

Select Board Members

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

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, April 6, 2021
REMOTE VIA ZOOM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES.

PRESENT: Peter O. Hood, Chair, Mary Just Skinner, Vice Chair. Members Steve Martin, Phil Hyjek and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. CVRPC Director Claire Rock and Christian Meyer, CVRPC senior planner. State Hazard Mitigation Officer Stephanie Smith, Jen Evans, Randy Drury, Road Foreman Shane Brickey, Road Commissioner Vic Dwire, Former Road Commissioner Gary Lamell. MVFD President Jeff Koonz and firefighter Scott Isham. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes and the meeting was recorded by ORCA.

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM

CVRPC Capital Planning Update

Claire Rock and Christian Meyer from the CVRPC outlined points in the “capital improvements plan,” for which the Town received a grant, to identify and prioritize major spending projects the Town will undertake in the next ten years. Chris referred to the contract for CVRPC’s services to help the Town plan for capital improvements and said he would discuss how to define a capital improvement and how the Town would like to proceed. The contract is for \$9,804 and would run from February 1, 2021 to April 30, 2022. Liz said she wanted the contract to run until the 2022 Town Meeting.

MOTION: Liz moved and Mary seconded approving the contract with the CVRPC to help with capital planning. The motion passed. Peter will sign the contract.

Christian asked about how to define a capital improvement. He said \$5,000 is a common threshold. However, East Montpelier also includes items like a \$500 sump pump. He said the key is not to get caught up in too much detail. Peter said he doesn’t want to get bogged down by minutia, but if it’s \$25,000 in gravel then, yes, that needs to be included in the capital plan. Mary said, on the state level, a capital improvement was something you would bond for and pay over a period of time. Peter said \$5,000 was a guideline number. If, for example, a truck needed \$6,000 of immediate repairs, that wouldn’t be a capital improvement.

Christian brought up the capital improvement committee which could help in defining a capital improvement. Liz said there are already about a dozen people on the capital committee. He said the committee should also be involved in maintaining the plan going forward. Steve asked how he envisions the committee. Christian said that’s a good question: a steering committee or more? He said it depends on how the Town envisions the committee working in the future. Liz asked if the Budget Committee could be in control of the capital plan going forward.

Dorinda asked about how this plan affects annual funding of the Town Hall fund, for example, or road fund or conservation fund. Peter said he assumed those contributions would be part of the plan. Christian agreed said it's looking at big costs down the road and prioritizing them. Liz asked if the Board has to make any rules about that committee at this meeting. Christian said it would be helpful to know the flow of the committee and commission. He said the Select Board needs to appoint an advisory committee. People on the committee who are not appointed should not have a vote. Claire said the Board needs to make a decision on whether the committee should have the power to make a formal recommendation to the Board or if they are merely a guiding committee. The Board decided no decision on the committee power/structure needed to be made tonight.

FEMA Buyout of 28 Rich Road

Sarah, as Town Clerk tasked with managing the buyout of 28 Rich Road due to flooding issues, said she was concerned that the overall budget for the project - \$136,000, of which \$102,000 is FEMA money – was insufficient. This grant needs to buy out not only the homeowner, but also pay for an asbestos survey, possible removal and to deconstruct and remove the house and barn along with all utilities. She said the grant should be more like \$200,000 because she does not want the Town holding the bag for overruns.

Stephanie said there is money for overruns and also a way to extend the deadline from August 2021 to August 2022.

Peter asked if there can be an assessment of the asbestos before the project so the Town has real numbers and real estimates. Stephanie says once there is an appraisal, yes. If the appraisal doesn't come back high enough, then the grant may be pulled. She said any costs the Town incurred during the appraisal will be reimbursed. If the appraisal is sufficient, then the Town may conduct an asbestos "assessment," which, Randy pointed out, was not the same as a more in-depth survey. Stephanie said it's a step-by-step process. First the subgrant agreement needs to be approved; the Board decided to put that on the agenda for the April 13 Special Meeting. Jen said she needs to be able to walk away with enough money to cover her mortgage and help her buy another place to live. Stephanie and Jen left the meeting.

Purchase of the John Deere 772 Grader for \$280,500 with Trade-in

Shane reviewed graders and his experience trying out the John Deere 772 and Caterpillar 140. He said the Road Crew likes the steering wheel and that the window opens on the Deere. The total price on the Deere is \$280,500. The Town approved up to \$290,000 for a new grader at the 2021 Town Meeting. Peter asked about additional costs. Shane said it would only need 2-way radios. Randy recommended the roller attachment and asked about training for more than one road crew member. There is a \$55,000 trade in for CAT and it's available now, Dorinda said. The Deere is \$40,000 trade in and won't be available until July. She noted the Board has been concerned about the current grader breaking down and losing the trade-in value. Shane said the crew is being careful with the grader. Peter said the net cost includes the trade-in; Shane confirmed. Gary said the Town's had good luck with Cat graders in the past and a good experience with Milton Cat. Shane said another thing he doesn't like about the Cat is that it has shims that need to be changed. Peter asked about an extended warranty. Shane said he thinks it's seven years. Vic said 84 months, though it's possible to purchase more. Randy asked about the

expected life span. Shane said 15 years you should trade, though most towns go for 20. Shane said he feels as if the Deere is more rugged with thicker steel and more horsepower. Peter noted there is a \$9,000 difference between the two models. Shane suggested a plow harness for extra weight. Mary asked about exploring a lease. Dorinda said Caterpillar supplied lease information, but that the Town would be better off financing through a bank. Also, you can pay off a loan at any time versus a lease agreement.

MOTION: Phil moved and Mary that the Town purchase the John Deere 772 equipped with a Walk 'n Roll and plow harness for \$280,500 including trade-in of the current grader. The motion passed. Gary left the meeting.

Highway Report

Vic said the Town roads have benefitted from dry weather. He said Shane and Steve are going to work on a paving grant for Center Road. Peter inquired about a patch of road on the Middlesex/Montpelier line. Vic said he'd talk to the Montpelier City road engineer. Shane and Vic left the meeting.

Treasurer Update

Dorinda said there was nothing of great importance.

MVFD Update

Jeff submitted call reports for the MVFD from 2018 and how they relate to Waterbury and Montpelier. Jeff said there are some incidents where calls to outside departments are automatic, such as alarms at the State Archives and Camp Meade, or accidents that require special equipment. He said Montpelier has never requested mutual aid from Middlesex in the past three years, probably because they want to deal with union firefighters, which is why they don't call Berlin or Middlesex. That's why they call Barre City, because they're unionized. Every time Waterbury requested mutual aid in 2018, Middlesex responded.

Peter said according to Montpelier, the city fire department requested mutual aid and Middlesex did not respond. That is not reflected in Jeff's notes. Liz said obviously there's a disconnect if Montpelier has different information than Middlesex has. Jeff said Middlesex has a unique situation with the interstate as well as valuable businesses like Red Hen and the state buildings. Peter noted that what started this inquiry was that Montpelier and Waterbury say Middlesex does not respond to mutual aid calls. However, Middlesex can't be blamed for that if those communities don't call on Middlesex. Jeff said that's his contention. The Board will address this issue further at the Special Meeting held on April 13th. Jeff and Scott left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded approving the March 30, 2021 Middlesex Select Board minutes. The motion passed.

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded appointing Margaret Schwartz as the Town Emergency Management Coordinator. The motion passed.

All orders were signed

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Phil moved and Liz seconded entering Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1)(A) The Board voted to enter executive session at 7:14 PM and to include Dorinda and Sarah. The Board exited Executive Session at 7:46.

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM

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

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE REMOTELY APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A SPECIALLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON APRIL 13, 2021.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF