

**TOWN OF MIDDLESEX
WARNING FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MARCH 5, 2019**

Announcements. Susan Clark asks for a moment of silence in honor of Middlesex residents who have died in the past year. Vermont State Rep. Kim Jessup provides update about legislative action. Susan Clark reads Roberts Rules of Order. Lucy Wood, a senior at U32 High School, delivers the civil convocation. Susan Clark calls the meeting to order at 4:50 PM.

ARTICLE 1: *To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year.* Jeff Koonz nominates Susan Clark; Anita Krauth seconds. The article passes.

ARTICLE 2: *To elect a Grand Juror and Town Agent for the ensuing year.* Kyle Landis-Marinello nominates Todd Daloz; Mary Just Skinner seconds. The article passes.

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

Treasurer	1-year term	Dorinda Crowell
Trustee of Public Funds	1-year term	Vacant
Collector of Delinquent Taxes	1-year term	Dorinda Crowell
Select Board	3-year term	Mary Just Skinner
Select Board	2-year term	Steven K. Martin
Budget Committee	3-year term	Elias K. Gardner
Budget Committee	3-year term	Vacant
Budget Committee	3-year term	Vacant
Cemetery Commissioner	3-year term	Evelyn Gant
Lister	3-year term	Eric A. Young
Planning Commissioner	1 year of a 3-year term	Theo Kennedy
Planning Commissioner	2 years of a 3-year term	Sandra Levine
Planning Commissioner	3-year term	Richard Alderman
Planning Commissioner	3-year term	Elias K. Gardner

ARTICLE 4: *To receive and act upon the reports of the Town Officers.* Jeff Koonz moves to accept; Anita Krauth seconds. Lee Rosberg, Chair of Conservation commission, reports that upon the MCC's request, the Select Board last year designated \$10,000 to support the Trust for Public Land's purchase of 800 acres in Middlesex and another 1,000 in Worcester near and around Mount Hunger. Upcoming projects include work at Shady Rill Park, rectifying the gully across from Rumney School that is threatening the school's septic system and working on a trail in the town forest. Select Board Member Liz Scharf, of the What's Next Middlesex? Spaces and Activities Committee, says a hike is scheduled for the beaver pond in the town forest. Mark Bushnell, of the What's Next Middlesex? Communications Team, discusses a possible online calendar. Theo Kennedy of the What's Next Middlesex? Economic Development Group and who is also on the Planning Commission updates about progress on the Town Plan and says there is a tight timeline. Janet McKinstry of the Middlesex Cemetery Commission explains the commission emailed its 2018 report to the Town but the Town didn't receive it. Therefore, there are handouts of the MCC's report on the chairs. Liz says the Middlesex Food Shelf is open from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. every Saturday morning. Select Board Member and CVI Rep. Phil Hyjek discusses the Central Vermont Internet Board, thanking State Rep. Kim Jessup for her support, and noting that the biggest obstacle is funding for the planning phase. CVI will need to raise \$12,500 to meet the Vermont Innovation Grants' match requirements. CVI is in discussions with the Washington Electric Coop to use their poles on which to wire broadband. Bill Hahn asks for an estimate on how much of town has broadband. Is there a map? Phil says there is and there's a link on CVI's website. The article passes by voice vote.

Because it is 5:19 p.m., Susan says the meeting will now skip to Article 7, the Town Budget.

ARTICLE 7: *To vote a budget of \$1,187,891 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)* Jeff Koonz moves, Steve Melamed seconds. Select Board Chair Peter Hood refers voters to page 16 in the 2018 Town Report, the Select Board's proposed budget explanation. Sarah Seidman asks why the Board appropriated \$40,000 from the Town's fund balance to reduce the budget and then appropriated \$10,000 to the building fund. What are the building issues? Peter says the Town's auditor has been pushing the Board to lower its fund balance. In the old days, we needed a fund balance because the fiscal year started January 1st and no tax money came in until the summer. Now, the budget is approved in March and taxes are collected almost immediately. That has nothing to do with putting \$10,000 in Town buildings, he says. Almost all the Town buildings need renovations and repair. This year we have an opportunity to contribute to the building fund due to short-term reduction of debt service. There is a vault problem in the Town Clerk's Office. Sarah Seidman asks if we're ever going to take a comprehensive look at the Town's needs for buildings. Peter says What's Next Middlesex? has been considering issues such as does it make more sense to renovate the Town Hall or build a new office. Amy Whitehorne says What's Next Middlesex? is not an official Town committee. Back to the Select Board - what are you doing in your positions? Peter says the Board looks at the building issues every year. It's an ongoing process. We are still paying for the new fire department now. Amy says, look at Town Hall and its American with Disabilities Act's accessibility, or lack thereof. The elevator was out of service on Election Day. Things like that are of big importance. She agrees with Sarah Seidman, why don't we look at taking the money in the fund balance and using it proactively? Peter says the Board can do that if that is the will of the town. As for the elevator, it's not really an elevator, but a lift and it'll cost at least \$25,000 to repair. The Town vault is at maximum capacity. That's what we're trying to work on and figure out. If we create a new town office, where would it be? Near Rumney school? Mark Bushnell asks about using Rumney as a shelter. Liz Scharf says after discussions with the Red Cross and based on their guidelines, the school would be a place where people can come in emergencies because there are a generator, kitchen, bathrooms and showers. However, it is a place where you'd bring your own sleeping bags and people would come here only if school was not in session and they couldn't make it to the current shelter in Barre. School Board Chair Chris McVeigh says the Rumney School Board is working out an agreement to use the school as an emergency shelter and if there were an emergency, school wouldn't be in session anyway. Jeff Koonz talks about Middlesex shelters. Jesse Barth asks about improvements to West Hill which was slated for repair and, yet, was not repaired. Select Board Member Steve Martin, the Road Commissioner, explains that West Hill was on the maintenance schedule, but the

schedule was thrown out of whack with other projects. The Highway Department is trying to get back on those road projects. A voice vote is taken and the article passes.

ARTICLE 5: *Shall the Town voters authorize payment of all property taxes to the Town Treasurer, as provided by law and without discount, in four installments as follows: the first installment will be due on or before 4:30 PM, August 20, 2019; the second installment will be due on or before 4:30 PM, November 20, 2019; the third installment will be due on or before 4:30 PM, February 20, 2020, and the fourth installment will be due on or before 4:30 PM, May 20, 2020, except if post marked by the US Postal Service on or before the aforementioned dates accordingly? (32 VSA Sec. 4773)* Chris McVeigh moves, Eric Benedict seconds. Peter Hood explains that from discussions with taxpayers, the Board has heard from people who wish the Town offered quarterly installments so the Board put it out there see how people feel about quarterlies. Bennett Shapiro says it's a great idea. If you want to pay in two installments, still can. Michael Levine asks if this will result in extra costs for the Town. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell says there is no additional cost. David Lawrence has questions about the payment schedule. Dorinda explains about the four bills. You will be charged .5% interest per month on the unpaid portions. Sarah Merriman wonders if the article should be amended to specify that any unpaid balance by May 21 will be delinquent. Several agree that is unnecessary since it's in the state statutes. Susan Sussman asks for clarification on payment periods. Dorinda explains. A voice vote is taken and the articles passes.

ARTICLE 6: *To see if the Town will charge interest at the rate of .5% per month or fraction thereof on overdue tax installments from the applicable due dates. (32 VSA Sec. 5136)* Eric Benedict moves; Julie Moore seconds. Select Board Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner asks what is the previous interest rate we're lowering it from. Dorinda Crowell says none since it is the same as last year. Greg Whitchurch asks if the half percent would be added to the 8%. Chris McVeigh asks for clarification. Peter and Dorinda clarify that the half percent is compounded monthly on the unpaid base amount. Jane Dudley asks if the 8% is a one-time charge or annual fee. Peter says one time. A voice vote is taken and the article passes.

ARTICLE 8: *Shall the Town eliminate the position of Trustee of Public Funds, effective March 3, 2020? (17 VSA 2646(11))* Jeff Koonz moves; Dave Smith seconds. Evelyn Gant of the Middlesex Cemetery Commission delivers a speech outlining the Cemetery Commission's role as a body of elected officials who oversees the Town's three cemeteries: Village and Carr, which are closed, and North Branch, which is active. Evelyn says the Commission was created to take place of the Select Board in overseeing the cemeteries. She states that while the Commission was tasked with overseeing maintenance of North Branch, last year the cemetery commissioners' names were "stripped" from administering the Edward Jones fund that had been attached to the North Branch cemetery back when a private group deeded it to the Town in 2004. Instead, the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer Helen Weed's were added. The matter's over, but that was wrong, she says. Evelyn says the fund was not an endowment, but a donation and, therefore, the Cemetery Commission should be administering the fund because they are the overseers, not the Treasurer. Peter Hood says the Town sought legal advice on this matter and the legal opinion was that administering this fund was the responsibility of the Treasurer because that account is town money held in a trust. As for the Trustee of Public Funds, the law says we should have three Trustees of Public Funds. We've had only one. This motion does not change anything with the Cemetery Commission, but just eliminates this one position. Marcia Sibley asks how much is in the fund. Peter says about \$118,000. Chris McVeigh asks what happened that the Select Board had to seek a legal opinion. Peter says \$6,900 approved by the voters was allotted to cemetery maintenance, but it was just for Carr and Village. North Branch was to pay for itself. Janet McKinstry of the MCC says it's true there is money for Carr and Village for maintenance only. North Branch is not in the town budget. The problem arose in 2018 when former Treasurer Cindy Carlson's name was taken off the Edward Jones account as signer for no reason and Dorinda Crowell's was put on – without the MCC members' names added, Janet says. Town Clerk Sarah Merriman says that in the course of researching this issue, she was tasked with finding out when the Town went from three Trustees of Public Funds to one and found Middlesex had had only one when the position was created in 1933. That's all this article is about. Chris McVeigh says then maybe the Town should be adding two more Trustees instead of eliminating the one. Also, his question about why the Select Board sought a legal opinion wasn't addressed. Peter said the Town sought a legal opinion because there was a disagreement of how the funds should be dispersed. Also, it's a redundant system. There are now a lot of checks and balances including a professional CPA who audits the books. The Trustee of Public Funds is an unnecessary position. Since the Town had been in noncompliance all these years with one Trustee of Public Funds, the Select Board's recommendation was to do away with the position, as a lot of towns have done. David Magida calls the question. Michael Legendre seconds. Debate is ended. The article passes by voice vote and the Trustee of Public Funds is eliminated.

ARTICLE 9: *Shall the Town voters appropriate the sum of \$5,000 to the Middlesex Conservation Fund? (By Select Board)* Susan Sussman moves and John Puleio seconds. The article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10: *Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of \$600 for the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation? (By Petition)* Alison Cornwall moves; Jeff Koonz seconds. Peter speaks in favor notes the request is the same amount as last year. The article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11: *Shall the voters authorize expenditures of \$4,050 to support Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice? (By Petition)* Chris McVeigh moves; Mark Bushnell seconds. Mary Hood speaks in favor, citing the CVHH entry in the 2018 Town Report. The article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12: *Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of \$3,000 to support Community Connections? (By Petition)* Lauriana Capone moves; Bill Rossmassler seconds. Mary Jo Lamell speaks in favor and asks if Chris Malone can speak since he is not a Middlesex voter. The voters allow. Chris introduces himself as a site coordinator for Community Connections. The \$3,000 request is level funded and Community Connections serves more than half the student body at Rumney. The article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13: *Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of \$1,500 to support Girls/Boyz First Mentoring? (By Petition)* Liz Scharf moves; Laura Lyle seconds. Wendy Freundlich speaks in favor, noting she has run the program for nineteen years and since that time many mentees have gone on to do great things. The article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14: *Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of \$29,801 to help support the Kellogg-Hubbard Library? (By Select Board)* Jennifer Murray moves; Kim Hagen seconds. John Puleio speaks on behalf of KHL, noting there are 521 library card holders in Middlesex. Circulation in this town is 14,000 plus. But a library is more than about books. It is a place to gather, with high value including discounts on Echo and other venues for members. Amy Whitehorne says she appreciates the

library, but it is not free; town taxpayers pay \$29,000 a year to use it. She says she was a dedicated KHL patron, but notes it is difficult to access because it is closed on Sundays and parking is impossible. If kids need a place to gather, they should do it here in the community. For those from non-contributing towns, it costs \$40 to be a patron; seniors pay \$35. Some of the programs have charges, while for \$10 you can use the Waterbury Public Library for the same library materials and it has great hours, easy parking and public meeting spaces that are open and free. Last year, KHL asked for an increase and now we're talking about our Town's aging buildings. We really need to think seriously about our money and where we're spending it. She totally supports a smaller amount, the equivalent of paying \$40 per person for a library card, because \$30,000 is a lot of money. Lucy Wood speaks in favor of passing the article because it's not that much to pay over the course of a year. Mary Hood says she feels bad that someone has to pay \$40 for a library card. Wendy Freundlich says she uses the KHL public meeting spaces. Mary Jo Lamell speaks in favor of the article. Kathy Shapiro says that for some families, paying \$40 for a library card is not an option. That's what this article is for – so families don't have to pay that. Fred McCullough agrees with Amy; the article should be more in line with what it costs for people to get a library card. He moves to amend KHL's request to \$20,000. Jessica Clark seconds. Chris McVeigh urges people to vote down this amendment because without this funding, KHL is a public asset that potentially could go away and it's not KHL's fault that there's no parking. Jessica Clark explains that she loves KHL. She was a page there and that's where she had her first job. She's been going there since she learned to read at age three and agrees it's wonderful. However, she feels it's more fair for the Town to pay the equivalent of what an out-of-stater would pay and KHL has a large fundraising arm. Ben Carlson supports the original article. He says U32 students use the library, which is also used by people who don't have internet at home. Adrienne Magida calls the question on the amendment to reduce the request to \$20,000; Michael Legendre seconds. Alison Cornwall wants a straw poll. The amendment fails by voice vote. Steve Melamed calls the question on the original article; Emily Smith seconds. The article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town vote to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of \$5,500 for the support of the Montpelier Senior Activity Center to provide services to residents of the Town? (By Petition) Anita Krauth moves; Lisa Carlson seconds. Hugo Liepmann speaks in favor. The article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town voters authorize expenditures of \$10,000 to support the Waterbury Senior Center's Meals on Wheels program? (By Petition) Bill Rossmassler moves; Lisa Carlson seconds. Sarah Seidman asks for clarification on the cost of feeding four Middlesex residents per year. Liz Scharf says the \$10,000 cover the costs of more than one meal per day per four residents all year long. Mary Hood speaks in favor. The article passes by voice vote.

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town of Middlesex will appropriate a sum not to exceed \$4,771 to support the following organizations: Hugo Liepmann moves; Susan Sussman seconds. Fred McCullough asks that MotherUp! be scratched from the list because as part of 350VT it is a political action committee and taxpayers should not be funding political activity. Resident but non-voter and MotherUp! organizer Geraldine Vatan receives permission to speak. While 350VT is a political action committee, Mother Up! is not, she says. It is a group of mothers who gather once a month to discuss climate change and the climate crisis. Mother Up! does not back political candidates. The original article passes by voice vote.

Central VT Adult Basic Ed	\$250.00
Central VT Council on Aging	\$250.00
The Children's Room	\$250.00
Circle	\$199.00
Community Harvest of Central VT	\$250.00
Family Center of Washington Cty	\$250.00
Good Beginnings of Central VT	\$250.00
Green Mt. Transit	\$249.00
Green-Up Vermont	\$100.00
Home Share Now	\$250.00
Montpelier Veterans Council	\$250.00
Mother Up!	\$250.00
Our House of Central VT	\$250.00
People's Health & Wellness	\$250.00
Sexual Assault Crisis Team	\$250.00
T.W. Wood Gallery	\$250.00
VT Assoc. for the Visually Impaired	\$249.00
VT Center for Independent Living	\$199.00
VT Rural Protection Task Force	\$100.00
Washington County Diversion	\$250.00
Youth Service Bureau of Wash. Cty.	\$175.00

ARTICLE 18: Shall the Town of Middlesex approve the following resolution? (By Petition)

WHEREAS: extreme and erratic temperatures, increasingly severe storms, a rise in tick-borne diseases, and threats to farmers and maple sugar makers clearly demonstrate that climate change is one of the most urgent problems facing our state, nation, and the world, and

WHEREAS the State of Vermont has a goal in the Comprehensive Energy Plan to achieve 90% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050, yet is making insufficient progress towards achieving that goal;

Now, therefore, be it resolved:

1. Shall the Town of MIDDLESEX, VT 05602 urge the State of Vermont to:

a. Halt any new or expanded fossil fuel infrastructure, i.e. transmission pipelines, electrical generation plants and/or industrial storage facilities.

b. Commit to as close to as possible 100% renewable energy by 2030 for all people in Vermont, with firm interim deadlines; and,

c. Ensure that the transition to renewable energy is fair and equitable for all residents, with no harm to marginalized groups or rural communities.

2. Shall the Town of MIDDLESEX, VT 05602 request the town to do its part to meet these demands by committing to efforts such as:

a. Protecting townlands from fossil fuel infrastructure, denying easements or agreements for any pipelines crossing townlands;

b. Weatherizing town buildings and schools;

c. Enlisting state support to install rooftop solar on town and school buildings;

d. Other initiatives to improve residents' quality of life while helping to reduce overall energy use.

e. Encourage landowners, municipalities, and farmers to implement practices that build the soil carbon sponge to cool the planet and mitigating flooding and drought.

f. Form a Town Energy Committee to work towards reducing town emissions and meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Energy Plan.

3. Should this article pass, a letter shall be sent from the Town of MIDDLESEX, VT 05602 to our State Representatives and Senators, the Speaker of the Vermont House, the President Pro Tempore of the Vermont Senate, and the Governor, including the count of votes that support and oppose to the article.

Enrique Bueno moves and Greg Witchurch seconds. Jeff Koonz speaks in opposition, as does Fred McCullough who calls it "freedom squashing." He suggests people take proactive steps, such as planting trees. Ron Krauth moves to add the word "worldwide" on 1C so it reads, "with no harm to marginalized groups or rural communities *worldwide*." Ben Carlson seconds and the motion passes. John Puleio suggests that the article be amended to "soften the blow" by substituting the word "reduce" for "halt" in 1a and by substituting "encouraging" for "committing" in 2 so that the voters signal it's their intent to move in this direction without being restrained by "committing." Chris McVeigh argues against. This is a non-binding resolution and therefore the blow is already softened. Kathy Shapiro agrees with Chris; this is just a statement urging the Legislature to take action. There is no need to amend. Enrique Bueno says this article is the most relevant article of the day and speaks in favor. Peter Hood and Dorinda Crowell call the question. Since the Resolution asks for a vote count, a vote is taken by raised hands. The article passes by a vote of 66-27 out of approximately 165-170 voters in attendance.

Susan adjourns the meeting at 7:23 PM.

Approved and signed by the following:

Peter O. Hood, Select Board Chair, March ____, 2019

Susan Clark, 2019 Moderator, March ____, 2019