

**Select Board Members**

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

**MINUTES**  
**MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD**  
**Tuesday, August 18, 2020**  
**5:00 PM**  
**HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM**

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**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Chair Peter Hood, Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner, Members Steve Martin, Liz Scharf and Phil Hyjek. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell, Road Foreman Paul Cerminara. Rumney Teachers Matthew Pelkey and Christine Babcock. WCUUSD Member Chris McVeigh. Vic Dwire and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman. ORCA recorded the meeting which was also recorded on Zoom.

**Call to Order/Amendments**

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM and welcomed visitors. Phil amended the to include potential appointment of Sarah Birge to the ZBA under Other Business.

**Using Town Land for Outdoor Rumney Classrooms During COVID**

Matt asked the Board for permission to use the Town land behind Rumney School and the abutting Town recreation area as spaces for outdoor classrooms so students could be educated safely this fall. The school would like to use the woods and the tennis courts where they hope to set up tents. They are also building a shelter to enclose a privvy space. Matthew and Christine have taken courses on outdoor education through the North Branch Nature Center and noted there are many positive opportunities to educating children outdoors.

There was discussion about using the unused half of the tennis courts for tents. Peter expressed concern that poles would have to be affixed into the court surface by driving stakes into it, which the Board will not permit. Christine says she does not envision drilling into the court.

Peter said he saw no problem using the Town land or facilities, especially during COVID. Dead trees may be removed, but not live ones. The area should be left as good as, or better than, when the school first started using it. The Board does not want to have to clean up a mess.

Christine said there are no plans to remove live trees, but dead trees might fall and hurt someone so they need to be removed. They are looking for a forester to identify the problem trees. Peter stressed the Board does not want volunteers taking down dead trees. The Board asked that the school's insurer be contacted to add the Town of Middlesex as an additional insured. Chris McVeigh said he would do that.

Since school is reopening on September 8<sup>th</sup> and the next Board meeting is September 1<sup>st</sup>, Peter floated the idea of a special Select Board meeting with a possible site visit before granting final approval to the School's plans. For now, Matt and Christine should seek a forester and draft plans for using the Town land. Matt said they have identified six spots to be used as outdoor classrooms. Peter said they can clear brush and order tarps, but the Town should be apprised before any larger trees are removed.

**MOTION:** Mary moved and Phil seconded granting Rumney a provisional go ahead to conduct initial planning and light work to prepare the abutting Town land for outdoor classrooms, but they should add the Town to the school's insurance and meet with the Select Board before receiving final approval. The motion passed and Matt and Christine left the meeting.

### **Highway Report**

Steve said that over the last couple of weeks, the Highway Department has completed ditching on McCullough Hill Road. The Notch Road Town pit has been cleared of debris so McCullough Crushing can come in to screen sand that will be spread on the roads during the winter. The road crew and Dubois repaired the slide on Brook Road as well. Therefore, trucks will be hauling sand from the pit, up Brook Road to the Town Shed on Shad Rill and then down Center Road to the pit in a loop that will be lasting a couple of weeks. Thanks to recent rain, dust has been kept to a minimum, though the Department has chloride in case it becomes a problem. As soon as the sand screening/hauling is complete, the road crew will return to the McCullough Road. The culvert for Upper Barnett has arrived and will go in. The patch on the Wood Road Bridge will go in after the culvert is installed.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Dorinda asked about an \$11,000 bill from Dubois for consulting on the walkable Middlesex Village project. This bill is to be paid for by a grant that has been approved although the Town has yet to receive the money. The Board authorized Dorinda to hold off paying the bill for now. The Board discussed the increased rates of Batchelder Associates which conducts the Town's annual audit. It's too late in the year to look for a new accounting firm now, but it might be worth sending the job out to bid next year. Mary questioned chain saw repairs; Paul said they were not Highway Department expenses.

### **Extending the Late 2019 Tax Penalty Moratorium**

**MOTION:** Liz moved and Steve seconded extending the moratorium on the 8% late penalty for unpaid 2019 taxes only until January 1, 2021, as allowed under S.344, due to the financial hardship created by COVID. The motion passed.

\*\* The Select Board meeting was momentarily recessed for a Board of Civil Authority Meeting. Phil left to attend a CVFiber meeting.\*\*

### **Liz Fortman as Deputy Health Officer**

**MOTION:** Mary moved and Liz seconded recommending Liz Fortman as Deputy Town Health Officer. The motion passed.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- **MOTION:** Mary moved and Steve seconded approving the August 4, 2020, Select Board minutes. Liz abstained. The motion passed.
- **MOTION:** Mary moved and Liz seconded appointing Sara Birge to the Middlesex Zoning Board of Adjustment. The motion passed.

- All orders were approved via email.

**MOTION:** At 6:44 PM, Peter moved and Liz seconded entering into Executive Session per 1 VSA § 313(1) (3) The motion passed and the meeting was closed to the public. The Board exited at 7:01 PM. There was no action afterward.

The Board adjourned at 7:02 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 SEPTEMBER 2, 2020.

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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