

Select Board Members
 Peter Hood, Chair
 Mary Just Skinner,
Vice Chair
 William Callnan
 Steve Martin
 Liz Scharf

MINUTES
MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, September 22, 2015
5:00 PM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

Present: Members Steve Martin, Bill Callnan, Liz Scharf and also Chair Peter Hood by speakerphone, Bill Rossmassler, Middlesex Conservation Member George Longenecker, Colin Crawford-Stempel, Aaron Weed, Fred McCullough and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman.

Call to Order/Amendments

Bill Callnan called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. There were no amendments

MCC Recommends Purchase of Steed Property/Special Town Meeting Debated

George said that after a subcommittee review and approval, the Middlesex Conservation Commission agreed last week to recommend to the Select Board that the Town purchase 38.9 acres at the end of Notch Road owned by Cynthia Steed for \$40,000 to improve access to the Town Forest and to insure that such access was preserved by preventing private development. The Board accepted the MCC's recommendation.

However, Bill Callnan questioned the necessity of holding a Special Town Meeting to purchase the land. Vermont state statutes are clear that towns may purchase lands with public funds for conservation purposes and \$20,000 was already set aside in the Middlesex Conservation Fund for an acquisition such as this. Moreover, with the "unanticipated revenue" of \$21,500 from the pending sale of the former Morse property to Town Hall neighbor David Specht, the Town would have sufficient funds to cover the purchase. Therefore, there really were no changes to the budget if the Board decided to do away with the \$5,000 per year for four years provision and pay Cynthia Steed outright.

Also, Bill Callnan questioned the precedent that would be set. Would the Select Board have to hold a Special Town Meeting every time it wanted to buy a truck, for example?

Fred said he thought there was a difference between buying a truck – which is on the regular order of business for a municipality – and the rarer decision to acquire land that, as Aaron noted, would be removed from the tax rolls. Bill Callnan said he could see their view.

The Board decided to defer the issue until Peter had a chance to consult with the Town Attorney about the necessity of the Special Town Meeting and whether it would set a precedent for future purchases.

Mowing the Town Athletic Field

Bill Rossmassler said that grass on the Town Rec field had grown so high that Brian Van Hoy took the initiative and just mowed it himself – twice – since he was unable to contact Jason Merrill, head of the Middlesex Rec Committee. Bill said Grant Knauss, a soccer parent from Middlesex, has offered to mow the field for \$40 per cut with two and maybe three cuts left in the season. Bill Callnan noted the Board had instructed Jason to mow it "high" to preserve the field, though Bill Rossmassler said this was too high.

Bill Callnan said Sarah should contact Jason and present him with Grant's offer and also ask him to appear at the next Select Board meeting on October 13 to provide an update about the status of the Rec Committee.

Traffic Calming near Rumney School

Sarah told the Board that Tammy Picard expressed concern about the traffic around Rumney School and pedestrians walking on Shady Rill Road, now that there was a provision for diagonal parking. Peter said he recalled that in meetings with the school about plans for the addition, a pathway was supposed to be built from the parking area to the school so no one would have to walk on the road and that the school principal should be contacted.

Appointing Brandon Poulson to the Budget Committee

Brandon had yet to submit a bio and letter asking to be appointed so the Board deferred on his appointment until he did.

Municipal Dog Ordinance

The Board reviewed the proposed Municipal Dog Ordinance. Bill noted there was no formal definition for a vicious dog, only a "potentially" vicious dog. He suggested eliminating the requirements that a dog found without a collar or license be impounded, that the Select Board mandate owners take a responsible dog owner course on the third offense, and said dogs running at large should only be classified as nuisances if complaints were filed. The Board decided to take up the ordinance again at its regularly scheduled meeting of October 27.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Bill moved and Liz seconded approval of the 9.8.2015 Select Board minutes. The motion passed by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Sarah said Bill May was buying the Kennison property on Route 12 and asked if there were Town funds to help with the cleanup since the trailer was condemnable and filled with trash that would cost upwards of \$9,000 to clear. The Board noted that although the Town had issued a health order in the past, public funds could not be used to improve private property.

The Board signed the Personnel Policy that was revised at the regularly scheduled 9.8.2015 meeting.

MOTION: Steve moved and Liz seconded approving an agreement with Bill Yacavoni to conduct the annual FY2015 audit.

The Board deferred signing an agreement allowing neighbor Doug Lombard to use Town land behind his house for raised garden beds until he specified the size of the beds.

All Orders were signed.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Merriman, Select Board Assistant