

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

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD  
Tuesday, June 12, 2018  
5:00 PM  
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office  
5 Church Street  
Middlesex, Vermont 05602  
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Select Board members Phil Hyjek, Steve Martin, Liz Scharf and, by speakerphone, Chair Peter Hood and Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Residents Bryan Redmond and Sky Barsch and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman

**Call to Order, Amendments, Guests**

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM. There were no amendments or guests present.

**Changing Regular Select Board Meetings to 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays**

Phil asked the Board to consider changing at least the first meeting of every month from the second Tuesday of the month to another day or time so as not to conflict with his Central Vermont Internet meetings. After discussing a variety of options, the Board decided to change its regular meetings to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, of every month starting August 7<sup>th</sup>.

**MOTION:** Steve moved and Mary seconded changing the regularly scheduled Select Board meetings to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of each month starting in August 2018. The motion passed.

**Residential vs. Non-Residential Tax Rates**

In response to a previous Board inquiry as to why non-residential educational tax rates in Middlesex were lower than residential tax rates, Phil offered to research and produced a report. He explained that non-residential tax rates are set each year by the Vermont Legislature. That rate is then divided by each town's Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) to produce that town's non-residential rate. That way, for non-residents the local budget is not a factor.

and are the same for every town, the theory being non-residents do not have a say when it comes to voting for school budgets, bonds, etc. Residential – or homestead – rates are higher in Middlesex because of per-pupil spending at Rumney which, due to economies of scale, is higher than at U32. Phil said smaller districts, which tend to have higher per-pupil spending, also tend to have higher homestead education tax rates.

**Approving an Emergency Municipal Towing Policy**

In light of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns' request that Middlesex adopt a towing policy – after a driver filed a claim with VLCT over damage to a bumper allegedly caused when a Town truck towed her out of a ditch – the Board considered a draft policy that had been reviewed by VLCT. The policy noted Town vehicles were not to tow cars, etc. except under a series of extreme conditions, including the safety of the driver and other drivers and only with approval of the Road Commissioner and Foreman when possible.

**MOTION:** Phil moved and Steve seconded the Middlesex Emergency Municipal Towing Policy. The motion was approved and the policy was signed by the Board members present. Liz asked that the policy be forwarded to the WCSU Superintendent's Office so they could send it to the company contracted to bus Middlesex students. The company should agree and sign the policy before the upcoming winter in case buses go off the road. If the company refuses to sign, then the bus company will have to hire private towing companies instead of using Town vehicles, as in the past, the Board agreed.

**Approving the 2018 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The Board reviewed the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan which replaces the 2012 plan and had been updated by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission working with the Select Board and other town officials.

**MOTION:** Mary moves and Phil seconds approving the 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan for Middlesex. The motion passed and the approval document was signed. Sky and Bryan entered the meeting.

**Treasurer's Report/Edward Jones Funds Transfer Approval**

The Board reviewed the end-of-the month May financials. Dorinda noted the Town has \$120,968 left in its budget to spend until the end of the fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Dorinda said the Middlesex Cemetery Commission will not approve orders to transfer funds from the Edward Jones account to the Town to reimburse the town for the bills it has covered in the past two years and recorded in a "due to" account. Dorinda asked the Board to sign the order to transfer funds from the Edward Jones investment account to cover those costs. Peter suggested covering those costs by drawing down from the MCC account at Community Bank, leaving a balance of approximately \$1,000. The remainder should be paid with Edward Jones money. Dorinda said that would be approximately \$5,300 from the Edward Jones account.

**MOTION:** Phil moved and Liz seconded supporting the Treasurer's request to reimburse the MCC due-to account from the MCC town funds, leaving a balance of @\$1,000 and to withdraw the remainder owed from the Edward Jones account. The motion passed and the order signed.

Phil wondered if the Board should ask the Town Voters to eliminate the positions of elected Cemetery Commissioners since the Board has been met with "outright hostility" from the MCC.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

All Orders were signed.

**MOTION:** Mary moved and Steve seconded approving the May 22, 2018 Select Board Minutes. The motion passed. Phil abstained since he wasn't at the meeting.

**Addressing Gun Shooting in the Town's Notch Road Gravel Pit**

Bryan Redmond, who lives at the end of Notch Road near the Town Forest entrance, said there is a constant discharge of firearms in the Town's gravel pit that's intensified lately. He said it continues until night and appears to involve a lot of automatic weapons. Considering the pit's proximity to the Town Forest, potential lead contamination and degradation of lifestyle, he asked the Board to take action since there are only two approved shooting ranges in the state and this is not one of them.

Peter asked if he knew who was doing the shooting. Bryan said he avoids confrontations with them, but says he's seen cars with license plates from out of state. He thinks most people in Middlesex are using their own property for target practice, not

the gravel pit. Sky said residents in the neighborhood are upset by the constant shooting, but do not feel comfortable coming forward.

Liz said successfully closing down an illegal firing range on state property at the bottom of Culver Hill Road had been a community effort. Neighbors placed logs across the entrance and made it so difficult to park and shoot that finally people gave up. The Notch Road neighbors might have to use the same approach.

Bryan said the gate to the gravel pit is rusted and cocked at an angle, as if no one cares. One immediate step would be to repair it. Peter suggested neighbors call the VT State Police when they hear shooting. Steve said the Town would take steps to block off public access to the pit with a sign to follow. Bryan suggested shutting down all use of the gravel pit and, perhaps, adding it to the Town Forest.

The Board reviewed a proposed "letter of understanding" drafted by the attorney for Scott Beaudin regarding the trail the Conservation Commission would like to install in the Town Forest near Beaudin's property. Mary and Peter stressed that they wanted the Town's attorney to review and approve it before the Board agrees to the conditions stipulated in the letter.

**MOTION:** Steve moved and Liz seconded reappointing Ron Krauth as the Middlesex representative to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. The motion passed.

The Board discussed Dick Picard's report that his assistant had injured his fingers in a table-saw accident and could not continue painting the old fire station roof. This would cause a delay. Dick had suggesting finishing the roof by spraying it; the Board said no.

Peter adjourned the meeting at 6:03 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Merriman, Town Clerk/Select Board Assistant

ABOVE MINUTES APPROVED JUNE 26, 2018

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PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

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MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

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STEVEN MARTIN

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ELIZABETH SCHARF

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PHILIP HYJEK

DRAFT