

Select Board Members
 Peter Hood, Chair
 Mary Just Skinner,
Vice Chair
 Phil Hyjek
 Steve Martin
 Liz Scharf

MINUTES
MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, August 20, 2019
5:00 PM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Peter Hood, Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner, Members Steve Martin and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Road Foreman Paul Cerminara. Jessica Clark. Johanne and Marshall Gray, ORCA and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. The agenda was amended to table the update on the middlesexvt.org emails since Phil was not in attendance. The Board briefly discussed appointing a delegate to the VLCT Annual Meeting in October.

Highway Updates

Paul said 2019 had been a tough year with a harsh winter, lingering mud season and two significant storms that caused costly damage. In short, the Highway Department's five-year plan was out the window. After spending the summer recovering from the above damage, only now is the Town where it was supposed to be in May. The good news is, work on the damaged roads has been completed. Some other highlights:

- The fuel tank at the Town Garage is prepped and ready to go. Permits have been obtained.
- After attending an emerald ash borer class at UVM's Extension Program, Paul said the Town will need to address ash trees in the Town's rights of way ASAP. There are thousands of ash trees that fall into this category. They will either have to be removed or treated within five years since there are reports of the emerald ash borer beetle in Middlesex already. Mary, who is on the board of the Washington Electric Coop, said WEC is addressing this issue, too, and may be able to help the Town's efforts since at times the rights of way overlap. Peter asked whether it might be proactive for the Town to invite loggers to remove the trees. That way, the wood can still be used before it's too late. However, if there are special ash trees that should be preserved, it might be a good idea to purchase pesticide and equipment to inoculate them like Montpelier. Montpelier has only 40 ash trees, Paul said, less than one percent of Middlesex's.
- Doug Grout has retired from roadside mowing after his mower broke so there won't be a second cut this year. Paul said the Town will need to deal with this next year, though the costs are high: \$3000/week to rent a machine and 4 weeks for a single roadside mow, not to mention the cost of manpower. Peter advised Paul to hire someone to at least brush hog the intersections for safety.
- Winter sand might exist in the Town's gravel pit. Mike Patterson is planning to flag the boundaries so Fred McCullough can bore through the topsoil at cost. That's the only way to find if there's good sand underneath. The Board discussed the logistics of excavating sand from private property across the street provided the owner agrees to a reasonable deal.
- The Town needs to insulate the roof of the Town Garage. First, however, the Town Garage needs a structural assessment to determine whether it's worth investing anything in the building. The same structural engineer should take a look at Town Hall, the Board agreed.

In general, as for improving the roads, Paul said it feels to him like Town is regressing. The Board agreed they have never received more calls about roads than this year. Peter asked whether, going into budget season, the Board needs to consider subcontracting to repair culverts, dig ditches and brush hog the roads. Should the Town lease equipment? Hire additional help? Steve said he and Paul will draft a plan to deal with these issues and present them to the Board with their suggestions.

The Board agreed to send a letter to each resident informing them that, due to a severe winter and violent spring storms, the Road Crew has spent much of the summer repairing that damage and will not be able to follow the protocol of the five-year plan. The Board will review the letter at its next meeting.

Potholes on Three Mile Bridge Road

Johanne and Marshal Gray, of Moretown, showed the Board photos of three potholes on Three Mile Bridge Road that have damaged their cars. Having listened to Paul's presentation, they said they understood the challenges currently facing the Town, but these potholes existed before then. Paul estimated there are probably a dozen such potholes around Town equaling two-three weeks of work and his department would address them soon, now that the other roads have been repaired. The Grays and Paul left the meeting.

Appointing Jessica Clark to the ZBA

The Board reviewed a letter from Jessica Clark asking to be appointed to the ZBA to fill a vacancy created by John Demeter's resignation. **MOTION:** Liz moved and Steve seconded appointing Jess Clark to the ZBA. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Dorinda said the General Fund was able to repay the Paving Fund \$100,000 it borrowed to cover two loan payments this month. The General Fund was short \$78,500 already due to emergency road repairs. Already, the Town has received close to half a million in tax payments, though the Town has already spent what it budgeted for highway equipment repairs on a restoring a damaged transmission.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded approving the July 30, 2019 Select Board minutes. The motion passed. The minutes were signed.

Peter signed access permits for Dennis and Jennifer Hill on Culver Hill Road and a permit for Corey Michaud at 781 East Hill Road.

All orders were signed.

Correspondence: The Board reviewed a letter from Jim Colby received August 20th in response to the minutes of the July 30th Select Board meeting.

The Board reviewed a letter received August 7th from Ian Degutis, Traffic Operations Engineer, advising that the State was considering extending the 35mph zone in Putnamville after a traffic study showed people speeding into the area. A public hearing on the change will be held at 1 PM, August 28th before the Traffic Committee, 2178 Airport Road, Barre.

Jess and ORCA left the meeting.

MOTION: Liz moved and Steve seconded entering executive session at 6:10 PM per 1 V.S.A. §313 (a) (1). The motion passed. The Board exited Executive Session at 6:40 PM.

Peter adjourned the meeting at 6:41 PM

Respectfully submitted,
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 SEPTEMBER 3, 2019.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF