

**Middlesex Town Meeting Solutions Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 16, 2018**  
**6:00 p.m. Middlesex Town Office**

Present: Susan Clark, Dexter Lefavour, Tim Murphy, Janette Shaffer, Dave Shepard, Barb Whitchurch, Greg Whitchurch

**1. Minutes of October and November Meetings**

Minutes were reviewed for the October 26<sup>th</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting Solutions Committee (TMSC) meeting. Approval of both sets of minutes was moved by Janette and seconded by Tim. The minutes were approved.

**2. Remote Town Meeting Participation (RTMP)**

Janette is planning to use WIFI for RTMP, and she said it would be helpful to minimize the number of cell phone users trying to also use the Rumney WIFI during Town Meeting. She will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting making this request to meeting attendees. She will use an Apple laptop with an Ipad to provide the camera. In past years the phone connection for RTMP participants has been somewhat problematic in terms of maintaining constant connectivity. Greg offered a PC laptop if that would be helpful.

Barb will post the flyer advertising RTMP by in various locations and it will also be put on Front Porch Forum. Locations where the flyer will be posted include:

- Waterbury, Montpelier and Barre senior centers
- Home Health & Hospice
- Central Vermont Council on Aging
- Vermont Center for Independent Living
- Middlesex Town Hall
- Rumney Elementary School
- U32 Middle and High School
- Worcester Post Office Café
- Sticks & Stuff
- Red Hen
- Sally's Second Act
- Middlesex Food Shelf

**3. Food and Child Care for Town Meeting**

The post Town Meeting meal and child care during Town Meeting will be as in past years. Liz Scharf is leading the preparation of the dinner and has a back-up lined up if she doesn't make it back from a trip for Town Meeting. Dave will be the contact if anyone needs transportation to Town Meeting.

**4. Draft Town Meeting Warning**

A draft warning for the 2018 Town Meeting was available and was reviewed.

**5. Budget Charts**

Last year the budget charts were prepared by the Town Treasurer. Susan will check with Town Clerk Sarah Merriman about this year.

### **6. Meals on Wheels**

The TMSC reviewed the report submitted by the Waterbury Senior Center for the Town Report about the Meals on Wheels program in support of their monetary request. Committee members felt that the necessary information was in the report but that the presentation could be clearer. One possibility would be to reformat the information as a handout to be distributed at Town Meeting. Tim will try to meet with Karol from the Senior Center about the presentation of the data on the program.

### **7. Petitions at Rumney School**

It has come to the attention of the TMSC that the Principal at Rumney School has said petitions for individuals running for town office or for other articles to be included on the Town Meeting Warning can't be distributed in Rumney School, including at school events after school hours such as basketball games. The Committee questioned the appropriateness of this position. It wasn't clear where this directive originated, but possibly it may have come from the Supervisory Union. Dave made a motion to have the Town Clerk contact the Secretary of State to determine whether prohibiting individuals from distributing petitions for town office or for articles to be included in the Warning for Town Meeting is legal. Dexter provided a second for the motion. Discussion ensued during which it was mentioned that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns might have an opinion on this question. The Committee also discussed whether such a policy could be amended, for instance to disallow petitioners from approaching people directly in the lobby, but to allow petitions to be circulated at a table in the lobby. The Solutions Committee is concerned that especially in a town like Middlesex that has very few central "common spaces" (no post office, no general store, etc.), our public elementary school serves as an important community gathering site. While the Committee fully appreciates the need to protect students during school hours, Committee members expressed the belief that after-school hours at public events should be an acceptable time for members of the public to use the lobby for activities that are legitimately of interest to the community. Susan will check with the Town Clerk about contacting the Secretary of State and the League. The motion was approved.

### **8. Community Visioning Forum**

There was a discussion of possible sources of funding to support a community visioning forum. Susan noted that conducting such a process can be helpful for grant applications and the forum can result in tangible actions. Possible funding sources include the following:

- Vermont Community Foundation
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development Planning Grant
- Vermont Council on Rural Development – they engage in community visits but can do only a limited number each year and are pretty backed up
- U.S. Department of Agriculture has grants for projects related to structures but can include planning efforts

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 13 at 6:00 p.m. at Rumney School

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, Secretary

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