

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

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, May 9, 2017
5:00 PM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

Present: Chair, Peter Hood, Vice-Chair Mary Just Skinner, members Steve Martin, Phil Hyjek and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Town Moderator Susan Clark, Joe Hayes, Middlesex Conservation Commission Chair Lee Rosberg and Select Board Assistant, Sarah Merriman.

Call to Order/Welcoming of Guests/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM. There were no amendments to the revised agenda other than to address issues out of order until Mary could arrive, having been delayed by traffic on I-89

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Liz moved and Phil seconded approving the April 25, 2017 Select Board minutes. The motion passed.

All orders were signed.

Correspondence: The Board reviewed a May 3, 2017, letter from the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District offering a grant for up to \$150 to pay for recycling containers. Since there are already recycling bins at Town Hall and the Town Shed, the Board passed.

The Board reviewed a letter from Gil Livingston announcing his resignation from the Vermont Land Trust.

The Board reviewed a letter from the Town E-9-1-1 Coordinator Maryke Gillis re: naming and renumbering the homes on Myron Dorfman's private road. Due to state statutes, private roads must be named by the property owners in concert with the E-9-1-1 coordinator and brought to the Select Board for approval.

Dick Picard submitted a proposal to paint the old Fire Station behind Town Hall for \$1,000 after July 1, 2017. The Board approved.

Executive Session

At 5:15 PM Phil moved to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters and to invite Sarah. Steve seconded. The motion passed.

At 5:25 PM Steve moved and Mary seconded exiting executive session. No action was taken.

RB Technologies Proposal for Town Computer Support

Sarah updated the Board on RB Technologies' plan to streamline and secure the Town's computers. RB technicians installed software on May 8 that would monitor the computers as part of a \$250 assessment. Phil said RB's suggestion that the Town upgrade to Microsoft 365 at \$86.80 to \$127.30 per user account could be expensive and unnecessary. As someone who has overseen computer systems for entire school districts, he suggested investigating what Google had to offer. He also stressed that each Town official, whether elected or appointed, should be given a Town email address on which to communicate about Town business, rather than using his or her private email addresses. Peter asked Phil to call Steve Gilman at RB Tech and discuss these ideas, noting it was possible that RB could set up the system using Google vs. Microsoft Office 365.

Act 46 Forums

Susan said that she'd been asked to moderate two Middlesex forums on Act 46 – a state law requiring school districts to merge or possibly be merged by the State Board of Education – since the Rumney School Board and school boards in neighboring towns could not agree on a solution. The two roadblocks were 1) debt (low-debt districts were not willing to bear the burden of high-debt districts) and 2) loss of local representation. The forums on Saturday, May 20 at Town Hall and on May 23 at Rumney School were being held to solicit public input on the vision for Rumney's future. The Board agreed to hold its next regularly scheduled meeting at Rumney School from 5 p.m. to 5:45 PM on May 23 so Board members could attend.

East Hill Road Conditions

East Hill Road resident Joe Hayes asked when the other end of East Hill Road would be improved now that the part near Molly Supple was finished. Steve said it wasn't on the schedule until the summer of 2019; Peter said the issue was a matter of resources and attacking the worst road first. Joe asked if there were some way East Hill could be moved up to this summer. Steve said that wasn't possible. Joe asked that some of the trees be cut back to allow more sunlight for faster drying. Steve said the Road Crew has been doing that.

Endorsing the MCC's Application for Town Forest Planning Assistance/CVRPC GIS

Lee said the MCC was going to apply for a \$10,000 grant from the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Community Assistance Program to improve the Town Forest and asked the Board for a letter of support. The grant is administered jointly by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation and the UVM Extension Program with 10 grants awarded. He said the Town Forest could benefit from the grant which would pay for improved parking, access and signage as well as more trails. Peter asked if there was a Town match. Lee said no and that, in fact, this grant, if received, could be used as a match for a larger grant. He said a small group has been formed to complete the application that's due June 1, 2017. The Board approved of the idea and Peter signing a letter on the Board's behalf.

MOTION: Phil moved to send a letter of support for the Town Forest Assistance Grant with Peter signing on the Board's behalf. Steve seconded. The motion passed.

Lee also said the MCC was interested in using some of the free 12 hours of mapping provided by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to the Town each year. Mary asked if that was on a fiscal year or a calendar year and asked Sarah to find out. The Board encouraged the MCC to use any remaining hours.

Imposing on Taxpayers Who Fail to File or Late File their HS-122 (Homestead Declaration) Forms

Under 32 VSA §5401 (g) in Vermont towns where the homestead rate is higher than the non-residential tax rate, "the Commissioner (of Taxes) shall notify the municipality, and the municipality shall issue a corrected tax bill that **may** include a penalty...the penalty shall be an amount equal to eight percent of the education tax on the property." Mary noted that on prior years, since this subsection became effective in 2010, the Middlesex Select Board has waived this penalty. However, Sarah and Dorinda pointed out that not only does late filing cause headaches and confusion for the Town, but also a few property owners

consistently fail to file their Homestead Declarations and, as a result, pay far less tax than due. To further complicate matters, late filers who anticipate state payments occasionally pay their bills in full with the 1% discount which will not take into account the state payments that will be uploaded in September. Or they underpay their first-half payment and then are dinged with late fees. The Board agreed that imposing the fees this year, without warning, would be too harsh. However, letters should be sent to taxpayers who are listed as “non-residential” but who are actually residents that the Board is changing its policy and will impose a fee on the 2018 tax bills. Therefore, they should remember to file their HS-122 forms by April 15, 2018 as Vermont statutes require. Phil suggested imposing the full 8% on the education tax on late/non-filers. Mary suggested a 6% fee.

MOTION: Mary moved and Phil seconded imposing a penalty equal to 6% of the education tax portion of the 2018 Middlesex tax bills of those who fail to file or late file their HS-122 (Homestead Declaration) forms. The motion passed. It was agreed that a letter noting this vote would be sent to affected parties.

Peter adjourned the meeting at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Merriman
Town Clerk/Select Board Assistant

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