

**Select Board Members**

Liz, Scharf, Chair  
 Randy Drury, Vice Chair  
 Vic Dwire  
 Peter O. Hood  
 Zara Vincent

**MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD**  
**Tuesday, March 19, 2024**  
**Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom\***  
**Middlesex Town Clerk's Office**  
**5 Church Street**  
**Middlesex, Vermont 05602**  
**(802) 223-5915**

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**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Chair Liz Scharf, Vice Chair Randy Drury. Select Board members, Peter Hood\*, Vic Dwire and Zara Vincent\*. Richard Cowles. EMC Steve Dennis. Former Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. MVFD Chief Eric Metivier (who is also the Road Foreman) and MVFD President Jeff Koonz. MVFD member Scott Isham. Matt and Jody Dwire. Energy Committee member Lauri Scharf\*. Listers Samantha Beaudoin\* and Shelly Desjardin. Evelyn Prim\* and Zach French.\* Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes, and the meeting was recorded by ORCA. (\*indicates attended via Zoom)

**Call to Order, Amendments**

Liz called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and explained that after Town Meeting, the Board makes several appointments as part of its annual organizational meeting. The Board appointed a Chair and Vice Chair at its emergency meeting the week before to conduct business.

**Designating the Times Argus as the Newspaper of Record**

**MOTION:** Randy moved, and Vic seconded designating The Times Argus as the newspaper of record. The motion passed.

**Reappointing Vic Dwire as Road Commissioner**

Liz said she received an email from Richard Cowles expressing interest in the Road Commissioner position. Towns can choose to have Road Commissioners elected or appointed. Middlesex appoints. Richard said he's lived in Town 25-30 years and has been doing excavation and construction for most of his life. He thought maybe he could help the Town and realizes it's not a paid position. As for his opinion on the roads, he said they may not need to be paved, but they may need to be brought to that level. He has dealt with FEMA and has a commercial driver's license. He said he's familiar with the kind of work the Road Crew does. Liz thanked him for stepping up to offer help.

Randy asked him to elaborate on his experience with roads. Richard explained that he had built private roads, driveways, did lots of foundation work and worked as a trucker.

Zara asked Vic and Richard what they would suggest to improve the roads. Richard says Middlesex gets a month of winter longer than other communities. The Town is still thawing out, though there's not much you can do with mud. He questioned if the Town is buying enough material and said the Town is patching right now. Vic said there's no quick and easy way to fix Middlesex roads. He said he thinks what Eric this year has done is about all anyone can do. When the road crew did the rebuild after the flood, what suffered was maintenance. He said he had hopes that the Town could get grants to permanently repair the roads, so gravel doesn't sink.

Vic said he'd like to continue as Road Commissioner. Steve pointed out that towns can appoint two road commissioners.

Liz noted the Town is in a two-year FEMA project and that Vic has been helpful. Therefore, Liz said, considering Vic's involvement in the flood projects, personally she feels Vic should stay for continuity purposes. As for two road commissioners, she's not sure that would be a benefit to Middlesex. Randy agreed that Vic has been involved and that's important. However, additional folks being active to help push efforts to improve the roads would be very helpful. Liz noted the Board will be considering forming a sub-committee on roads. Eric said Vic has been very helpful with the FEMA work.

**MOTION:** Randy moved to appoint Vic as Road Commissioner; Zara seconded. The motion passed.

**Other Town Appointments**

**Emergency Management Coordinator:** Zara nominated Steve Dennis for reappointment; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

**Fire Warden:** Randy nominated Jason Merrill for reappointment; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

**Tree Warden:** Vic nominated Gary Lamell for reappointment, Randy seconded. The motion passed.

**Wrightsville Beach Management Representative:** Vic nominated Aric Brown; Zara seconded. The motion passed.

**Recreation Director:** Randy nominated Mitch Osiecki for reappointment; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

**E911 Coordinator:** Zara nominated Mitch Osiecki for reappointment; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

**Animal Control Officer:** Zara nominated Christina Hayward, Vic seconded. The motion passed.

**Deputy Health Officer:** Randy nominated reappointing Liz Fortman; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

**CVFiber Board:** Vic nominated reappointing David Lawrence and Bruce Stevenson as alternate; Randy seconded. The motion passed.

**Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District Representative:** Vic nominated Del McDonough for reappointment; Zara seconded. The motion passed.

**Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Representative:** Zara nominated Ronald Krauth with Mitch Osiecki serving as alternate; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

**Reviewing and adopting the Rules of Procedure**

Liz summarized the Rules of Procedure passed by the Board in 2023 as a recommended alternative guide to Roberts Rules of Order and publicly thanked Peter for serving as chair for so many years. The Board gave him a round of applause. Liz reminded the Board that Select Board meetings should be welcoming to the public and that everyone should treat everyone with respect. She noted serving on the Select Board is a sacrifice for the Town and fellow Board members want what's best for the Town. She invited members of the public to attend in person or via Zoom and she reminded attendees to address the Chair in order to keep the peace and keep the meetings moving.

**MOTION:** Vic moved, and Randy seconded approving the Rules of Procedure. The motion passed and Board members present signed the rules.

**REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING**

**MOTION:** Randy moved and Vic seconded approving the minutes of the March 13, 2024, Emergency Meeting, the February 29, 2024, Vicious Dog Hearing and the February 20, 2024, Regular Meeting. Zara abstained. The motion passed.

**MOTION:** Randy moved the March 19, 2024, Regular Meeting Agenda as amended; Vic seconded. The motion passed.

**Approving a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant of \$9,862.50**

**MOTION:** Randy moved and Vic seconded approving a federal BRIC Grant of \$9,862.50 to pay for a consultant to help update the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. The motion passed and the grant was signed.

**Monthly meeting with the Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department**

Jeff reviewed the activity over the past month (report below) and outlined the effect the April 8<sup>th</sup> solar eclipse will have on Middlesex, which will be in the area of totality. He noted there are 40,000 – 60,000 reservations for stays in the Chittenden County area and at open state campgrounds. Estimates are that 100,000 -150,000 people will be expected to be in the area. I-89 will be crowded. He advised trying to stay off the roads the weekend before to lessen the burden on emergency services.

**Highway Report**

Eric reported that the Freightliner has electrical issues and Portal Road has been closed to school buses due to conditions. There are also sinkholes on Zdon and South Bear Swamp roads. Vic said a pre-bid meeting on Friday drew 20 contractors and bidders. Randy asked about the All Seasons Excavating request for an extension on work it had to stop due to winter weather. Eric said he asked for permission from FEMA in writing to expand the work All Seasons was contracted to do and is waiting for a response.

Matt Dwire asked about comparing bids. Eric said a number of factors are considered. Richard asked if contractors were provided details in the pre-bid hearing. Eric and Vic said yes. Randy said the RFPs were issued as separate projects and, therefore, even if contractors bid on the entire projects, they can be broken out separately. Jody asked which roads were slated for repair. Eric answered nearly every road.

Dorinda asked about invoices that switched from C projects (permanent) to B projects (emergency). Eric and Vic said that has been addressed.

In response to Randy's inquiry, Eric said the Town has received a permit from ANR to dredge the bottom of the stream under the McCullough Hill Road bridge. However, the distance of dredging has been shortened by the State from 200 feet to 50 feet which may not be enough.

Scott Isham asked if there can be a signage at a dangerous corner on VT Route 12 across from Norton Road. The Board agreed this might be a State issue since VT Route is a State road.

**Forming a Mud Road Subcommittee**

Liz noted Hilton Dier is conducting a survey about roads for input on which are the challenging roads during mud season. She suggested including this issue in the Select Board's annual goals. She said a subcommittee could be involved in determining the cost to the Town on serious mitigation since the roads are getting worse every year. Peter said he thinks the Town knows where the bad spots are. Where the Board could use help is figuring out how to pay for road improvements, either with grants or by raising taxes. Jody said you need people on the ground to investigate the road conditions and implement changes. Matt said this year has been the worst year with six mud seasons. The Road Crew doesn't have a chance. He expressed interest in joining the subcommittee as did Zara and Richard and Vic. Zara said she's good at finding grant money. Richard said he's not sure the Town needs to pay for a consultant. The Board agreed a subcommittee should be formed and directed Sarah to post requests for volunteers to join.

**Approving an Access Permit for Diana & Luther Putnam**

The Board reviewed an application for an access permit submitted by Diana & Luther Putnam near 51 South Bear Swamp Road that Eric approved.

**MOTION:** Vic moved, and Randy seconded approving an access permit for Diana and Luther Putnam on South Bear Swamp Road. The motion passed and Liz signed the permit as chair.

**Approving a Resolution for a \$938,000 Vermont Bond Bank Loan**

Dorinda reviewed the documents for a \$938,000 Vermont Bond Bank Loan at 1.3% interest that would be used, in part, to pay off the \$3 million line of credit from Community Bank that was taken out to pay for emergency road repairs due to the July 2023 flood. Dorinda said the Bond Bank loan doesn't have to be paid back until March 1, 2026. Contrary to previous reports, the Town will not be obligated to use all FEMA reimbursement to pay back the Bond Bank. One half of FEMA payments can be used to pay back the Bond Bank; the other half can be spent as the Town sees fit.

**MOTION:** Zara moved to approve the resolution and Peter seconded. The motion present and Board members present signed the resolution.

Marc Steinberg and Linda Hsu's application for a buyout of their camp at 366 VT Route 12 was passed over until the April 2, 2024, meeting.

Liz recessed the meeting at 6:30 PM for a warned Board of Civil Authority meeting. The Select Board meeting resumed at 7:23 PM.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board discussed how to respond to a survey from the VT Agency of Natural Resources on climate priorities. Randy agreed that the Energy Committee would be good at filling out the survey as Lauri suggested. Vic said he has no problem with that as long as the Town Garage is addressed in the survey.

All orders were signed.

The Board reviewed a letter from Jeremy Goff that was emailed to the Town Moderator and stuffed in the door of Town Hall on Town Meeting Day. The letter complained about an interaction with Vic on his private property at McCullough Hill Road last summer. Vic said Jeremy was trucking in stone for Blow and Cote, Inc. for Hutchins Construction that was contracted to repair McCullough Hill Road. Jeremy as about to dump stone on Vic's private property, to which he objected. Things got heated because Jeremy insisted on dumping, Vic said. He reiterated that he never identified himself as the Road Commissioner or made any connection to the Town. When Vic threatened to call the VT State Police, Jeremy drove off. Matt, Vic's son and co-owner of the parcel where the dumping allegedly was about to take place, backed up Vic's story. The Board agreed this wasn't a Town matter, though Liz reminded Vic and everyone that they have public-facing positions. Vic asked for support from the Board.

The Board reviewed a letter from Evelyn Prim and Zach French asking that newly elected Lister and Budget Committee member Samantha Beaudoin – with whom they’ve had a conflict as neighbors – not assess their property on Mead Road. Shelley, who is also Samantha’s mother, noted there’s no reason why the Listers would be assessing their property this year. The next time they’ll be assessed will be during the town-wide reappraisal which begins this summer and will be conducted by NEMRC, which has no connections. The Board acknowledged that it has no control over the Listers or Budget Committee members who are statutorily separately and equally elected. Randy asked Evelyn and Zach if they were satisfied by the responses to their letter; they said they were.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

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

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON APRIL 2, 2024.

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LIZ SCHARF, CHAIR

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RANDY DRURY, VICE CHAIR

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BRIGID BROWING

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RANDY DRURY

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VICTOR DWIRE

19 Mar SB Meeting Notes

Total calls this year: 19  
Calls during this period: 3  
Mutual Aid out: 0  
Mutual Aid in: 0  
Max members respond: 4  
Min members respond: 3  
Avg members respond: 3.7

E-1 out 1 time  
E-6 out 0 time  
T-1 out 0 times  
R-1 out 2 times  
Tk-14 out 0 times  
POV out 0 times

07 Mar, I-89 SB mm 59.4, Vehicle accident, Cnx'd by VSP, 3 responders  
08 Mar, US Rt 2, Vehicle fire, E-1, R-1, 4 responders  
11 Mar, US R 2, TT unit rollover, R-1, 4 responders

Training: Working with Capital Dispatch and tour

Repairs: R-1 working emissions sensor issue

Purchases: Low level strainer for E-6

FAST Sq:  
8 total for the reporting period  
6 medical only calls