

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

MINUTES
MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, November 13, 2018
4:00 PM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Peter Hood, Members Phil Hyjek, Steve Martin and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Middlesex Cemetery Commission members Gary Lamell and Evelyn Gant. Middlesex Conservation Commission Chair Lee Rosberg. Middlesex Fire Department Assistant Chief Jeff Koonz and MVFD Treasurer Bob Bower. Budget Committee Members Bill Dorigan and George Longenecker and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM and welcomed guests. There were no amendments.

2019-20 BUDGET WORKSHOP

The Middlesex Cemetery Commission

Gary and Evelyn presented a level-funded request of \$6,900. Gary explained that future income depends on how many burials in a season, though the Village and Carr cemeteries are closed for future business. Evelyn said she contacted other cemeteries about their mowing costs and learned that Lamson's, who has the contract to mow the Town cemeteries now, was much more affordable.

Gary also brought up recent friction between the MCC and the Board over who should manage the Edward Jones investment account for the North Branch Cemetery. Dorinda said when she discovered the fund was actually a Town fund, she was simply trying to do her job as Town Treasurer by having her name added to the account so she could discuss managing funds with Edward Jones's brokers. The problem arose because the MCC Treasurer Janet McKinstry refused to add Dorinda's name to the account. In addition, North Branch owed the Town's General Fund over \$7,000 for years of costs that should have been covered by North Branch's income, either through burials, Edward Jones dividends or both. In order to reimburse the General Fund, Dorinda, in consultation with the Select Board, decided to spend dividends and sell stock. Evelyn said she worried all the principal would be sold and the fund would be gutted. Peter assured her that would not happen. This was a one-time reimbursement and the Board had no interest in usurping the MCC's statutory duties. In order to make sure the MCC participated in the investment decision making, Peter encouraged members to attend Board meetings when the topic was on the agenda. Evelyn and Gary agreed this was a good idea. They then left the meeting.

REGULAR MEETING

Approving the Emergency Shelter Agreement with Rumney School

The Board reviewed a draft agreement between the Town and the Rumney School Board regarding use of the school as an emergency shelter. The Board agreed Peter and Liz should be the primary and backup contacts respectively for the Town, and the Rumney principal and school board chair should be the contacts for the school. The Board suggested reviewing the agreement annually.

MOTION: Liz moved and Phil seconded sending the draft Emergency Shelter Agreement with changes to the Rumney School Board for review. The motion passed.

The Board discussed adding a deadline and decided to respectfully request that the school board review and return the agreement by the end of the year.

Reversing October 16 Employee Health Insurance Decision

After the Board approved at its October 16, 2018 meeting signing up with Business Resource Services to offer BCBSVT health insurance in 2019, Dorinda discovered that this change would negatively affect at least one employee who was over 65. In addition, this employee also liked to take advantage of the HSA's full benefits. She suggested reverting to the Town's original health insurance, the Silver HDP from BCBSVT.

MOTION: Liz moved and Phil seconded vacating the Board's October 16 decision to switch health plans and stick with the Silver HDP offered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Vermont. The motion passed.

2019-20 BUDGET WORKSHOPS

The Middlesex Conservation Commission

Lee submitted a budget request of \$500 for the MCC, the same request as last year. In addition, he asked the Board consider again adding an article on the 2019 Town Meeting Warning asking that \$5,000 be added to the Conservation Fund. He said there is currently \$14,000 in the fund, though the MCC would like \$10,000 of that donated to the Hunger Mountain Headwaters Conservation Project which is preserving 760 acres north North Bear Swamp Road in Middlesex and is the location of the Hunger Mountain and White Rock hiking trails. He said the project met the Conservation Fund's criteria for funding.

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil seconded expending \$10,000 from the Conservation Fund to the Hunger Mountain Headwaters Conservation Project. The motion passed. Lee left the meeting.

The Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department

Bob presented a budget for the fire department that was \$1,768 more than the current budget. While trying to keep expenses down, he said some costs – such as Capital West radio dispatch service – were fixed increases. Dorinda said the 2019-20 MVFD-related debt service, which includes the bond on the new building plus financing a new truck, would be \$79,551, an increase of 5.84%. That put the MVFD's total budget increase at 4.54%. Bob said there was little fat in the MVFD budget proposal to cut. Bill asked if Bob had explored other dispatch services. Bob noted the Town was still bound by a 5-year contract, but that signing on with Lamoille, for example, would only delay response times since Lamoille would have to call Capital West which would then call neighboring fire departments. Liz praised the MVFD for keeping its costs down and thanked its members for volunteering.

Bill asked about the procedure for adding a special article to the 2019 Warning requesting funding to hire outside contractors to improve Middlesex roads, including East Hill. Steve said first the Town would have to hire an engineer at an approximate cost of \$20,000 to draw up a plan and scope of cost for such work which would be very expensive. The Town saved thousands

of dollars by using its own highway department to improve and repave Shady Rill Road in contrast; outside contractors would be almost prohibitive. Peter said he would not support such an article; Steve concurred. Peter noted that one of the challenges of living in the country was putting up with mud season. In the meantime, the Town had bought an excavator and would address East Hill as soon as possible. Bob and Jeff left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Phil moved and Steve seconded approving the October 16, 2018 Select Board minutes. The motion passed and the minutes were signed.

All orders were signed.

The Board reviewed a letter from the Montpelier Veterans Council asking for unspecified financial support in placing flags at the graves of Middlesex veterans and agreed to include their request on the 2019 Warning for \$250 so they would not have to submit a petition.

The Board decided to cancel its regularly scheduled meeting slated for November 20th since no orders would be available.

Steve submitted his letter of resignation from the Middlesex Planning Commission effective November 28, 2018. The Board accepted it reluctantly and thanked Steve for his many years of service.

Peter adjourned the meeting at 5:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Merriman, Town Clerk/Select Board Assistant

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON DECEMBER 4, 2018.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF