

Select Board Members

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

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, June 18, 2024
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Liz Scharf, Vice Chair Randy Drury. Select Board members, Peter Hood*, Vic Dwire and Zara Vincent (Chair of the Town Roads Subcommittee). MVFD President Jeff Koonz. MVFD Chief and Road Foreman/Road Commissioner Eric Metivier. Treasurer Cheryl Grandfield. Town FEMA Coordinator Steve Martin. Former Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Zoning Administrator Kevin Thompson*. Jayne Shoup, Michelle Johnston, Elliot Burg*, Jan Thouron*, WCUUSD Middlesex representative Chris McVeigh, and Samantha Beaudoin. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes and the meeting was recorded by ORCA. (*indicates attended via Zoom)

Call to Order

Liz called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Guests were welcomed.

MOTION: Zara moved, and Randy seconded approving the corrected minutes from the June 4, 2024, Middlesex Select Board meeting. The motion passed and the minutes were signed by those present.

MOTION: Randy moved, and Zara seconded approving the agenda for the June 18, 2024, Middlesex Select Board meeting, which was amended to include correspondence from Evelyn Prim.

MVFD Monthly Meeting

Jeff reviewed the activity at the fire department since the May meeting. (Please see his report below.) Jeff noted it was unusual to have so many failing smoke alarms, calls that more often are made in the fall. Liz noted that at the emergency management meeting the committee discussed somehow alerting the MVFD which homes have EV cars with batteries, which can be fire hazards.

Highway Department Update

Eric reviewed his report, below. The Town is renting the roadside mower from 7/15 – 7/25. Mowing happens once a year. Eric said he's received one resume for the highway department opening and expects another to be submitted tomorrow. Liz suggested a Select Board member participate in the interviews.

Dirt Tech Update: Steve said Dirt Tech has completed permanent repairs on Macey Road. They added riprap to shore up the bank where Patterson Creek was eroding and extra work on Wood Road which is complete. Liz asked how the Wood Road neighbors have responded. Steve said he spoke to John Rahill who feels there should be a bigger crown. Steve said there's not enough material in the road to create the best crown possible. However, they will monitor the roads. Liz confirmed that it was a cost issue, dependent on what FEMA will reimburse.

Dirt Tech should complete Government Hill Road tomorrow. The highway department will then chloride the roads and move to Culver Hill Road which will take two days. FEMA is aware of the box culvert that'll be necessary on Portal Road. Eric said the State is requiring this box culvert, so FEMA is more likely to approve it. It's not applicable for the hazard mitigation grant Zara's working on. Dirt Tech wanted to start on East Hill next week. Liz asked if that would be disruptive to residents; Steve said when the large culvert goes in, the road will be shut down for a few days. Residents will be forewarned. Steve said he meets with FEMA once a week now and he'd like to submit over \$400,000 of work on Macey/Wood roads to FEMA in one package. Randy said he was concerned about the Town's cash flow. Liz asked Cheryl about the Community Bank line of credit that's expiring in August. Dorinda said the line is for \$3 million and the town has spent only \$1.5 million. The line of credit should roll over if the Town refinances the loan. The Town will have to pay interest, though the State may pick that up since it was a loan to pay for flood work.

Jayne Shoup's email raising questions about Dirt Tech's staging site. Jayne filed a formal complaint with the Board on June 12 about Dirt Tech's staging area across the street from her house on Steve Martin's land at the corner of Center and Brook roads. She said the mounds of material and culverts violated local zoning codes since no permit had been granted and the area is zoned for rural residential. She also questioned if there was an Act 250 violation since the land is agricultural.

At the meeting, Jayne said the decision to place the staging area on his field was made by Steve alone and she wanted to know how it skipped zoning. Liz said she felt it was done as a courtesy so Dirt Tech wouldn't have to deliver their material Town Shed and Steve didn't think there would be zoning violations because it was temporary. Liz said she didn't realize what a huge issue it was until the Board received Jayne's email.

Eric said he was visited by Susan Baird, District 5/Act 250 Coordinator following up on Jayne's complaint to the state. Jayne asked how many Select Board members drove by the site every day and never questioned whether it was a zoning issue when this staging area was in a residential area. Randy said he got complaints fairly quickly and the Zoning Administrator was involved very quickly, as quick as town government can be.

Kevin said when he was made aware of the situation on June 12, he immediately inspected the site and determined it was a contractor's yard which is not allowed in that zoning district, and it was also in the floodplain. That day, he sent certified letters to Dirt Tech and Steve notifying them of the zoning violations, requesting they remove all material and equipment and return the land to its original state within seven days. Jayne asked who would be billed for Dirt Tech's move from the site. Vic said Dirt Tech should be paying the Town for use of the Town garage, to which he objected. He said bidders on the project were informed they would have to get their own staging area last spring when he was Road Commissioner. He said Dirt Tech should not be allowed to use the area around the Town garage as a staging area. Jayne said Steve told her he could develop the land where the staging area was and build houses there. Liz said they would be subject to all zoning regulations.

Town Road Subcommittee: Zara said she's posting explanations on Front Porch Forum and Middlesex Families with news about Dirt Tech. She said (former road foreman) Paul Cerminara and Richard Cowles are updating the mud list. The subcommittee is also applying for \$200,000 in Hazard Mitigation grants; they are fully funded and don't require a town match. "Team Future" is working on asset management. John Rahill is looking at speeding issues. Zach Smith put together a cheat sheet on grants and when they're due. Hilton Dier put together an 18-page survey and 179 residents participated. Liz thanked Zara for all her work on the subcommittee and the subcommittee's work.

Personnel Policy

The Board picked up where they left off reviewing the policy last summer.

Overtime: The Board discussed how overtime works. The current policy notes employees would be paid time-and-a-half for working on a holiday as long as they worked the remaining 32 normal work hours. Michelle Johnston noted other towns pay their road crews overtime simply for working a holiday, no matter what they do with the remaining days in a week. Liz asked for this issue to be further researched.

At 6:03 PM, Liz recessed the meeting to hold a Board of Abatement Meeting as warned. The Select Board Meeting resumed at 6:40 PM.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Peter moved and Randy seconded approving an updated Town policy for the collection of current and delinquent taxes. The motion passed and Board members present signed the policy, as did the Treasurer.

Correspondence:

Tennis courts: Elliot expounded on an email sent to the Board June 2nd asking that the Town tennis courts near Rumney School be resurfaced and marked for pickleball. Liz noted the Town has set aside money every year for resurfacing. Cheryl said before the start of the FY25 fiscal year, there is \$8,300 in the account. Sarah said Wrightsville Recreation District, Worcester and Middlesex might join efforts to apply for a recreation grant that might help pay for the courts.

WCUUSD’s proposal for a joint public hearing with the WCUUSD and Select Board at Rumney School: Following up on a letter sent to the Board June 10th, Chris said the school board is soliciting input from district communities on how they may be affected by the potential closing of Doty School in Worcester and Calais Elementary. While Rumney is not slated to be closed, there could be 70 children from Worcester joining the @150 students at Rumney. This will have a ripple effect on traffic and programs. Rumney’s name will likely be changed to be more inclusive to Worcester students. Worcester and Calais voters must approve the closings under the WCUUSD’s Articles of Agreement. If they don’t, Chris said it’s likely the district will seek to amend the Articles of Agreement so those town approvals aren’t necessary. Whether or not closing schools will save money is up for debate since it’s likely that by consolidating schools, the district will be able to expand services, he said. The Board agreed WCUUSD should warn the meeting to include a Select Board since it’s likely a quorum of Select Board members will attend. Chris said there was no date set for the joint public hearing.

Mead Road: Per the Board’s agreement at its June 4th meeting, Liz contacted the lawyer representing Evelyn Prim and Zach French on Mead Road regarding disruptive flags (strips) and milk jugs in the Town’s right of way. Evelyn responded that the jugs were not in the right-of-way. The Board discussed tearing down the yellow flags that Samantha said were remnants of a tarp and decided to email the lawyer informing him the yellow strips are distracting and need to be removed. If not, the Town will remove them. Mead Road will be graded; it just needs more material.

Town Hall rehabilitation update: Liz said on Monday she and other Town representatives met with the architects (VIA) redesigning Town Hall. VIA said June 25th was the last day for public input/changes on the design which has been tweaked to allow for more office space. Sarah said if the Board wants to get a bond question on the November 5, 2024, General Election ballot, the Board will need to approve the final wording of the question before August 23, 2024, since the ballots are being produced and mailed by the Secretary of State’s Office.

Cheryl sought guidance on how to finance the new excavator: five years at an interest rate of 5.73%; seven years at 5.82% or ten years at 5.97%. The Board recommended ten years.

The Board decided to move its regularly scheduled meeting from July 2, 2024, to July 9, 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40PM.

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A SPECIALLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON JULY 9, 2024.

LIZ SCHARF, CHAIR

RANDY DRURY, VICE CHAIR

VIC DWIRE

PETER HOOD

ZARA VINCENT

18 June MVFD Meeting Notes

Total calls this year: 46	E-1 out 9 times
Calls during this period: 9	E-6 out 0 times
Mutual Aid out: 0	T-1 out 2 times
Mutual Aid in: 0	R-1 out 1 time
Max members respond: 7	Tk-14 out 0 times
Min members respond: 2	POV out 2 times
Avg members respond: 4.1	

- 23 May, I-89 SB mm 58.6, Vehicle in median, E-1, T-1, 3 responders
- 08 Jun, I-89 NB mm 57, Car vs deer, E-1, R-1, 4 responders
- 09 Jun, McCullough Hill Rd, Smoke alarm, false alarm, E-1, R-1, POV, 4 responders
- 11 Jun, Welch Park, Odor, Nothing found, E-1, R-1, POV, 7 responders
- 12 Jun, Vt Rt 12, Car accident, E-1, R-1, 3 responders
- 14 Jun, I-89 SB mm 57.7, Car vs deer, E-1, R-1, 4 responders
- 14 Jun, Center & Notch, Unattended burn (permitted), E-1, R-1, T-1, 5 responders
- 14 Jun, Shady Rill Rd, Car accident, E-1, R-1, T-1, 3 responders
- 15 Jun, East Hill Rd, Smoke in the area, E-1, 2 responders

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

Training: Vehicle extrication and using jaws

Road Foreman/Road Commissioner’s Bimonthly Road Report

6/4/2024-6/17/2024

Equipment
Kenworth- Back with a new engine
International- Running and no issues
Freightliner- Still down

Grader- Running no issues

Excavator- Waiting on the new one

Road Work/Issues

Graded and added gravel to Bolduc Rd (7 loads)

Graded and added gravel to west hill (30 loads) Also cleaned under and around the guardrails by Guilmette Rd so water can drain off the road.

Graded and added gravel to east hill between Portal Rd and the pavement adding (8 loads)

Graded Macey Rd so Dirt Tech could add gravel. We added 2 loads over one spot.

Graded and added gravel to North Bear Swamp Rd (11 loads) also removed several large rocks out of the road way.

Added gravel to the bottom of Molly Supple on both ends (8 loads)

Graded Culver Hill Rd, Government Hill so Dirt Tech could add gravel.

Graded Wood Rd so gravel could be added.

Upper Sunny Brook Rd and Davy Rd signs are missing, ordered and picked up new ones and installed.

DRAFT