

Select Board Members

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

MINUTES
MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, June 16, 2020
5:00 PM
HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Peter Hood, Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner, Members Steve Martin, Phil Hyjek and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Stephanie A. Smith, MUPP, State Hazard Mitigation Officer for Vermont Emergency Management, Road Foreman Paul Cerminara. Sky Barsch. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM.

Outline of Town's Role & Costs in FEMA buyout of 28 Rich Road.

Stephanie A. Smith, State Hazard Mitigation Officer for Vermont Emergency Management, outlined the expected process for buying out 28 Rich Road under FEMA's 2012 program to purchase and destroy properties that had been damaged in Tropical Storm Irene. Stephanie said the \$136,000 grant had been awarded representing 75% of the total cost of the purchase and deconstruction of 28 Rich Road. The other 25% will come from non-Town funds. She said there is no cost to the Town for participation and that the Town will be reimbursed by FEMA within ten business days for costs incurred, including title work, appraisal, asbestos consulting, asbestos remediation, and deconstruction. In addition, the Town may opt to request funding in advance to cover these costs.

Depending on the appraisal, Stephanie said \$110,000 is expected to go to the property owner and \$2,000 for the asbestos survey and removal. Sarah noted that when the Town handled a FEMA buyout of 191 and 195 Three Mile Bridge Road in 2013, the bids for asbestos removal from a sink and a portion of a roof ran between \$20,000 and \$40,000. Stephanie said in that case, the Town can request more funding. Considering two other projects have dropped out, she said there is plenty of funding, though at this stage, this project is still voluntary for the homeowner and the Town. Peter said the Town cannot afford any financial surprises. Liz asked what if there are mortgages/liens on the property. Stephanie said it's like a normal property purchase, the creditors will be paid. Peter noted the property has been a problem for the Town and the property owner and the project is worthwhile. The Board will wait until it reviews the Subgrant Agreement to decide whether to move forward.

More discussion about the Class 4 section of Notch Road.

Steve, who is also the Road Commissioner, said after he and other Town officials met with State officials, the Town will try to add a few more spaces to the State of Vermont Wildlife Management parking area at the top of Notch Road near the Town Forest. The Town will also add a small parking area down by entrance to Town pit on Notch Road to accommodate six cars. This will be done pretty quickly. Lee Rosberg of the Middlesex Conservation Commission will be handling signage. Peter said the hope is that the MCC can create a hiking trail from the pit parking lot to the Town Forest, provided the Town can obtain permission from affected property owners. He doesn't know if that's possible, but that's a goal. Steve said the State is enthusiastic about creating a parking lot above the its current Wildlife Management lot, but that's for a future discussion.

Highlights of June 6, 2020 Highway Forum

Steve said the informal meeting between Road Foreman Paul Cerminara, him and members of the public on June 6th was productive and produced good ideas. Former Select Board member Vic Dwire suggested that Board meetings regularly include a segment on Highway Department updates. To that end, Steve said the road crew is clearing the pit so the Town can bring in a company to screen sand that will be used on winter roads. This will be a huge savings to the Town which currently buys 5,000 yards of sand from a location that requires a round trip of one hour plus. The screened sand will be stored behind the Town Garage on Shady Rill. Before the Road Crew leaves, it will carve out a parking area at the pit and expand the State-owned lot higher up on Notch Road. There won't be any grading until the Town receives chloride, possibly next week, because it will be too dusty without it. Mary asked if the State will reimburse the Town for expanding the Wildlife Management lot. Steve said no, because the lot is being expanded for the Town Forest. Peter noted it's also the Town snowplow turnaround. The Board agreed to add a Highway Update section to its agendas.

Treasurer's Report

- RBTechnology bill: Dorinda said the Town has spent \$13,000 on computers and computer issues this fiscal year and has now received another bill from the RBTechnology that has eaten up much of the banked monthly IT support. The Town pays RB \$700/month in IT support that accumulates if it's not used. However, there were some issues with the installation of the new bookkeeper computer and she questioned small charges for contacting RB about rewiring the office for COVID, etc. The Board discussed related computer problems and questions and decided to invite Rubin Bennett of RBTech to a Board meeting for a conversation about how the company and Town interact. The Board gave Dorinda permission to pay the RBTech bill.
- MVFD: Dorinda directed the Board's attention to the MVFD's overspent equipment budget and asked for authorization to pay for two breathing cylinders even though they would not be delivered for ten weeks, i.e. in the new fiscal year. The Board discussed the MVFD purchase of a thermal imaging camera which caused the line-item overrun. This caused confusion because the

MVFD said during budget talks in 2019 that it would be purchased from donations earmarked specifically for that purpose. Dorinda said the donations were used to make a down payment on the camera. In addition, Engine 1 needs approximately \$4,000 in repairs. Before the \$4,000 repair, the MVFD was over the line item for its equipment budget, but not the budget as a whole. Peter said the agreement with the MVFD is that they don't have to worry about overspending their line items as long as they don't overspend their whole budget. It is very difficult to anticipate expenses when putting together a budget a year out. Dorinda has okay to pay.

- Dorinda outlined end-of-year expenses that will include one more payroll, power bills and fuel before the end of the fiscal year on June 30th. Peter said the Town will be in the hole, but maybe not significantly. There are still unpaid taxes, though most seem to have been errors of oversight. Mary left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil seconded approving the minutes from the May 19, 2020 and May 21 Select Board meetings. The motion passed.

MOTION: Liz moved and Phil seconded approving the Washington County Sheriff's Contract for the FY21 starting July 1, 2020, to conduct speeding patrols on Middlesex roads for up to \$7,500 and granting the Select Board Assistant permission to sign on the Board's behalf. The motion passed.

Orders: All orders were reviewed via email and approved.

Peter asked if the Board should consider meeting in person. Sky Barsch encouraged the Board to keep meeting via Zoom since it's much easier for people to attend virtually. Liz, who disagreed with meeting in person for now, said when the Board does resume normal meetings, those meetings can still be Zoomed to encourage participation.

The meeting adjourned at 6:21 PM.

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

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE REMOTELY APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON JULY 7, 2020.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF