

Select Board Members

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

**Middlesex Select Board
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, July 18, 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 Brigid Browning*, Randy Drury (who is also a member of the Budget Committee) and Vic Dwire (who is also Road Commissioner). Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. MVFD President Jeff Koonz. Deputy Commissioner of Vermont Department of Human Services Aryka Radke. Deputy Secretary Agency of Human Services Todd Daloz. Steven Dennis*. Planning Commission Chair Sandy Levine*. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes. (*indicates attended via Zoom)

Call to Order, Welcoming Guests, Approving Minutes and Agenda

MOTION: Vic moved, and Liz seconded approving the minutes of the July 13, 2023, Rescheduled Select Board meeting. The motion passed and the Board members present signed the minutes.

MOTION: Liz moved, and Vic seconded approving the amended agenda of the July 18, 2023 Regular Select Board meeting. The motion passed.

Highway Report – Flood Repair Update

Vic updated the Board on post-flood road work: J. Hutchins is working on Culver Hill and Government Hill and All Seasons from Colchester will work on Lower Sunny Brook Road. The town is trying to obtain culverts for McCullough Hill Road. Jason Merrill is working there and on Upper Barnett before moving to Portal Road. Dale E. Percy is working on Brook Road. The Town Highway Department is working on Shady Rill, especially by the guard rail where the bank was undermined. They are also trying to expand access on Wood Road and up Macey Road. Vic said he and Eric met with the National Guard, requesting trucks and material. The Guard could not produce trucks and material but will check out Norton Road Bridge which was under water. There is an issue with contractors dumping gravel at the end of driveways and assuring homeowners FEMA will reimburse the Town/the homeowner; this is not true. The Town is hiring contractors to work on a road-by-road basis. Brigid said the Middlesex Community Fund has an application for flood relief. Liz clarified that the Town's working only in the Town rights of way, not on personal driveways, as the Town is legally permitted to do. Steve Dennis said hazard mitigation grants are available which might offer private homeowners help. As for people who've already repaired the end of their driveways at their own expense, Peter said the Board doesn't know if they'll be reimbursed because the Town doesn't know if they can be bundled into the FEMA submission.

Randy asked about inspections of culverts along driveways. Vic said it's being done, looking at whether they're undersized, etc. Peter said the Town should fix them in every situation, giving washouts a priority. This is another opportunity to improve infrastructure and prevent flooding in the future.

Dorinda asked if John Picard was working for the Town; he is not. She needs paperwork from Percy and an updated COI from Jason Merrill.

Vic clarified that John Picard may be working for the Tow but hasn't gotten paperwork in. Peter said no one should be paid until the paperwork is done.

MOTION: Liz moved and Vic seconded signing MRGP ##GA059. The motion passed and Peter signed the grant agreement.

Monthly Meeting with MVFD

Jeff reviewed the Fire Department's more-active-than-normal monthly report. (Please see below.) He noted that during the storm, a fully equipped Red Cross truck could not reach the Barre Auditorium and had to park at the MVFD after being stuck behind the car of a family of four that went into a ditch on Center Road. The family had to spend the night at the MVFD.

Jeff also described a harrowing experience when Emergency Management Coordinator Paula Otenti learned after the rains stopped that a pond with 400,000 cubic feet of water was about to breach its banks, potentially taking out homes downhill of its location on Zdon Road. Paula contacted water resources engineer – and former resident of the neighborhood – Matt Schley who coordinated with the homeowner to siphon off some water while the Road Crew sped up repairs on Zdon so excavating equipment could reach the pond. Jeff drew up an evacuation plan for all those in the water's path.

Sarah praised the teamwork of the EMC, the Road Crew, Matt and Jeff for their quick thinking, quick action and dedication that averted a potential lethal disaster.

Vic said the MVFD cleared out several culverts using specialized hoses that delivered a powerful force of water. Peter asked about a dry hydrant that's currently inaccessible on East Hill Road due to a damaged road; Jeff said a portable pump is a short-term solution to that problem. Peter asked that the Road Crew fix that section of road leading up to the dry hydrant, even though it's on private land, for fire-safety purposes.

Randy asked about the reflective address signs that used to be administered through the MVFD. Jeff said the Department of Corrections stopped making the signs and now the Town must find another producer.

Dorinda noted that since the Board would not meet again until August 1st, she needed authority to cut a check for the 10% deposit on a rescue vehicle the Town planned to purchase from Hyde Park and another check for 50% of the \$4,6000 needed for a water softener at the fire department in Welch Park. She requested authorization to cut the checks.

MOTION: Randy moved, and Liz seconded authorizing Dorinda to draft a Town check for 10% of the purchase of a rescue vehicle sold by the North Hyde Park/Eden Volunteer Fire Department and another for 50% of the cost of a new water softener system for the MVFD. The motion passed.

Dorinda reminded Jeff that the water softener system requires \$400 in annual maintenance costs which the department should include in its budget.

Liz acknowledged the hard work of EMC Paula Otenti, who was ready to pass the torch, and volunteers Honi Bean Barrett and Michelle Johnston for their service during the flood. Jeff said the EMC is thinking of expanding the emergency community to include qualified residents like nurses.

Planning Commission Meeting

Sandy said the PC is tackling two projects. She said Middlesex is one of five Vermont communities selected by the VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development for an in-depth study of rural housing needs. She said this may lead to a review of the Town's zoning to address how best to meet the need for affordable housing. For example, should there be more opportunities for accessory dwellings, commonly known as mother-in-law apartments? She said a panel of experts will come in one week in October to meet with the PC and community members to discuss. Sandy credited new PC Member Elle O'Casey for making this possible.

Also, the PC has completed its work with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to take a deeper look at wildlife resources planning. Sandy said it comes as no surprise that Middlesex has plenty of valuable natural resources. They've created a map which specifies where there are overlapping resources. This will help with future planning and zoning and will direct development away from areas with resources that may need protection.

She said the PC is taking off the month of July. Will start back in in August.

Brigid mentioned the USDA watershed protection program to mitigate future flood issues. Sarah said this had been passed to the Conservation Commission which will address it at its next monthly meeting on July 25th.

Plans for the Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence

Todd, who lives in Middlesex, and Aryka, told the Board that the Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence (MTCR) on US Route 2 near the abandoned Vermont State Police Barracks has been vacant since last spring when the seven adult patients were moved to a new permanent facility. Aryka said the Agency of Human Services would like to temporarily use the facility to house four juveniles who need therapeutic care in a stabilized setting. Currently, there is no such permanent facility in Vermont, though the Legislature has granted permission for a new one to be constructed.

Aryka said there are 1,068 minors in the custody of the Department for Children and Families. Of those, only a fraction are there because they have been found legally delinquent. Since the closing of Woodside, there's been no juvenile detention center in Vermont, she said, so many of

these kids are in facilities that not only don't serve their needs, but that are taking beds away from kids who would be better served at those facilities. Along with the closure of Woodside, the pandemic has also put further staffing stress on the system, so much so that the level of care for these children has been reduced by 50%, she said. As many as 90 children have been housed out of state. Aryka said the tentative plan is to house four youth – male or female – in the MTCR for two-week intervals so they can be stabilized. Some of these youths have had issues with assault and may be at risk of self-harm, she said, and possibly running away. That's why the department would like to return for the August 15th Select Board meeting to present their proposal in more detail and to nearby residents. She and Todd confirmed, using the MTCR in this capacity would be only temporary. Peter said he remembered when (former Chief of Staff) Jeb Spaulding promised the Board long ago that the MTCR would be a temporary facility to house patients displaced by Tropical Storm Irene when it wasn't vacated for almost ten years. Todd says that's one of the reasons why his department approached the Board – to "allay concerns." He said, "This is not a forever facility." Liz asked if the capacity might increase to its former level of seven patients; Aryka said that was unlikely. Peter asked if the old VT State Police Barracks might serve as a permanent facility; Todd said the State plans to lease a facility, not own it and that is not one of the locations. Dorinda asked if the youth have already been housed there. Todd confirmed they were briefly housed there when the State was shutting down Woodside. The Board will take up this issue again on August 15th. Residents are encouraged to attend.

Awarding Clay Point, LLC Abatement Consulting Contract for 28 Rich Road

The Board reviewed the two proposals for lead/asbestos surveying and consulting received by the Town for the FEMA buyout/demolition of 28 Rich Road. The first, from Atlas Technical Consultants, which has a Williston, VT, office submitted a bid of \$4,250. The second, from Clay Point Associates, also of Williston, offered to test 40 bulk samples and create a report for a total of \$1,645. If asbestos is detected, Clay would develop an informal project design, solicit bids and hire a contractor for \$725. (Not including costs of contractor.) And for an additional \$395, would create a project closure report. Total cost = \$2,765.

Randy said Clay had a reputation for being economical and efficient. Peter said 28 Rich Road was a small house and garage and did not need an extensive survey.

MOTION: Randy moved, and Vic seconded awarding the lead/asbestos surveying contract for 28 Rich Road to Clay Point Associates, the lowest bidder, for \$2,765 not including remediation, if necessary. The motion passed.

Treasurer Report

Dorinda informed the Board that RB Tech submitted a proposal for a new Town server costing \$17,000.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Liz moved, and Randy seconded reappointing Dr. Robert A. Penney to another three-year term as Town Health Officer. The motion passed and Peter signed the nomination form.

There were no orders.

The Board adjourned at 6:35 PM

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 AUGUST 1, 2023

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

ELIZABETH SCHARF, VICE CHAIR

BRIGID BROWNING

RANDY DRURY

VIC DWIRE

8 July MVFD Meeting Notes

Total calls to date: 57	E-1 out 9 times
Calls during the last month: 19	E-6 out 4 time
Mutual Aid out: 1	T-1 out 5 times
Mutual Aid in: 1, 4 water rescue requested	R-1 out 5 time
Max members respond: 11	Tk-14 out 1 time
Min members respond: 2	
Avg members respond:	

Calls: 13 Storm related; flooding, trees down, evacuations, vehicles in rain ditches
Non-storm calls
26 Jun, Center Rd, Tree on road, E-1, R-1, 9 responders
26 Jun, Brook Road, Tree on road, E-1, R-1, 9 responders
07 Jul, Bolduc Rd, Fire alarm activation (smoke alarm) false alarm, E-1, E-6, T-1, R-1, 6 responders
11 Jul, McCullough Rd, Communication line on fire, E-1, E-6, 4 responders
16, Jul, Gallagher Rd, Car stuck, 2 people direct, 4 responders
17 Jul, Molly Supple Rd, 2 people direct, 8 responders

Training: Canceled due to the storm.

Work Night: Washed trucks and worked on E-6.

Repairs: E-6 had some pump repairs completed, 2 valves need to be replaced, waiting on parts.

Purchases: Two lengths of 4 inch hose.

Rescue Update: Informed North Hyde Park VFD of intent to buy and they are fine with a 10% deposit.

FAST Sq:
4 total for the reporting period
4 medical only calls

Station 1 issue: Contacted Clear Water Filtration, Inc., they typically require a 50% deposit to get scheduled and they are about 4 weeks out.

Notes from the storm:

First off, all members, including our junior member, of the Department responded during the storm. Only one member was not able to respond after Rt 2 was closed. The Station was opened as the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) about 0930 Monday 10 Jul and remained opened until 1500 Tuesday, 11 Jul. All but one member was at the station through the night. Most of the members were there from about 1200 Monday to 1330 Tuesday. The EOC was staffed by non-FD personnel as well as Department members. We did shelter a family of 4 and their 2 cats after we rescued them from Center Rd. They left the station in the morning after they were able to get a tow truck to pull their car out of the water ditch. We also had the Red Cross team, that was trying to Barre with food and cots, stay at the station for a few hours until their EOC could come up with a plan.