

Select Board Members

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

**MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD**  
**Thursday, November 10, 2020**  
**REMOTE VIA ZOOM**  
**Middlesex Town Clerk's Office**  
**5 Church Street**  
**Middlesex, Vermont 05602**  
**(802) 223-5915**

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**MINUTES.**

**PRESENT:** Peter O. Hood, Chair, Mary Just Skinner, Vice Chair, Members Steve Martin and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. MVFD Treasurer Eric Metivier and President Jeff Koonz. Planning Commission Chair Sandy Levine. Budget Committee members George Longenecker and Bill McManis. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes and the meeting was recorded by ORCA.

**Call to Order/Amendments**

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

**2021/22 BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**MVFD's Budget Request**

Eric, the newly appointed treasurer of the Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department reviewed the MVFD's proposal which reflected an increase of 10%. Supplies increased by \$100, and the equipment repair from \$7,000 to \$10,000 because much of the department's equipment is aging and failing. The budget does not include money for air packs because the MVFD doesn't know exactly how much they will cost. The Emergency Management Committee was using the MVFD internet for COVID so the telephone bill is up. Jeff said there are 10 active members but one of the new guys is taking a firefighter course that's expensive.

Liz asked if now is the time to start saving for big-ticket items like air packs. Jeff said the MVFD has been trying to set up a fund to purchase items like vehicles and has been repeatedly turned down on the theory it's easier to borrow because interest rates are cheap. Peter explained the Board's philosophy – that by borrowing money for a current need, present taxpayers are benefitting from purchases vs saving for a purchase they may never see.

Mary asked about air packs. Jeff said it will cost \$58,000 to purchase eight packs which would put four packs on each engine. In three years, Scott will stop making repair parts for the current packs and Jeff thinks all the packs should be all the same. His hope is that they'll have to buy only one air tank per pack. Liz asked if other departments will be facing the fact Scott no longer will be producing replacement parts. Jeff said it depends since each town is different. The MVFD packs were purchased in 2003-2004 via a federal grant, Jeff said, though that was before he was on the department. The air pack itself is about \$5,600. Jeff said he'd like to buy two per year and stretch that out over five years. The MVFD did not anticipate buying them in this upcoming fiscal year. Mary asked for detailed statistics on how many calls the MVFD responds to and also if there are any significant responses requiring equipment. Mary said she wants the statistics to justify the budget. Peter requested numbers for a fiscal year ending on June 30<sup>th</sup>.; Eric agreed. Liz said a quick search of the internet showed there were grants to purchase equipment such as air packs the year before last. She wondered if there is an association or listserv the MVFD could tap into to be alerted about grants. Eric and Jeff left the meeting.

**Planning Commission's Budget Request**

Sandy said the PC drafted its proposed budget of \$11,000 at its last meeting. The budget is a bit of an increase due to an increase in consulting fees to assist with an update to the Town's zoning regulations. The consultation proposal from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission is about \$17,000, though they won't be able to help Middlesex until July 1, 2021. Sandy said that figure is roughly in line with what other towns have paid consultants to update zoning regulations. In this case, the \$17,000 would be spread over two years. The Board discussed applying for grants to pay for the zoning consultation. Sandy said she could envision the PC submitting a grant for \$10,000 in October 2021, but there's no guarantee the Town will be awarded the money. Peter said

it's discouraging when abutting towns get grants to rewrite their zoning regulations whereas Middlesex is asking the taxpayers to foot the bill. In an unrelated matter, Dorinda said the final payment will be made to Dubois & King for consultation on planning the walkable village and she asked how the Town can draw down from the grant. Sandy said a final report must be submitted, but she doesn't write that. Liz said she can't write the report, though she is authorized to draw down the money. She thinks it's just a spreadsheet that Planning Commission member Mitch Osiecki can upload - that will satisfy the grant requirements. Sandy, George, Bill and Elias left the meeting

### **REGULAR MEETING**

#### **Municipal Impact Questionnaire for Planetary Matters Octagon Building**

The Board reviewed a Municipal Impact Questionnaire on the Act 250 impact on a proposed "Octagon Building" at Camp Meade. Peter said he would contact the MVFD and then sign the report and submit it.

#### **Highway Report**

Steve said gates were installed at the Town Garage for safety reasons, to prevent people from driving around back where the sand pile is. Sand has been left for public use by the fire department on Shady Rill at the entrance to the Town Garage. Meanwhile, the Highway Department has been installing signs. The Road Crew will be short-staffed for a bit while a member undergoes routine surgery. Mary said she'd received a complaint from Ray Hickory. Steve said he'd like anyone with concerns to submit those in writing to create a paper trail and make sure the issues are addressed correctly. Liz said people should be able to call and shouldn't have to put their complaints in writing.

#### **Treasurer Report**

Dorinda noted that the Town spent \$141,394 in the last fiscal year on the MVFD. In welcomed good news, she said the Town received an extra \$30,702 in State Highway Aid for the current budget year, a one-time deal approved by the Legislature.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**MOTION:** Phil moved and Liz seconded approval of the minutes for the October 20, 2020 Select Board meeting. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 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 N

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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