

**TOWN OF MIDDLESEX
MINUTES FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MARCH 4, 2014**

The inhabitants of the Town of Middlesex, who are legal voters in the Town, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the RUMNEY MEMORIAL SCHOOL in said Town of Middlesex on Tuesday, March 4, 2014, 4:30 p.m. to act on the following business (Voting by Australian Ballot will be from 10:00 am to 7:00 p.m.)

Meeting convened at 4:35 pm

Susan Clark reviewed the Roberts Rules of Order.

2013 Select Board Chair Peter Hood honored outgoing Select Board Member Mary Hood Alexander for her 17 years of service on the Select Board and ten years on the School Board.

The civil invocation was read by U32 senior Corey Kline.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year. Greg Whitchurch moved to elect Susan Clark. Neely Washington seconded. The motion carried.

ARTICLE 2: To elect a Grand Juror and Town Agent for the ensuing year. Charlie Merriman moved to elect Larry Mandell. Jeff Koonz seconded. The motion carried.

ARTICLE 3: To elect all necessary officers for the ensuing year. (Voted by Australian ballot. Passed over.)

Town Clerk	1 year term
Treasurer	1 year term
Trustee of Public Funds	1 year term
Selectperson	3 year term
Selectperson	2 year term
Budget Committee Member	1 year of a 3-year term
Auditor	3 year term
Auditor	3 year term
Auditor	1 year term
Lister	3 year term
Delinquent Tax Collector	1 year term
Planning Commissioner	3 year term

ARTICLE 4: To receive and act upon the reports of the Town Officers. Anita Krauth moved to accept the reports. Jeff Koonz seconded. Michael Levine thanked Road Foreman Paul Cerminara for “keeping the town moving during difficult times” and asked Paul to elaborate on his five-year plan in the 2013 Town Report. Paul said his department tries to improve roads through a five-year rotation concentrating on the most troublesome issue – Mud Season. Last year, his crew improved a part of Center Road near Brook Road that had been problematic. He said next his crew hopes to focus on portions of East Hill Road. The motion carried.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote a discount of 1.5% on the net property taxes, exclusive of tax rebate, if the total annual tax is paid in full within 30 days of issuance of the tax bill. (32 VSA Sec. 4773) Jeff Koonz moved. Bill McManus seconded. The motion carried.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the voters authorize payment of real and personal property taxes to the Town Treasurer in two equal installments and the due dates being September 15th and February 15th, except if post marked by the US Postal Service on or before September 15th and February 15th? (32 VSA Sec. 4773). Jeff Koonz moved. Chris McVeigh seconded. Jeff inquired about which days of the week those dates fall on. Treasurer Cindy Carlson confirmed that since February 15, 2015, is a Sunday, taxes will be due on Monday, February 16. The motion carried.

- ARTICLE 7:** To see if the town will charge interest at the rate of .7% per month or fraction thereof on overdue tax installments from the due date of the tax. (32 VSA Sec. 5136) Bill McManus moved to approve. Lisa Carlson seconded. The motion passed.
- ARTICLE 8:** (This article was considered as a special order of business at 5: 15 PM)
- ARTICLE 9:** Shall the Town Voters authorize expenditures of \$1,000 to help support Central Vermont Adult Basic Education? (By petition.) Ron Krauth moved and Maribeth Domanski seconded. Larry Mandell, speaking on behalf of his wife, Marcie Andres who is involved with CVABE, said the program began as an adult literacy effort and has since expanded to serving students of all ages, including high schoolers despite very little government support. The motion carried.
- ARTICLE 10:** Shall the Town Voters authorize an expenditure of \$3,750 to help support Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice? (By petition.) Chris McVeigh moved and Ruth Dockter seconded. Mary Hood spoke on behalf of CVHHH and noted the request amount is the same as last year. Harry Domanski, speaking from home via a remote connection, said he has personally benefitted from CVHHH and urged the town to support it. The motion carried.
- ARTICLE 11:** Shall the Town Voters authorize expenditures of \$500 to help support The Family Center of Washington County? (By petition.) Dave Smith moved. Lisa Carlson seconded. Mary Hood Alexander, on behalf of Donna Russo, urged support. The motion carried.
- ARTICLE 12:** Shall the Town Voters authorize expenditures of \$1,500 to support Girls/Boyz First Mentoring? (By petition.) Sam Merriman moved. Elliot Burg seconded. Elliot, a former mentor, said Girls/Boyz First Mentoring specifically helps children who are at risk from single-parent families. This year the group lost its funding. Susan Clark noted a correction in Community Connections's annual report that erroneously stated Girls/Boyz was part of Community Connections. That is no longer true. Lynne Walther, a mentor, stood with her mentee, Derek Campbell, and attested to the benefits of the organization not only for Derek – whom she has mentored from second grade to U32 – but for her, too. Linda Jackson, a former mentor for eight years, spoke in support. The motion carried.
- ARTICLE 13:** Shall the Town of Middlesex appropriate the sum of \$26,800 for the support of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library? (By Petition) Eric Benedict moved. Martha Harris seconded. Michael Katzenberg, a member of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library Board, said the good news was that the library's request was the same as last year. He said it is the second largest and second busiest library in the state and that a library card provides discounts to other activities such as state parks and museums. Greg Whitchurch, referring to a handout that had been distributed detailing the financial effect on property taxes for each special article, noted that approving Kellogg-Hubbard Library's request would add approximately \$27 to the tax bill of a \$200,000 home. The motion carried.
- ARTICLE 8:** To vote a budget to meet the expenses and liabilities of the Town and authorize the Select Board to set a tax rate sufficient to provide the same. (THIS ARTICLE WILL BE CONSIDERED AS A SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS AT 5:15 PM) Chris McVeigh moved. Jeff Koonz seconded. Peter Hood noted that the increase in the town budget was only .86% over the previous year and that the Select Board worked very hard to level fund it. Dave Shepard inquired about the increased payments to the Washington County Sheriff's Department. He wanted to know if that was due to a rise in fees or more patrolling. Peter said that speeding – along with mud and dogs – is one of the top complaints made to the Select Board. Therefore, the increase is intended to ramp up enforcement of local speeding ordinances. Gordon Grunder asked if that kind of work could be performed by a town constable. Peter said due to a change in state statutes which required even part-time constables to have all the training of police, the town no longer had one. The motion carried, thereby approving a FY2015 budget (before special articles) of \$1,024,306.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$3,400 to the Montpelier Senior Activity Center to be used for operating expenses within the fiscal year July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015? (By petition.) Barbara Buckley moved. Jeff Koonz seconded. Speaking on behalf of the Montpelier Senior Center, Barbara said that while the request is a slight increase from 2013, this is because the Montpelier city government would like to see more contributions from surrounding towns. She and Lynne Walther, who also spoke in support, listed the numerous activities the senior center provided, many of which are listed in the 2013 Town Report. The motion carried.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town voters authorize an expenditure in the amount of \$1,000 to help support the services provided by Friends of the North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier? (By petition.) Ron Krauth moved. Lisa Carlson seconded. Anita Krauth urged support, noting that the executive directors of North Branch Nature Center, Chip Darmstadt, was a Middlesex resident. The motion passed.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of \$75 to support (RSVP) The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program? (By petition.) Mary Just Skinner moved. Anita Krauth seconded. Mary Skinner spoke in support and urged those over age 50 to considering volunteering their time and expertise to RSVP. The motion passed.

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of \$3,000 to support student and community participation in Middlesex Community Connections programs? (By petition.) Eric Benedict moved and Jane Dudley seconded. Emily Smith said she had heard that U32 was eliminating Community Connections and she wondered if the program would continue to exist at Rumney. Adrienne Magida, chair of the U32 School Board, confirmed that funding for Community Connections was cut at the high-school level because the plan was to bring the program in house. Julie Moore, chair of the Middlesex School Board, said Rumney will continue to use the program. Michael Levine said he was supportive of Community Connections but questioned why there wasn't more coordination between the elementary and high school regarding CC's future. Mary Jo Lamell, who identified herself as employee of Community Connections, said she had been told the program might not continue next year because federal funding had dried up. She touted its advantages, especially for working parents who need safe, quality care for their children before and after school and during school vacations. Kimberly Jessup said Community Connections makes use of school facilities when they would otherwise be vacant. The motion carried.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town of Middlesex will appropriate a sum not to exceed \$3411 to support the following organizations:

American Red Cross	\$250.00
CV Community Action	\$249.00
CV Council on Aging	\$250.00
CV Economic Development Corp	\$250.00
Circle (Battered Women)	\$199.00
GMTA	\$199.00
Green-Up Vermont	\$100.00
Home Share Now	\$250.00
Peoples Health & Wellness	\$200.00
Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$245.00
Vt. Assoc. for the Blind	\$249.00
Vt. Cares	\$250.00
Vt. Center for Independent Living	\$195.00

Vt. Rural Fire Protection Task Force	\$100.00
Washington County Diversion	\$250.00
Washington County Youth Services	\$175.00
Total	\$3411.00

Jeff Koonz moved. Eric Benedict seconded. Sue Bettman asked what the Rural Fire Protection Task Force's Dry Hydrant Program did. Jeff said accessing water is always a challenge for Middlesex Fire Fighters so this program paid for two dry hydrants to be installed on East Hill and McCullough Hill roads. He strongly supported it. The motion passed.

ARTICLE 19: Shall the Town voters appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to the Middlesex Conservation Fund? (By Select Board) Mary Just Skinner moved. Chris McVeigh seconded. Mary ceded the floor to Conservation Commission Chair Dave Shepard after noting that the Select Board placed this article on the ballot. Dave said the fund began in 2004 with the first \$5,000 appropriate and, after acquiring the Town Forest, has about \$12,454 left. Right now, the Commission is trying to pinpoint all the boundary lines and hope to coordinate with an adjoining landowner for timber management. The motion passed.

ARTICLE 20: Shall the Town of Middlesex approve the following resolution to protect our children's privacy and control over their own personal information? (By Petition)

WHEREAS:

1. especially in the digital age, a child's personal information cannot easily be retracted once shared or seized; and
2. existing law and school policy provide that individual student information belongs primarily to each student and his/her parents or guardian; and
3. without consent or strict legal requirement, transferring student records outside the school offensively mocks and effectively denies students' ownership and privacy interest in their own information; and
4. protecting our students' ownership and privacy interests in their own records is a solemn public trust that cannot credibly or effectively be fulfilled without direct, exclusive physical control of those records; and
5. our school officials have publicly stated that local management of student data is technically feasible without significant cost or operational disruption; and
6. widely-reported data theft, information sharing, cyber-attacks, and warrantless data collection threaten the security of our student records, especially when pooled with millions of others;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Town strongly urges the Middlesex and U-32 school boards to adopt firm policies requiring that all information about individual students be stored only on local school or district premises and not be shared outside school or district staff except:

1. by specific vote of the local board for each release, or
2. to the least degree strictly necessary to comply with law, or
3. with the prior written consent of the student/parent/guardian.

Bennett Shapiro moved. Dave Shepard seconded. Randy Brown, a science teacher at U32, said that if approved, the article would place an unnecessary burden on the schools and students. He said student data was secure and encrypted and that if this article went into effect, it could potentially jeopardize students' ability to access online courses. Chuck Davin, who circulated the article in the U32 District, requested permission to speak since he is from Calais. He was permitted by a vote of 92-12. Chuck said he was a father of two U32 students and that he was not part of any large corporation. He was motivated to draft the article because the school's data system stores a lot of information about students on a server in Minnesota. He said he's been trying to get U32 to adopt a policy that would insure student data was stored locally, separate from the 6.5 million other student records stored in Minnesota. He said that would reduce the chances a cyber-attack on U32 students.

Lauri Scharf said it sounded to him as though Chuck's main concern was the Infinite Campus software which allows parents to check their students' grades in real time. He said a lot more legwork would be needed to retain this software in house. He was opposed. Lisa Parrish, who said she works for a company that develops software for colleges, agreed that storing data in house was costly and labor intensive. She spoke against it. George Longenecker said he uses an online grading system for Vermont state colleges and that he was concerned because Chuck would not respond to his emails about who was paying for his website and mailings. He was concerned about a lack of transparency.

Katie Farber, a teacher at Rumney, agreed that it was an important issue but felt the language of the article was inflammatory and worried about limits it might place on educational activities as well as increased administrative costs. Mary Jo Lamell said that as an information technology specialist at IBM, it was her opinion that the data was safer in Minnesota.

At the request for comment from Michael Levine, U32 School Board Chair Adrienne Magida said that Chuck had attended every one of their meetings for the past 18 months, always speaking on the issue for five minutes or more at each. She said the Board continues to monitor the situation and is very concerned about the privacy and security of student data.

Martin Pincus was confused on what the article wanted. Susan Clark explained.

Charlie Merriman proposed rewording the Article 20 to the following:

Shall the Town of Middlesex approve the following resolution regarding our children's privacy and control over their own personal information? (By petition.)

WHEREAS:

1. *especially in the digital age, a child's personal information cannot easily be retracted once shared or seized; and*
2. *existing law and school policy provide that individual student information belongs primarily to each student and his/her parents or guardian;*

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the town urges the Middlesex and U32 school board to continue work on addressing the storage of information about individual students.

Paul Zabriskie said the town shouldn't try to draft a new policy with a committee of 200. This was not the proper forum for vetting this solution. Jeff Koonz said a bigger threat to students' privacy was Facebook. He encouraged everyone to vote down Article 20 without the amendment. Bennett called the question on the amendment. A vote was called on whether to call the question and the motion passed. The amendment failed.

Tim Hayward moved that the article be tabled. Anita Krauth seconded. Susan restated the motion as a motion to "postpone indefinitely." Chris McVeigh wondered if the article would automatically appear on the 2015 Town Warning if it was passed over that this meeting. Susan Clark and Peter Hood said no. It could only appear again if it were re-petitioned. Chuck Davin asked to speak again and was denied by a voice vote. The motion passed and Article 20 was passed over.

ARTICLE 21: To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Mary Just Skinner noted that Middlesex Fire Chief Doug Hanson, a Montpelier resident, was at the meeting if anyone wanted to discuss fire business. Also, she congratulated the Middlesex "Team Floodtastic" Robotics team for winning first place in the FIRST Lego League Robotics Tournament.

Don Dockter asked if \$200 could be awarded to the Montpelier Veterans Council which the town has historically funded. This year his organization didn't submit a request by the January deadline. Susan Clark explained that towns are not allowed to take binding action under the "Other Business" portion of the meeting. Peter Hood, a veteran himself, said he was very much in favor of the organization. However,

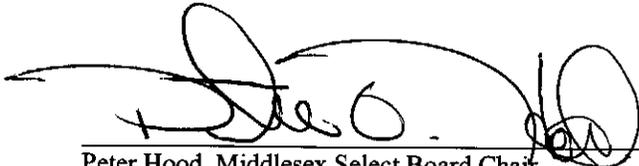
that request needed to be submitted as an amendment to Article 18. Janet McKinstry of the Cemetery Commission said her group might help the Montpelier Veterans since part of the Cemetery Commission's duties include marking graves, some as far back as the Civil War. Charlie Merriman asked for a straw poll in favor of supporting the Montpelier Veterans as an advisory measure for the Select Board. By a large majority, the voters gave their approval of the MVC.

Richard Miller asked if a policy could be created requiring the Listers to provide notifications for site inspections during the spring assessment season since he was surprised one Sunday morning to find two Listers on his lawn. In response to a question by Chris McVeigh, Charlie Merriman, as a former assistant attorney general for the Vermont Tax Department, said by law the Listers are their own elected entity and the Select Board has no control over them. However, he suggested Richard send a letter to the Listers and that the Lister draft a rational policy for visiting. Mary Just Skinner said the Listers might want to consider doing something since this has been an ongoing concern.

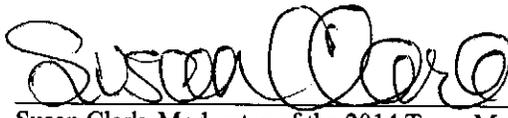
Susan Clark noted it was a Town meeting of two firsts and as second. It was the first time Corey Kline and Sam Merriman voted and, as far as she knew, Harry Domanski was the first in Vermont to speak at Town Meeting via remote town meeting participation technology. This meeting marked the second time he had done so. She said Middlesex is the only town in Vermont to use this remote technology for a town meeting.

Town Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Approved by the following:

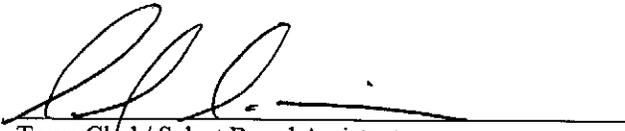

Peter Hood, Middlesex Select Board Chair

3/11/14
Date


Susan Clark, Moderator of the 2014 Town Meeting

3-11-14
Date

I so attest that the above approved minutes have been recorded in the Middlesex Town Records:


Town Clerk/ Select Board Assistant

3-12-14
Date