TOWN OF MIDDLESEX
MINUTES OF MARCH 3, 2015
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Meeting convenes at 4:35 p.m. Don Dockter and Jeff Koonz present the colors. Brian Tagliaferro urges residents to attend the all-you-can eat pie breakfast March 21, 2015, to benefit the PTO and the Middlesex Bandstand series. Sarah Seidman of the Middlesex Historical Society encourages residents to join for $1 and notes that the historic train station in Middlesex Village will turn 100 in 2018. It will be demolished by the railroad if it is not removed and preserved before that.
Vermont State Representative Tony Klein laments inaction in the state legislature and answers questions about mandatory vaccines and possible school consolidation.

CALL TO ORDER: 4:50 p.m. 2014 Moderator Susan Clark reviews Roberts Rules of Order. Civil invocation at 4:55 p.m.by Dan Krezinski.

ARTICLE 1: To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year. Chip Darmstadt nominates Susan Clark. John Dick seconds. The motion passes. Susan Clark is elected Moderator for the 2015 Town Meeting

ARTICLE 2: To elect a Grand Juror and Town Agent for the ensuing year. Tim Hayward nominates Larry Mandell. Anita Krauth seconds. The motion passes. Larry Mandell is elected Grand Juror and Town Agent.

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

Town Clerk	1-year term
Treasurer	1-year term
Trustee of Public Funds	1-year term
Delinquent Tax Collector	1-year term
Select Board	3-year term
Select Board	2-year term
Auditor	3-year term
Auditor	1-year term
Budget Committee	3-year term
Budget Committee	3-year term
Budget Committee	3-year term
Cemetery Commission	3-year term
Lister	3-year term
Planning Commission	3-year term
Planning Commission	3-year term

ARTICLE 4: To receive and act upon the reports of the Town Officers. Jeff Koonz moves; Ron Krauth seconds. Michael Levine suggests the budget figures in the report be rounded off in order to be easier to compare. Also, he wants to know where the mud mitigation, as indicated in the Town Highway report, will occur. Highway Foreman Paul Cerminara says the road crew will work on two sections of Center Road, one below Zdon Road and the other in the dip before the hill leading up to the Middlesex Center Cemetery. They will also try to smooth Molly Supple Hill Road. Select Board Member Liz Scharf asks if the school has been notified that Shady Rill Road will be closed for the summer due to resurfacing; Paul says they've been apprised. The article passes.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote a discount of 1% 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) John Dick moves; Jeff Koonz seconds. Gordon Grunder asks how much the discount costs the town. Select Board Chair Peter Hood says about $20,000 total and that the Select Board put this item on the Warning because interest rates had plummeted. When interest rates were high and the town had to borrow money at the beginning of the fiscal year, the town offered a 2% discount rate as incentive.Then it was lowered to 1.5% and now a proposed 1%. The motion passes.

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). Laura Lyle moves; Mary Ann Johnson seconds. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will charge interest at the rate of .5% per month or fraction thereof on overdue tax installments from the due date of the tax. (32 VSA Sec. 5136) Jeff Koonz moves; Anita Krauth seconds. Peter Hood notes that the town has historically charged 1% per month and that was reduced to .7% per month to reflect lower interest rates. The .5% interest proposal follows the same reasoning. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 9: (This article was considered at 5:10 p.m.) Shall the Town voters appropriate the sum of $5,000 to the Middlesex Conservation Fund? (By Select Board) Janette Shaffer moves; Michael Katzenberg seconds. Sarah Seidman asks how much is in the Conservation Fund right now. Dave Shepard, chair of the Conservation Commission, says over $17,000 – about as much as the commission had when it purchased the town forest. Gordon Grunder asks if there are current projects in the works. Dave says nothing in the pipeline. Mike Levine asks for a clarification in that there are ongoing projects for which the money could be used. Dave says the fund could be used to acquire more land or land management. The motion passes.

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 CONSIDERED AS A SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS AT 5:15 PM) Eric Benedict moves; William McManis seconds. Susan notes that the budget is $1,052,974 for fiscal year 2016. Peter says the budget represents a 2.16% increase over the previous year and attributes that to a change in benefits among town employees. Most of the budget goes to the highway department.
Sarah Seidman asks about the mowing budget. Peter says the town will start mowing twice a year, spring and late summer, to prevent dispersal of invasive species. She also asks about the 216% increase in the office salary staff. Ron Krauth explains that the percentage is confusing since, according to the his budget template, level funding would be shown as a 100% increase.

Treasurer Cindy Carlson says the line item is also misleading because all office staff including town clerk, assistant clerk, treasurer and zoning administrator have been combined into one.
Ruth Dockter asks which budget is correct: the $1,024,036 in the Budget Committtee Report or the $1,052,974 in the proposed budget. Peter says it's the latter. Eric Benedict praises the road crew. Julie Moore asks if there will be a reduction in PILOT payments to the town. Peter says the state has not informed Middlesex of any changes. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of $1,000 to help support Central Vermont Adult Basic Education? (By Petition) Linda Prescott moved to accept; Sarah Braun-Hamilton seconds. Marcie Andres notes that for years she worked at CVABE and provided an extremely valuable service for many Middlesex residents. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of $500.00 to help support the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation? (By Petition.) Ron Krauth moves; Jeff Koonz seconds. Peter Hood says he serves on the board as has fellow Select Board Member Mary Just Skinner in the past. Central Vermont needs jobs and this organization helps facilitate that. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of $3,750 to help support Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice? (By Petition) John Dick moves; Doug French seconds. Mary Hood notes her support for the organization. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of $3,000 to help support Community Connections? (By Petition) Wendy Freundlich moves; Jane Dudley seconds. Scott Harvey asks what it is. Wendy says it provides before and after-school child care. Liz Scharf says her kids have used it not for child care but for high-quality programs. Marcie Andres says it's a great program for rural children because then they have other kids to play with. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of $500 to help support The Family Center of Washington County? (By Petition) Mary Hood moves; Paul Zabriskie seconds. Liz Scharf voices support. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of $1,500 to support Girls/Boyz First Mentoring? (By Petition) Laura Lyle moves; Sarah Knauss seconds. Wendy Freundlich, the program director, explains the mentoring program, one of whom is Selma Hadzic of Middlesex. Selma says the program gave her a "big sister," and changed her outlook on life and increased her happiness to great applause. Lynn Walther corrects the 2014 Town Report. There were ten mentees, not mentors. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of $27,760 to help support the Kellogg-Hubbard Library? (By Petition) Linda Prescott moves; John Puleio seconds. Jeff Koonz asks why there's a 5% increase in this year's request. Michael Katzenberg, a library trustee, says the cost of everything goes up. Besides, this is the first increase in four or five years so there's some cacthing up to do. Mary Hood, a retired librarian, speaks in favor. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of $3400 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 moves, Ruth Dockter seconds. Lynn Walther speaks in support. Lisa Carlson questions the wording of the article since the fiscal year is almost done. Janna Clair, director of the senior center, says it's a typo. The article should read within the fiscal year July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016. John John Dick moves an amendment to correct the dates; Eric Benedict seconds. The motion passes and the article is amended to July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 18: Shall the Town voters authorize an expenditure in the amount of $1,000 to help support the services provided by the Friends of the North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier? (By Petition.) Anita Krauth moves, Lisa Carlson seconds. Anita asks that Chip Darmstadt speak since he directs the North Branch Nature Center. Chip lists its programs and services. John Puleio asks if surrounding towns participate in funding the center. Chip says Montpelier and East Montpelier. The motion passes.

ARTICLE 19: Shall the Town voters authorize an expenditure in the amount of $10,000 to help support the Waterbury Area Senior Center? Mary Hood moves; Lauri Scharf seconds. Linda Prescott asks what services are provided. The voters permit Karol Smith, director of the center, to speak. She says the main focus of her program is Meals on Wheels which serves meals to an average of 30 to 45 residents in Middlesex. The program asks for donations of $4 for each meal from its recipients. The focus is on keeping senior citizens fed at home instead of malnourished and in the hospital. Ruth Dockter asks how many members are from Middlesex. Karol says there are no members; the center counts by meal.
Karol says federal funding makes up one-third of the center's budget. Mary Hood, who used to volunteer for the program, asks how many deliverers are volunteers. Karol says they are all volunteers. Mary asks why Duxbury and Moretown contribute $5,000/year even though their populations are similar to Middlesex. Karol says because more residents in Middlesex avail themselves of Meals on Wheels and the volunteers have to travel further. Eric Benedict asks if mileage is reimbursed. Karol says yes, but that fewer than half of the volunteers seek reimbursement.
Michael Katzenberg says it's a wonderful program that deserves the town's support. Janet Andrews notes that since Meals on Wheels is federally funded, by law it cannot charge per meal. She says the cost per meal needs to come down and asks why the town would donate $10,000 to the Waterbury Senior Center when it approved only $3,400 to the Montpelier Senior Center. Ruth Dockter asks the cost of each meal. Karol says each meal costs $7.50. Of that, $3.50 is paid for by the federal government. The rest must come from donations. Shawn Fielder asks for a count of meals served to Middlesex residents. Karol says she doesn't have that figure with her.
Sarah Seidman moves to amend the article to reduce the expenditure to the same as what was just approved for the Montpelier Senior Center - $3,400. Janet Andrew seconds. Lisa Carlson notes that keeping senior citizens out of the hospital has many benefits, including savings for taxpayers. She says it's not unreasonable to pay more than other towns because Middlesex is farther away than Duxbury and Moretown. Kathy Shapiro notes that the Montpelier Senior Center provides different services and has a broader base of support. It might be an unfair comparison.
Randy Brown asks how the center settled on a request of $10,000. Karol says that's what the town has approved in the past. John Dick disagrees with the motion to reduce funding. One is a center that offers exercise classes; the other provides Meals on Wheels.
Linda Prescott says she sees a disparity in what Middlesex is paying vs. other communities. Whether or not that's the case, she feels as if the town goes through this argument every year because voters are not given the statistics they need to make an informed decision. She is quite tired of the WASC asking for more money without clear, concise statistics. Myron Dorfman

speaks in support of the center. Mary Hood questions whether recipients could pay more. Karol says the average donation is $1.29 instead of the suggested $4. Janette Shaffer agrees that the town wrangles with these same questions year after year. Charlie Merriman asks what the $10,000 request would cost each taxpayer using a per penny tax rate formula. Peter calculates $11 for a $200,000 property. Liz Scharf notes that no one in the room is against Meals on Wheels. She is happy to give $11. But the $10,000 request feels arbitrary and she wants the center to return next year with real numbers. Tim Kasten calls the question to great applause. The amendment fails.
Lynn Walther moves to amend the request to $5,000. Mary Ann Johnson seconds. Shawn Fielder asks what would be the impact on the center of $5,000 vs. $10,000 and notes he raised the same issues two years ago and, yet, the center failed to return with better statistics. Karol says last year the center received nothing from Middlesex because they couldn't get 75 signatures on a petition. Meals were reduced, though the center is under contract with the state to deliver a certain number of meals each year. Dave Magida expresses frustration with the lack of statistics. Greg Whitchurch says it doesn't matter what Duxbury or Moretown pay because the town doesn't have the stats to know if their appropriations are justified, either. Andy Leader notes the town gave $5,000 to the Conservation Fund without any discussion. Dave Shepard asks if the data the voters want is even something the center can produce. Karol says she has lots of data – but what does the town want? Jane Dudley says this is the cost of living in a rural community. The amendment fails. The original article stands and is approved by a voice vote.

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town of Middlesex will appropriate a sum not to exceed $4,160 to support the following organizations:

American Red Cross	$250.00
Capstone Community Action	$249.00
CV Council on Aging	$250.00
The Children's Room	$200.00
Circle	$199.00
Good Beginnings of Central VT	$249.00
GMTA	$249.00
Green-Up Vermont	$100.00
Home Share Now	$250.00
Montpelier Vermont Veterans Council	$250.00
People's Health & Wellness	$200.00
RSVP	$250.00
Sexual Assault Crisis Team	$245.00
Vt. Assoc. for the Blind	$249.00
Vermont 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

Linda Prescott moves; Joe Loga seconds, The motion passes

ARTICLE 21: To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting. John Puleio notes this summer marks the tenth anniversary of the Middlesex Bandstand Concert Series and says there will be a barbeque and extra festivities planned.

Town Meeting adjourns at 6:50 p.m.

Approved by the following:

Peter O. Hood, Middlesex Select Board Chair — Date 3/5/15

Susan Clark, Moderator of the 2015 Town Meeting — Date 3-5-15

I so attest that the above approved minutes were recorded in the Middlesex Town Records on March ___, 2015.

Sarah Merriman, Town Clerk/Select Board Assistant — Date 3/5/15