

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

MINUTES
MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, October 15, 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. MVFD Chief Doug Hanson, Treasurer Marge Bower, and President Jeff Koonz. Budget Committee Members Bill Dorigan, Elias Gardner and George Longenecker, also of the Conservation Commission. Bryan Redmond and Sky Barsch. Christina Bean of ORCA and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM. The agenda was amended to omit the Lister presentation because they were unable to attend and to add a request from the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District for a letter of support for construction of a hazardous waste facility. The agenda was taken out of order to accommodate scheduled guests. Peter noted the minutes should show a hearty congratulations from the Board to Steve on this, his birthday.

Treasurer's Report – Approval Process for VLCT Claims under \$10,000

Dorinda referred to a recent request from VLCT to approve payment of a \$2,500 insurance claim filed by Vic Dwyer whose shed was damaged by a Town truck delivering free fill to him on his property. At issue was the \$1,000 deductible the Town would have to pay. Dorinda said the Board should institute an approval process because she, as Treasurer, does not have sole authority to approve payment of the claim, the equivalent of an order, since each claim requires the Town to pay a maximum deductible of \$1,000. In her opinion, such approval should come from the Board.

Peter, who unilaterally approved the claim last week, agreed the process could be improved. He approved the claim because there was no alternative: the Town did not dispute the truck hit and damaged Dwyer's shed. In this case, if the Town denied payment, it could risk a lawsuit. Liz proposed a process whereby the Board granted the Select Board Chair authority to approve claims – under a certain limit - and in his/her absence the Vice Chair.

MOTION: Liz moved and Steve seconded granting authority to the Select Board Chair – and in his/her absence, the Vice Chair – to authorize payments on claims against the Town under \$10,000 approved by the Town's insurance carrier, VLCT/PACIF. The motion passed. The Board noted that at any time there are questions or concerns, payments on claims may be brought to the Board for review as a whole.

Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department FY'21 Budget Request

MVFD Treasurer Marge Bower presented a \$65,750 budget that was largely unchanged from this year's budget. Several big costs such as Capital West's dispatching fees and insurance had to be estimated, though there is no control over these costs.

Mary asked how many members were on the MVFD and how many were from Middlesex. Jeff said there are 11 members and three are from Middlesex. Marge said there are five members of the FAST squad; two of those are also on the fire department. Liz asked how many fight fires. Jeff said in the evenings as many as seven to nine firefighters could be available; during daytime working hours, that could be as few as one. The MVFD has responded to approximately 59 calls so far this year. Of those, about 28% are I-89 responses. (In a subsequent email to the Board following up this question, Jeff wrote: "Of those 17 calls, we were cancelled 4 times and we didn't find anything on 4 other calls. Which brings us to 9 call we did something for a 16.9%.")

In addition, Jeff gave the Board a heads up that the MVFD will need to replace within the next six years the 11 air packs purchased through a grant in 2003, a ballparked cost of \$58,000. Because of manufacturer consistency, they cannot be replaced one at a time. Liz asked about raising \$10,000 per year in anticipation. Peter said the Board's philosophy is

to take out bank notes – loans – as long as interest rates are low on the theory that current taxpayers should not be asked to pay for equipment purchased in the future when they might no longer be living in town. Peter encouraged the MVFD to search for grants. Other future costs include firefighting gear. The current pants and coats are over ten years old and are starting to get worn. The MVFD will need four sets at \$1,200-\$1,500 each. Finally, the MVFD will need a new rescue truck to carry people and tools to emergency events since the 1983 Chevy is on its last legs. Jeff suggested a used pickup truck with a cap and 8-foot bed with roll-out trays and a lighting system. Mary asked if this is what the FAST squad uses. Marge said the First Aid Stabilization Team arrives in their private cars. The rescue truck carries tools such as shovels and signs for the interstate along with a few people. Jeff said once the above items are addressed, the MVFD should be good for the next 25 years. Jeff, Doug and Marge left the meeting.

Notch Road Upgrade Request

The Board reviewed an analysis by Road Foreman Paul Cerminara regarding Bryan Redmond and Sky Barsch's request that the Town upgrade the end of Notch Road that ends at the access to the Town Forest and their driveway. In a previous email to the Board, Bryan and Sky said there has been a marked increase in traffic on this Class 4 portion of the road (approximately 800-820 feet) due to the popularity of the Town Forest trail and that has raised safety issues. Though abutting landowners have improved the road on their own initiative, Bryan and Sky would like the road to be upgraded so it can be plowed, ditched and graded.

If this portion were to be upgraded, the Town would need to install a turn around. Also, the State might want to move/expand its parking area since hikers are parking their cars on Notch Road. Bryan said people are driving everywhere; some are even driving down to the cabins. The Board discussed costs and what percentage of that upgrade should be shared by the abutting landowners. Mary cautioned that this discussion should not be taken as given that the Board has approved the upgrade which must follow a public hearing and decision process outlined in state statutes. No matter what, Steve said, the road upgrade will not happen this year. Sky, Bryan, Elias and Bill left the meeting. Steve left the meeting to celebrate his birthday; the Board sang in tone-deaf harmony.

FY'21 Conservation Commission Budget Request

George presented the MCC's request for \$500 to pay for dues, a project implementation, training and administration. Last year, the MCC used the same amount to install a kiosk at the Town Forest trail. Next year, the MCC may use a portion of the allotment to install signage on the same trail. The MCC has also asked the Board to consider placing a special article on the 2020 Town Meeting Warning for \$5,000 for the Middlesex Conservation Fund. Peter asked whether the MCC would be interested in using a portion of that fund for improved parking at the Town Forest trail. George said the MCC planned to review stipulations on how that fund could be used. Might use to help with water mitigation in the Shady Rill Park. George left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Mary moved and Liz seconded approving the October 1, 2019, Select Board Minutes. The motion passed and those present signed the minutes.

All orders were signed.

CORRESPONDENCE: The Board discussed a request from the Middlesex Democrats to host an event in Town Hall on November 18 in which the Washington County Democrats would be invited. They have a certificate of insurance, but are requesting a waiver of the \$25 fee since they are a Middlesex group. Liz said it's a Middlesex community event inviting those from out of town and the fee should be waived. The Board agreed.

The Board reviewed a request from Avery Knauss to host a Halloween party at Town Hall for approximately 20 middle-school students from U-32 and area schools on November 1st. The Board decided she could hold the party on the following conditions: 1) an adult sign the Town Hall rental form 2) A minimum of two, preferably four, adults chaperone the party, 3) no more than 30 people in total attend and 4) the group clean up the hall and remove their trash at the end of the party. In addition, the attendees should be respectful of abutting neighbors by being quiet when they leave no later than 10:30 PM.

Liz said Avery's a good kid and doesn't anticipate any problems. No insurance is required, though they will have to pay the \$25 fee.

The Board reviewed a request from the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District for a letter of support to include in their application for a Vermont Agency of Natural Resources grant to construct a year-round hazardous-waste collection facility. The Board agreed.

MOTION: Liz moved and Mary seconded sending a letter of support for construction of the hazardous waste facility to the CVSWMD and granting Peter authorization to sign it on the Board's behalf. The motion passed.

Liz left the meeting at 6:37 PM. Without a quorum, the meeting was automatically adjourned.

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 NOVEMBER 5, 2019.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF