

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

MINUTES
MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, September 1, 2020
5:00 PM
HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Peter Hood, Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner, Members Liz Scharf and Phil Hyjek. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell, Road Foreman Paul Cerminara. Rumney Principal Casey Provost, Moderator Susan Clark, Vic Dwire, and Rand Drury and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman. ORCA recorded the meeting which was also recorded on Zoom.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM and welcomed guests.

Using Town Land for Outdoor Rumney Classrooms During COVID

Casey recapped his August 28, 2020, letter to the Board outlining the COVID Outdoor Learning Plan for Rumney and an estimate from Foxfire Tree Care for removal of dead trees, brush, two larger hardwood trees and 10 or more smaller trees for \$2,000 that will be paid for by a generous \$2,000 donation. Casey noted the work will be done on Town property. He said WCUUSD Board member Chris McVeigh has followed up to add the Town of Middlesex as an additional insured at no cost.

Mary thought there was going to be an on-site visit with the Board. Peter said he visited the forested area behind Rumney but couldn't pinpoint the sites. The timing of school's resumption on September 8th means time is of the essence. Peter stressed the Town should probably always be added as an additional insured on Rumney's policy, with or without COVID, since Rumney regularly uses the Town properties such as the recreation field.

MOTION: Mary moved and Phil seconded allowing Rumney Memorial School to hire Foxfire Tree Care to remove trees as proposed on Town lands and use the land for outdoor education. The motion passed and Casey left the meeting.

Modifying Petition Requirements for the 2021 Town Meeting

Peter explained the Town has been receiving concerns from various organizations about petition requirements for funding requests over \$250 at Town Meeting. He proposed any organization that received money last year and only wants to receive what the voters approved last year not be required to submit petitions of 5% of the Town voters. But new organizations would need petitions. Liz wondered if the Town would accept electronic signatures. The Board decided that would be up to the organizations. Peter said he didn't feel comfortable putting the Board in the position of deciding which organizations should be allowed to ask for funding. Susan approved of the Board's direction.

MOTION: Liz moved and Phil seconded allowing any organization requesting more than \$250 in funding at the 2021 Town meeting to be exempt from submitting a petition with signatures from 5% of the Town voters provided that a) the organization appeared as a special article on the 2020 Town Warning b) the organization asks for no more than it requested in 2020 b) the organization submits a letter to the Board asking for funding and c) the organization submit a 250-statement of purpose with contact information by December. All other organizations requesting more than \$250 would have to follow normal protocol and garner signatures, including digital, from 5% of the Town's voters, i.e. 70 names. The motion passed.

Highway Report

Peter said he met with Road Commissioner Steve Martin this morning to review what's been going on with the Town pit on Notch Road. The estimate now is that there are at least six years of winter sand there. There might be other material to use on the roads as well. There has been a problem with ATVs.

The Road Crew has been primarily working on McCullough and Upper Barnett Hill road, ditching and ledge removal. Still need to repair the bridge from Shady Rill Road to Wood Road. The bridge deck will be repaired before winter. As regarding graders, the plan is potentially to purchase a new grader in the 2021-22 budget cycle by financing the grader

over 10 years. Liz said this brings up the idea of a capital improvement plan. COVID doesn't seem to be ending anytime soon and maybe the Town would like to participate in a virtual conversation with the community about high-ticket items, especially considering the uncertainty about individuals' financial future.

Peter said the Board has deferred the grader year after year.. But now the grader is at the point where it might completely stop working. Peter also said the Town needs to move on the Putnamville VT Route 12 signs approved at the 2020 Town Meeting. Following up on Liz's comment, Peter encouraged more public involvement during budget meetings this fall.

Susan said it might be a good idea for there to be an ad hoc meeting where people can meet in a less formal format to discuss priorities for the Town. Also, it will help inform the Board how the Town is leading. Liz encouraged use of a facilitator. Liz wondered if there's money for a planning grant from the CVRPC and if Susan could help. Susan said she would.

Treasurer's Report

No major update other than tax money seems to be coming in at a normal rate. Sarah updated the Board about a grant application to digitize Town records going back to 1976 using CARES money via the Vermont Department of Taxes. The Town has requested \$13,500 for a new recording computer/scanner and indexing of digital records.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **MOTION:** Mary moved and Phil seconded approving the August 18, 2020, Select Board minutes. The motion passed.
- All orders were approved via email.
- Randy asked if the Board would continue using Zoom after COVID. Peter said it's highly likely. The Board appreciates the increased public participation with these remote meetings.

The Board adjourned at 6:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Merriman, Town Clerk/Select Board Assistant

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE REMOTELY APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2020.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

N/A
STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF