

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

MINUTES  
**MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD**  
**Tuesday, March 17, 2020**  
**5:00 PM**  
**REMOTE MEETING**  
**Middlesex Town Clerk's Office**  
**5 Church Street**  
**Middlesex, Vermont 05602**  
**(802) 223-5915**

MINUTES

*Due to public health concerns over COVID-19, the Select Board held this meeting via conference call. The call-in numbers were published on this meeting's posted agenda and the Town website so the public could attend. In addition, to comply with 1 VSA §312 (a)(2)(D), the Select Board Assistant manned the conference phone at the Town Clerk's Office. All votes were taken by rollcall.*

**PRESENT:** By conference phone - Select Board Chair Peter Hood, Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner, Members Liz Scharf, Phil Hyjek, and Steve Martin; Town Meeting Moderator Susan Clark and guests Vic Dwire, Matt and Jodi Dwire and Roland Hebert. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell, Lister Amy Whitehome and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman attended at the Town Clerk's Office.

**Call to Order/Amendments**

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM. Dorinda amended the agenda to include a discussion about emergency management costs.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**  
**Select Board Chair & Voting Powers**

**MOTION:** Steve moved and Phil seconded reappointing Peter Select Board Chair Appointment of Select Board Chair and granting the Select Board Chair the power to vote. The motion passed.

**Adopting Robert's Rules of Order**

**MOTION:** Mary moved and Phil seconded adopting Robert's Rules of Order as procedural guidelines. The motion passed.

**Appointing the Select Board Vice Chair**

**MOTION:** Liz moved and Steve seconded reappointing Mary Just Skinner as Vice Chair. The motion passed.

**Designating Select Board Meetings Location & Time**

**MOTION:** Mary moved and Steve seconded designating 5:00 PM on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month in the Town Clerk's Office as Select Board meeting times and location with remote meetings held as necessary. The motion passed.

**Designating the Times-Argus as the Newspaper of Record**

**MOTION:** Liz moved and Mary seconded designating the Times-Argus as the newspaper of record. The motion passed.

**Appointment of Road Commissioner**

**MOTION:** Mary moved and Liz seconded reappointing Steve as Road Commissioner. The motion passed.

**Reappointments to Various Town Positions**

**MOTION:** Phil moved and Steve seconded reappointing the following:

- a) Charlene Bohl, Roger Hirt, Jessica Clark and Phil Hyjek to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.
- b) Erika Holm as Animal Control Officer
- c) Paul Otenti Emergency Management Coordinator
- d) Jason Merrill as Fire Warden
- e) Heather Katz and Lee Rosberg to 4-year terms on the Conservation Commission.
- f) Jane Dudley as Wrightsville Beach Management Representative
- g) Mitch Osiecki as Recreation Director

The motion passed.

**Granting the Select Board Assistant authority to sign Excess Truck Weight Permits**

**MOTION:** Steve moved and Phil seconded authorizing the Select Board Assistant to sign Excess Weight Permits. The motion passed.

**Reappointing Middlesex Representatives to the CVI**

**MOTION:** Steve moved and Mary seconded reappointing Phil Hyjek to the Central Vermont Internet Board and Lauri Scharf as alternate. The motion passed.

**Reappointing Anita Krauth to the CVSWMD District.**

**MOTION:** Liz moved and Mary seconded reappointing Anita Krauth as the Middlesex representative to the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District. The motion passed.

**Appointing Heather Katz and Bill McManis to the Budget Committee**

The Board reviewed statements from Heather and Bill about their qualifications and interest in serving on the Town Budget Committee. The two vacancies on the Committee did not earn enough write votes for elected officials.

**MOTION:** Mary moved and Liz seconded appointing Heather Katz and Bill McManis to the Budget Committee, their terms lasting until the 2021 Town Meeting/

**REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING**

**Creating a Capital Planning Committee**

As a result of concerns expressed at Town Meeting, Liz said she thought it was a good idea to focus on planning for major expenses regarding Town Hall, the Highway Department and other issues in the upcoming years. She spoke with Bonnie Waninger from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission who said there would be two grant opportunities this year. While the Planning Commission was slated to apply for a grant to help them rewrite the Town's zoning regulations, the other grant might go toward putting together a capital plan. This might involve creating a committee. Peter suggested forming a committee first and let those members decide whether they needed a planning grant. Mary concurred. Susan said based on her experience, professional help would be useful so committee members don't get lost in what is going to be a daunting process. Liz said the applications are due in October and the Town could ask CVRPC to prioritize. With volunteers tapped out by COVID-19, paying someone to put together a plan might make more sense, she said.

The Board stressed the need for community outreach. Steve, who conducted such outreach when he was a member of the Planning Commission, advocated for a widespread appeal to get as many interested people as possible. Susan didn't think this would happen until the summer. They asked Sarah to solicit interested members via Front Porch Forum and elsewhere to join the Capital Planning Committee.

**Addressing Roads Administration**

Vic said he'd like to have a discussion with the Board about road maintenance so it's on the record and in the minutes. Steve proposed holding a separately warned public meeting with the Road Foreman, Vic and Matt Dwire, himself and anyone else who wished to attend to address issues and concerns about road maintenance. Information gathered from that meeting would then be brought to the Select Board. Peter and Mary agreed this was a good idea. The Board asked Sarah to put out lots of notice before the Select Board meeting on this issue.

**Town Meeting Participation/Ballot Considerations**

4:40 PM

MARCH 23, 2020

Matt raised the question about increasing community involvement re: issues that arise at Town Meeting. Peter said the Board was now moving in that direction with the Capital Planning Committee and this meeting with the Road Foreman, especially since roads are 80% of the budget. Susan said increasing voter participation is a huge issue nationwide and that Town Meeting should be the culmination of a year-long process, not the only meeting involving the whole town.

Amy said that if Town Meeting were scheduled today, it could not be held because of the pandemic. With only 150 people in attendance at Town Meeting, less than 10% of the Town's population is voting on money issues which, in her opinion, should be on Australian Ballot. Because the school budget was on the ballot, 650 Middlesex voters had a say. And most people can't get time off from work to attend Town Meeting. Peter said this an issue the Town has dealt with over the years. His fear is that if the budget were on the ballot, it couldn't be amended. The Town has already tried to address attendance issues by moving Town Meeting to 4:30, instead of holding it earlier in the day. If Amy believed this needs to change, then she should petition to have this question as a special article on the 2021 Town Meeting Warning. Susan invited her to join the Town Meeting Solutions Committee which was formed to address this very issue.

#### **Select Board Goals**

The Board passed over this item due to time constraints.

#### **COVID-19 Update**

Sarah updated the Board about the Emergency Management Committee Meeting held Saturday in the MVFD to prioritize duties and reach elderly/immunocompromised members of the community who need food and medications. Liz apprised the Board about Capstone's role in stocking the local food shelves. She said these are pieces of a bigger puzzle and that the State would be establishing an incident command system to deal with food insecurity and other issues. For now, she said, we will be looking at 8-10 weeks minimum of disrupted schedules, isolation and possibly quarantine.

Sarah asked about paying the Assistant Clerk who is slated to retire April 1. Currently, office staff is staggered to avoid close contact. Maryke is also working on producing an operations manual out of the office. The Board agreed she should be paid according to the hours she works in the office and at home.

Steve said Paul may have to reduce his hours to accommodate child-care duties and the work schedule of his wife, an RN at the local hospital. He will be paid only for the time he works.

#### **Treasurer Report**

Dorinda asked about purchasing supplies for the EMC and tracking it for future reimbursement, if possible. Discretionary fund or line item? The Board agreed that the best approach might be to set up an account and fund it with money from the contingency fund. Phil said and the Board agreed that there was no problem Dorinda using the Town credit card.

A bill for stormwater permitting on Welch Park Road should be prorated among the pertinent parties, the Board agreed. A survey by Chase & Chase was requested by the Welch Park Association to determine boundaries and should be also prorated.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**MOTION:** Mary moved and Steve seconded approving the February 18, 2020, Select Board minutes. The motion passed.

Phil updated the Board about migrating in new computers. They discussed the contract with RB Technologies and agreed to explore other options with TechGroup.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** The Board reviewed a letter from the Vermont Land Trust giving the Board a heads up that the Trust would likely be procuring a permanent conservation easement on 88 acres owned by Sarah Seidman and Scott Harrower and, in the process, requesting \$5,000 from the Conservation Fund as a donation. The Board agreed to revisit this issue after the Middlesex Conservation Commission makes its recommendation. The Board discussed a letter from Doug Grahn complaining about the Town Clerk's insistence that he not socialize with poll workers with empty ballots in his hand. The Board said the complaint would have been more properly directed to the Board of Civil Authority. However, Sarah, who is also the Town Clerk, said she would put up signage at the next polling place so voters could clearly see the rules regarding voting procedure. The Board discussed a letter from Sorsha Anderson complaining about an interaction she had with Lister Amy Whitehorne at Rumney before the start of Town Meeting. There was no action.

All orders were scanned and sent to the Board members for review via email. The Board members then emailed their approvals in return.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 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 APRIL 7, 2020

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PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

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MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

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PHILIP HYJEK

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STEVEN MARTIN

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ELIZABETH SCHARF