardwick. The VLCT will pass directly by the Yellow Barn, which the town believes will serve to benefit both the Yellow Barn and the VLCT, and Hardwick itself should see substantial benefits if the impact of the VLCT is anything like it has been in other towns.

The Act 46 report from the state Board of Education surprised everyone with a mandated additive number of Hardwick, and Hardwick itself should see substantial benefits if the impact of the VLCT is anything like it has been in other towns.

See HARDWICK, 5

## New Year Kicks Off with Hearing

by June Pichel Cook

**CRAFTSBURY**—The select board will kick off the new year with a hearing on the Craftsbury Town Fubaher Energy Plan, set for the first meeting on January 7, 2020. Although the plan was presented in April and accepted by the board, a public hearing on the plan has to be held before final adoption.

The Town Fubaher Energy Plan culminates several years of work by the Planning Commission under the leadership of Chair Fary Brown. It presents an analysis of resources, needs, costs, and problems in all energy sectors within the region. The plan also sets a policy statement on efficient use and conservation of energy, and on

the development and siting of renewable energy sources.

The energy plan provides an avenue for municipalities to have more input into siting of commercial energy generation, systems, as called for under the Act 174, which was passed in 2015.

Municipalities that have an energy plan approved by the Northeast Vermont Development Association (NVDA) and the state are given more influence in the siting of wind, solar and hydroelectric energy generating facilities within their boundaries. The statute calls for municipalities to show "due deference" giving towns more influence on siting decisions than was granted under the previous "due consideration."

The commission created a map outlining three areas with prime solar potential, areas with possible constraints, and areas of preferred solar sites. The map is available in the town offices.

The state plan in establishing municipal energy policies is to promote renewable energy development and energy generating facilities while limiting adverse impacts on the public health, safety, and welfare. Currently, the Public Utility Commission regulates such systems (energy generation, and

transmission), which are exempted from local lead-based regulations. Systems may include solar, wind, geothermal, geothermal, and geothermal.

See HEARING, 4

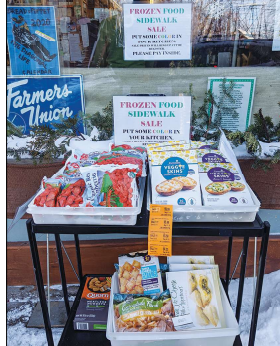


photo by Doug McClure

With temperatures hovering around a degree on December 12, the Blue Mountain Co-op in Hardwick, took the opportunity to host an outdoor frozen food sale.

## Reminder to Gazette Readers

The Gazette does not publish during the first week of January. Our first edition of the new year will be available on January 8, 2020. The staff and correspondents of The Gazette wish everyone all the best for the holiday season and a very Happy New Year.

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VERMONT GLASS  
OPEN STUDIO

## In Local, 3

UNITED CHURCH  
PAGANT

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## In Sports, 9

BLUE MOUNTAIN TOO  
MUCH FOR LADY TROJANS