

**Select Board Members**

Peter Hood, Chair  
 Mary Just Skinner,  
Vice Chair  
 Phil Hyjek  
 Steve Martin  
 Liz Scharf

**MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**Monday, April 17, 2017**  
**5:00 PM**  
**Middlesex Town Clerk's Office**  
**5 Church Street**  
**Middlesex, Vermont 05602**  
**(802) 223-5915**

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**MINUTES**

**Present:** Chair, Peter Hood, Vice-Chair Mary Just Skinner and member Phil Hyjek. Town Listers Dick Alderman and Eric Young. Appraiser Rich Lewis. Select Board Assistant, Sarah Merriman.

**Call to Order/Welcoming of Guests/Amendments**

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and welcomed Rich and the Listers. There were no amendments.

**Revising the Town-wide Reappraisal Grand List Lodging Date**

Peter referred to a timeline Rich submitted to the Board on April 11<sup>th</sup> in which the 2017 grand list (including new values from the two-year, town-wide reappraisal) would be lodged after the statutory deadline of June 4<sup>th</sup> due to unavoidable delays. The Select Board had taken a dim view of this schedule at its last meeting since it meant grievances would be held on the week of July 4<sup>th</sup> when many people might be away.

In a follow-up conversation with Peter, Rich suggested putting off the town-wide appraisal for another year. Therefore, Peter asked for the Special Meeting to bring this matter before the Board. The Special Meeting was warned and posted on April 13, 2017. Rich suggested two other options: delay releasing the new values until May of 2018 or, instead, seek a 60-day extension that would result in the preliminary grand list being lodged on July 10<sup>th</sup> with booklets mailed to property owners on July 13 and grievances held from July 27 to 29<sup>th</sup> of this year. That way, the tax rate could be set on August 1 and tax bills sent out soon thereafter. Rich said his priority and that of the Listers was to release the new values this year, albeit in July.

Mary asked why hiring extra help wouldn't speed things along so he could meet the original deadline of June 4<sup>th</sup> as stipulated in Rich's contract with the Town. Rich said extra help would not save time.

Phil asked how Rich found himself in this situation. Rich said that since the last town-wide reappraisal in 2010 was statistical, there was much more work than he anticipated. He had to review all properties going back to 2004 and make sure they were treated consistently. This was a challenge as three different Listers had inputted data since that time so he had to almost start from scratch.

Peter said there were two issues now: 1) with tax bills going out 30 days later than usual, would the Town have enough money to operate and 2) would grievance hearings at the end of the July be an improvement over the beginning of July. He said there would likely be enough money and the end of July was preferable to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July week. Moreover, Rich and the Listers confirmed that property owners did not have to appear in person for their grievance hearings. They could send letters within the 14-day appeal period or

appoint a surrogate in writing to argue their appeals. That would leave open the possibility for them to appeal to the BCA or beyond if they were dissatisfied with their valuations.

Rich anticipated that 40 to 50 property owners might grieve at one level or another and that, of those, seven to eight would likely appeal to the BCA.

Mary wished Rich had told the Board sooner about the backlog, though Rich said that would have been impossible. Peter noted that communication would be key going forward and that the printer should be given plenty of advance notice about printing the booklet of new valuations. Eric said he worried there were too many “moving targets” to guarantee that the grievances would be done by the end of July.

**MOTION: Phil moved and Mary seconded requesting a 60-day extension from the state for lodging the 2017 grand list and setting the Town tax rate at a Special Select Board Meeting on August 1, 2017. The motion passed.**

Dick noted that Rich does good and thorough work and Peter agreed that the chief purpose of a town-wide reappraisal was to streamline and update properties so that they are equitable. Rich anticipated that the grand list would change by 10 to 11%, roughly 1% per year since the 2010 statistical upgrade with another 3-5% for corrections.

Peter said the Listers should submit the letter for the extension by the April 25 regularly scheduled Select Board meeting so it can be approved, signed by the Board and submitted to the state.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**MOTION: Mary moved and Phil seconded approving the April 11, 2017 Select Board minutes. The motion passed.**

Peter adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Merriman, Town Clerk/Select Board Assistant