

Select Board Members

Peter Hood, Chair
 Liz, Scharf, Vice Chair
 Brigid Browning
 Randy Drury
 Vic Dwire

**Middlesex Select Board
Rescheduled Meeting
Thursday, July 13, 2023
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915**

MINUTES

PRESENT IN TOWN HALL: Chair Peter Hood, Vice Chair Liz Scharf*, Select Board members Randy Drury (who is also a member of the Budget Committee) and Vic Dwire (who is also Road Commissioner). Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Road Foreman and MVFD Chief Eric Metivier. MVFD President Jeff Koonz. John Christian. James Covino. Planning Commission Chair Sandy Levine*. The meeting was recorded by ORCA and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes. (*indicates attended via Zoom)

Call to Order, Welcoming Guests, Approving Minutes and Agenda

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM and welcomed guests. The agenda was amended to pass over the following: the Planning Commission presentation, approving an asbestos/lead consultant for the FEMA buyout on 28 Rich Road and everything under Other Business (aside from orders) due to the Governor's request that motorists stay off the road between 4 PM and 8 PM due to weather concerns.

Peter opened the meeting with a statement saying how delighted he was that Dorinda was present and had rescinded her resignation. He noted that none of the "confusion or unhappiness" had anything to do with the work she was doing; there is no question that Dorinda is an excellent Treasurer, and he wanted the minutes to reflect that.

MOTION: Randy moved, and Vic seconded, approving the minutes of the June 20, 2023, Select Board meeting. The motion passed and the minutes were signed. Liz abstained because she wasn't present at that meeting and Vic voted in opposition.

MOTION: Randy moved, and Vic seconded, approving the minutes of the June 27, 2023, Special Select Board meeting. The motion passed and the minutes were signed. The motion passed.

MOTION: Randy moved to approve the amended agenda for the rescheduled July 13, 2023, meeting, Vic seconded and the motion passed.

Highway Report: Flood Recovery

Eric said Center Road is passable and Brook Road is accessible at both ends after the July 10th historic flood. Culver is passable from top, but not at the bottom where a slide off, below Warren, has taken off half the road. For the most part, the road crew is concentrating on bringing town roads up to grade so they can at least be accessible for emergency services. He said the Road Crew is working on Wood and Macey roads right now. The next priority is Culver. Liz said Culver is not accessible from both ends. Eric said he's been talking to John Christian, a project manager for J. Hutchins, about repairing the Culver Hill slide off.

John said his crew could start on Monday and described the work that would cost at least \$90,000 before equipment. Sarah outlined FEMA regulations regarding emergency bids. Randy suggested the Town look at upgrading from 30" culverts to 48" culverts. Eric said he hasn't been able to get 30" pipe. John said he had 48" pipe. Peter said this is the time to upgrade the culverts when FEMA funding is available. Randy suggested maybe hiring someone to do the paperwork to keep in compliance with FEMA so that Eric can work on roads. Peter said Eric should be authorized to hire that person hire. Randy said he would assist in coordinating with the Road Commissioner and Foreman.

MOTION: Vic moved that the Town authorize Eric to hire an administrative consultant to handle flood-repair under FEMA, Randy seconded. The motion passed.

Repairing Driveway Connections

Liz spoke to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns regarding the town's duty to repair the junctions between private driveways and Town roads. She noted the Town's highway ordinance states the homeowner owns and is responsible for the culvert beneath a private driveway. In normal circumstances that's true. However, because these culverts are in the Town's right of way, she said it would be wise for the Board to hire a contractor to repair the connections and have those bundled in the Town's FEMA request. She said the argument is to prefer to have these culverts installed correctly not just "willy nilly," thereby creating more problems in the future. Peter said the most pressing matter is to get people connected safely to town roads. However, the Town will not be fixing private driveways. Sandy asked about installing bigger culverts to handle increased water. Eric said the minimum now is 15".

Randy said Eric would have to hire multiple contractors. Vic said the only problem is someone has to manage multiple contractors. Randy said it would run through Vic and Eric and the project manager/consultant. James asked if there were specifications for culverts. The Board said there was and that the culverts must adhere to state specification. Jim Covino asked the Town to check stumps caught in the culvert under East Hill Road.

MOTION: Vic moved that the Town hire contractors to repair driveway connections and culverts within the Town's rights of way to allow for egress and ingress to Town highways noting they must adhere to the State of Vermont's specifications; Randy second. The motion passed.

Liz stressed that contractors would not be working on private roads or driveways that connected to private roads.

Flood-damaged Trash Removal

The Board discussed trash-removal concerns in the flooded areas. Sarah said Pete Ainsworth has offered to allow his neighbors on Three Mile Bridge Road to heap their trash on a lot he owns there. The Board agreed to pay for three Dumpsters for two weeks at the following locations: Three Mile Bridge Road, the Town Garage on Shady Rill and a location to be determined in Putnamville.

MOTION: Peter moved to rent three dumpsters for two weeks for flooded debris only to be located at Three Mile Bridge Road, the Town Garage on Shady Rill and a location to be determined in Putnamville; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

Eric said the new pavement on Shady Rill has been undermined.

Setting the FY24 Town Tax Rate

Dorinda proposed a Town tax rate that would be under a three-cent increase. She advised against using the fund balance to offset the impact of the education rate since that money will be needed to fix the roads before FEMA reimbursement is processed.

MOTION: Liz moved accept a FY24 Town tax rate of 0.6239 cents per \$100 of valuation; Randy seconded. The motion passed. With the local agreement rates, the FY24 Middlesex tax rate for homesteads (including an education rate of 1.8229 per \$100 of valuation) is 2.4468 per \$100 of property valuation while the non-homestead rate (including an education rate of 1.7009 per \$100 of valuation) is 2.3248 per \$100 of valuation.

Purchasing a Used Rescue Vehicle for \$135,000 from Hyde Park

Following up on the Board’s prior approval of purchasing a used rescue vehicle from Hyde Park, the Board discussed how to finance it, including dipping into the \$345,000 remaining in ARPA funds. Randy asked if the vehicle had been checked out. Eric said he and Jeff looked over the vehicle. Dorinda did not recommend using ARPA funds, preferring to use money in the fund balance. Jeff said Hyde Park needs a deposit.

MOTION: Randy moved purchasing the rescue vehicle from Hyde Park for \$135,000 with a 10% deposit and a purchase and sale agreement provided it receives a satisfactory inspection by a mechanic; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

Purchasing a Water Softener for Potable Water at the MVFD

Due to high levels of manganese, the water at the MVFD station in Welch Park was not potable, Jeff said. He suggested purchasing and installing a water softener for \$4,600.

MOTION: Peter moved and Vic seconded purchasing a water softener for \$4,600 for the MVFD station in Welch Park. The motion passed.

Extending First Payment Due Date of the 2023 Tax Bill to September 20th

Considering the emergency created by the July 10th storm and the unexpected financial stress it created, Dorinda suggested the Board pass emergency legislation moving the due date of the first payment on the 2023 tax bill from August 20, 2023, to September 20, 2023.

MOTION: Liz moved to extend the due date of the first payment of the 2023 Tax Bill to September 20, 2023; Randy seconded. The motion passed.

All orders were signed.

The Board adjourned at 6:18 PM after Liz thanked the road crew on behalf of the Select Board.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Merriman, Select Board Assistant

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON JULY 18, 2023

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

ELIZABETH SCHARF, VICE CHAIR

N/A
BRIGID BROWNING

RANDY DRURY

VIC DWIRE