

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

**MINUTES**  
**MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD**  
**Tuesday, September 3, 2019**  
**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, Members Phil Hyjek, Steve Martin and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell, State Rep. Kimberly Jessup, Putnamville residents and supporters: Karen Gennette, Carol Maloney, Kristin Hayes, Maryanne Watt, Sharon Paige, Kevin Thompson, Jane Tucker, Barbara DuPere, Olivia DuPere, Albie Borne, Joanne Mankoff, Seth Lipschutz, Marge Dethloff and Jon Skates from Casella Waste, Sue Bettmann for ORCA and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman.

**Call to Order/Amendments**

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and welcomed the guests.

**Putnamville Speeding**

Providing background on the Putnamville speeding issue, Kristin said she and Albie approached the Board earlier in the summer to ask that a letter of support be sent to the Vermont Agency of Transportation requesting the speed limit through Putnamville on VT Route 12 be lowered and that the state install more signage because speeders were risking the lives of residents and children getting on and off school buses. There have been several near accidents and accidents despite residents' efforts to get drivers to slow down. The Board sent the letter to AOT.

After AOT conducted a traffic study and held a public hearing on August 28<sup>th</sup>, Kristin said the State agreed to expand the 35 m.p.h. section and place additional signage indicating the speed limit ahead drops from 50 m.p.h. to 35 m.p.h. However, the State would not drop the speed limit to 25 m.p.h., as the residents requested, because statutes did not allow a difference in speed between zones of more than 15 m.p.h. In addition, the State could not pay for two Radar Speed Feedback Signs (RSFS) which cost approximately \$3,000 each because they fall in the category of speed enforcement, the municipality's responsibility. Therefore, the residents of Putnamville were asking for Town assistance in calming traffic, possibly by obtaining permits, paying for and installing the RSFS signs on the north and southbound lanes of VT Route 12. Albie reiterated that the blind curves, increased traffic and ledge outcroppings make this section of road the most dangerous in Middlesex. Peter noted VT Route 12 is a state road and that while he and the Board understand and share the residents' concerns, in some ways the Town's hands are tied. For one thing, the 2019-20 municipal budget that was approved by the voters in March does not provide for this expense. Liz suggested lawn signs, but Kristin said residents have already tried similar approaches. It's a Band-Aid on a serious issue.

John, from Cassella, said curb service on roads where the speed limit is 50 m.p.h. is a huge safety concern for his business, citing a recent incident in Burlington where a Casella worker was hit and killed on a foggy morning. He doesn't usually attend these kinds of meetings, but he is very concerned about the speeding in Putnamville and his workers' safety.

The Board discussed other forms of enforcement, such as Washington County Sheriff's patrols. The problem, Peter said, is that the Sheriff's Department annually spends only 60% of the funds allotted in its contract with the Town because it doesn't have the manpower to do more.

Peter asked Kim to investigate whether there were State grants available or any other assistance. Steve said he would explore less expensive alternatives than the \$3000 signs approved of by the State. Peter also asked Kim to verify whether it was true that the State couldn't lower the speed to 25 m.p.h. because that was too sharp a drop from the 50 m.p.h. Sarah, speaking as Town Clerk, urged the Putnamville residents to solicit names for petitions for an article to be placed on the 2020 Town Meeting Warning asking for funding for the RSFS signs, if there is no other remedy.

Kim and the Putnamville residents left the meeting at 5:40 PM.

**Withdrawing from the Welch Park Common Potable Well**

Peter reminded the Board about a June 13, 2019, meeting of the Welch Park Association where Bernie Chenette confirmed the Town does not have, has never had, and is unlikely to have permitted access to the common well of potable water at Welch Park. Recently, that well has had to be upgraded to meet state standards, a cost of \$30,000 so far born by Benderson. The Town had until the beginning of September to decide whether or not to retain its interest in the well. If it does, then the Town will be responsible for \$4,500 of the above cost. Mary asked if Carl Bailin, another Welch Park member with no access to the well, was going to withdraw; Peter said in recent conversation, Carl was 90% sure he would.

**MOTION:** Phil moves and Steve seconds forfeiting all interest in the common well of potable water at Welch Park. The motion passed.

Dorinda asked about when this would be effective, especially in light of recent water testing fees. Peter proposed the Town assume its responsibility for the water testing prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>. Mary suggested codifying this in an amendment to the motion. The Board agreed these were details to be worked out at a subsequent Welch Park meeting.

**Approving the Town Roads Update Postcard**

In an effort to keep the Town apprised of what was going on with the roads, the Board reviewed and edited a suggested postcard to be sent to each resident. The Board decided on the following:

*Dear Middlesex Resident (s):*

*Due to a severe winter followed by two devastating spring storms requiring immediate and extensive repairs, the Middlesex Highway Department is behind schedule on its Five-Year Highway Plan. This fall, we will be improving McCullough Hill and Barnet Hill roads, installing signage around town, and performing regular maintenance.*

*Please check the Town's website – [middlesexvermont.org](http://middlesexvermont.org) – for an updated Five-Year Plan coming soon.*

*Thank you for your understanding.*

*The Middlesex Select Board, Road Commissioner and Road Foreman*

**Revising the Petition Policy for Town Meeting Funding Requests Over \$250**

Sarah, as Town Clerk, requested a formal policy on requiring petitions for placing funding articles over \$250 on the Town Meeting Warning. Currently, the policy is that requests \$250 and under do not need petitions, just a letter to the Select Board. Requests over \$250 must follow the Vermont statutes for any petitioned articles not brought by the Select Board, i.e., signatures of 5% of the Town voters or 75 registered Middlesex voters. Last year, the Board allowed Kellogg-Hubbard Library to warn its request for \$29,000 with just a letter to the Select Board after members of the library board asked not to have to submit petitions on the argument that few towns requested petitions, the request was unchanged from the previous year and soliciting petitions was a burden on library staff. Peter said he understood that to be a one-time pass. Mary said she feels strongly about requiring petitions for a couple of reasons. Petitions require work and effort. Also, it's a good way for the non-profits to interact with the community. Sarah floated the idea of placing funding requests on the Australian ballot, with voter approval, so there would be more community input since few people attend Town Meeting. Liz said that would be the death of Town Meeting and she was opposed to it. The Board agreed to take up the issue at the next Select Board meeting.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Steve updated the Board re: the corner of Culver Hill and French roads where the McManises were concerned that through snowplowing and maintenance, the Town was cutting into their property. This has been resolved.

**MOTION:** Phil moved and Steve seconded ratifying a catering permit for Zenbarn to serve alcohol at The Great Bread Festival at Camp Meade on September 7, 2019. The motion passed. Liz said the Town should consider permitting events of this magnitude to regulate safety issues.

All orders were signed.

The Board discussed a rash of illegal dumping of furniture, etc. in the Town's rights of way and agreed that Sarah was authorized to take care of this.

The Board discussed ongoing concerns about the MVFD including whether to hire a consultant to analyze the department's operations and report back to the Select Board. Steve said he doubted the MVFD, as a separate 501(c)(3) would allow that type of analysis. Peter said the Town Attorney confirmed VLCT's opinion that the Select Board has no control over the MVFD since it is not technically part of Town government, though it receives Town funding, operates out of a Town-owned building and is covered by Town insurance. The Board decided to pick this up later.

**MOTION:** Phil moved and Mary seconded adjourning the meeting at 7:30 PM. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

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 SEPTEMBER 24, 2019.

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PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

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MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

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PHILIP HYJEK

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STEVEN MARTIN

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ELIZABETH SCHARF