

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

MINUTES
**MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
AND PUBLIC HEARING
Tuesday, July 30, 2019
5:00 PM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner, Members Phil Hyjek, Steve Martin, Liz Scharf and Chair Peter Hood by speakerphone. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Planning Commission Chair Sandy Levine and member Theo Kennedy. Zoning Administrator Mitch Osiecki. Jim Decker. Carl Dupont and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. There were no amendments.

Executive Session

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil seconded entering Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. §313 (e) "pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public body is or may be a party." The motion passed and the Board entered executive session at 5:01. The Board exited Executive Session at 5:10 PM

Setting the 2019 Municipal Tax Rate

Dorinda told the Board that thanks to an increase of approximately \$30,000 in the 2019 Grand List, a slightly reduced homestead education tax rate of 1.8008, and a decrease in the local agreement rate, the Town could meet its FY20 expenses as approved by the voters (including a 2.36% budget increase before special articles) with a municipal tax rate increase of only 0.81%. At issue was revenue. Dorinda expects a decline in state contributions for state properties and highway aid. The Board discussed this and that due to the cost of two major storms this spring, the Town was in the hole for \$78,500 from FY19. Because of that, the Board agreed on a 1.96% increase in the municipal tax rate which would raise an additional \$50,000 and still be under the 2.36+ budget increase approved by the voters in March. This would be an increase of 6 cents on the municipal rate, from 41 cents per \$100 of valuation to 47 cents. Dorinda noted the .41-rate from 2018 was artificially low because the Board had contributed \$40,000 from the fund balance to lower the 2018 municipal rate from 43 cents.

MOTION: Steve moved and Liz seconded setting the 2019 municipal tax rate at 47 cents per \$100 of valuation for an overall 2019 homestead rate of 2.2732 and non-residential rate of 2.1106. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Dorinda said the General Fund had to temporarily borrow \$100,000 from the Paving Fund to pay for two loan payments due in the third week of August and cover other expenses.

Setting Tuesday, August 20th as Only August Select Board Meeting

The Board agreed to meet once in August, at 5 PM on Tuesday, August 20th in the Town Clerk's Office.

Denying WNRCD'S Request for Road Crew Contribution

The Board reviewed a request from the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District for an in-kind contribution of up to 272 hours of Middlesex Road Crew time and equipment to relocate an access road in Shady Rill Park and perform other improvements on the state-owned land, an equivalent of \$17,000. In a July 25, 2019, email to Gianna Petito, WNRCD's district manager, Road Foreman Paul Cerminara wrote his department could not provide that kind of contribution this year and unlikely next year since it was such a considerable commitment of Town manpower.

Peter said the Board had previously told Gianna it was unlikely the Board would approve this request due to the Town's needs to improve its own roads, not to mention roads on state land. Moreover, the Town could not afford to make a \$17,000 contribution now or in the foreseeable future. Peter asked Sarah to write a letter that Mary would sign on the Board's behalf.

Endorsing the Designation of a Village Center

Theo asked the Board to approve applying to the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development for a Village Center Designation for Middlesex Village, approximately between east of 100B to the end of the Camp Meade property. Were this area to receive official Village Center designation, the Town could be eligible for grants and support of revitalization efforts in the area. Theo said there is money and assistance from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to facilitate the application process and could help with grant applications due in September. Peter wanted to make sure the Village Center designation corresponded with the current Village Center for consistency purposes. Theo said it does, but it could grow depending on expansion.

MOTION: Mary moved and Phil seconded endorsing a Designated Village Center application. The motion passed and the resolution was signed.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Liz moved and Phil seconded approving the June 25, 2019 Select Board minutes. The motion passed. Mary abstained. The minutes were signed.

MOTION: Mary moved and Phil seconded approving the July 9, 2019 Select Board minutes. The motion passed and the minutes were signed.

All orders were signed.

Due to time constraints, the Board passed over the update on middlesexvt.org emails.

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded accepting John Demeter's resignation from the ZBA

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2019-2027 TOWN PLAN

Peter opened the public hearing at 6 PM. The Board accepted Jim Colby's letter of July 25, 2019, into the record and reviewed the letter. Sandy said Jim's request to extend the 80% Future Growth area on Map 8, page 105 that included Colby Farm to include forested land would constitute a "major change" to the Town Plan because it would require altering a map. That would kick the Town Plan back to the Planning Commission and the CVRPC which had already given its approval to the current version. That might delay the process another year.

Theo said the Town Plan was a visionary document. Jim's concern might be better brought up after the Town Plan is approved and zoning regulations are being rewritten. Phil questioned Jim's standing in this matter since he's not a voter. Peter said, traditionally, the Board has always allowed property owners to be heard, even if they're not voters. Phil said one individual who is a substantial land owner should not be allowed to manipulate the wording of the Town Plan to his benefit. He said he was "pretty miffed" when he received this letter at the 11th hour. He said he gives it no standing and would send it to the "round file."

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded closing the public hearing. The motion was approved and the public hearing closed at 6:15 PM.

Warning a Vote on the 2019-2027 Town Plan for September 10, 2019

MOTION: Mary warned and Steve seconded holding a "Special Town Meeting" on the 2019-27 Town Plan from 7 AM to 7 PM Tuesday, September 10, 2019 in the Town Clerk's Office. The motion passed and the Warning was signed. Sandy left the meeting.

Jim Decker told the Board that he has witnessed Town road conditions degrade in the past eight years he has lived here. Brook Road in particular is slippery and in extremely poor condition during mud season. He wondered if the Town has explored using other material. Peter explained that much of the problem stems from the State's advice, years ago, to use crushed slate. Over time, that slate has turned to clay. Gradually, the Town has been excavating that clay and replacing it with more durable material. But doing so takes time and money.

Peter adjourned the meeting at 6:30 PM.

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

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A SPECIALLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON AUGUST 20, 2019

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF