

Select Board Members	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Peter Hood, Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mary Just Skinner, Vice Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Phil Hyjek
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steve Martin
<input type="checkbox"/>	Liz Scharf

**MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD  
EMERGENCY MEETING  
Thursday, September 16, 2021  
Remote via Zoom + in person at Town Hall  
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office  
5 Church Street  
Middlesex, Vermont 05602  
(802) 223-5915**

**MINUTES.**

**PRESENT VIA ZOOM:** Peter O. Hood, Chair, Mary Just Skinner, Vice Chair, Members Phil Hyjek, Liz Scharf and Steve Martin. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell, Road Commissioner Vic Dwire. Budget Committee Member Randy Drury. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes and was present at Town Hall which was open to the public.

Peter called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM and welcomed guests. Dorinda amended the agenda to discuss an issue about a bereavement policy at the end.

**Addressing Bookkeeper's Retirement – Advertising for a Fulltime Position**

Dorinda said Amy Whitehorne is leaving the job as bookkeeper some time in November. Even if there were someone being trained today, they will not be ready to take over when Amy leaves. Dorinda said there's not enough repetition to allow for consistent training. Amy will put together a calendar of weekly, monthly and annual duties. The biggest problem facing the Town is finding a qualified candidate who wants to work 10-24 hours per week. A former bookkeeper wasn't on the job a month until he was looking for additional employment. He has since been let go.

Dorinda suggested creating a 32-hour, full-time position with benefits by combining the bookkeeper and assistant clerk position. Possibly the Treasurer position could be added. If just assistant clerk and bookkeeper and possibly grant administrator job, you could find a candidate outside of Middlesex. It would affect current Assistant Clerk Dave Smith. Dorinda wasn't advocating either way; the problem is you can't find someone who's qualified with a part-time position.

Peter asked if NEMRC could do the bookkeeping; Dorinda said NEMRC can do certain things remotely, but cannot come to the office to run checks, etc. They could possibly close out the month and train the new candidate. Liz asked if there were bookkeeping businesses that provide this service; Dorinda said NEMRC provides this service for towns in Southern Vermont where NEMRC. The Board needs to decide whether to attempt to combine the position or try to piecemeal it, Dorinda said.

Peter said he agreed with the need for a fulltime person. He said that has ramifications for Dave, but the Board has to put the Town first. Liz asked if Dave had been approached as bookkeeper. Peter said the Town needs a real, qualified bookkeeper. Dorinda also said Dave is a Lister and Collector of Delinquent Taxes, so he has a lot going on. Dorinda said big challenges are ahead including property taxes due November 20.

Peter asked if Amy or someone could work remotely. Dorinda agreed, but someone needs to run the checks. The new employee would probably have to be doing bookkeeping duties and assistant town clerk simultaneously.

Peter asked Dorinda her plans as Treasurer. Dorinda said she feels she has no choice but to step down. She said she feels the Board only operates in crisis mode and she doesn't work well in crisis mode. Dorinda noted this is her Town and she wants it to work, she doesn't want to see it fail. But the Town is in a serious situation. She said two Listers are resigning, the financial department is in disarray, but, instead, the Board is spending time on issues like installing sidewalks. Peter said now was not the time to discuss this; Mary said Dorinda deserves a fair hearing. Peter said the Board needed to first concentrate on this bookkeeper/assistant Town Clerk issue.

**MOTION:** Liz moved that the Board advertise immediately for a 32-hour-per week position that would combine bookkeeper and assistant Town Clerk with benefits, salary commensurate with experience; Mary seconded the motion. Phil had to leave the meeting due to a broken internet connection.

**Clarifying the Personnel Policy Again**

Dorinda said the Town doesn't have a policy for bereavement pay, though the Personnel Policy does allow for personal days. There is an employee who wants to use bereavement and interpreted a section of the Personnel Policy to say that was allowed. In reviewing this issue, Dorinda came across a clerical error in the Personnel Policy the Board passed on May 18, 2021. She noted the Board passed the following at the January 7, 2021 meeting: *Those employed full time by the Town on January 1<sup>st</sup> will on that day receive 3 days of paid personal leave per year. Anyone hired for a full-time position after January 1<sup>st</sup> will receive 3 days of paid personal leave the following January 1<sup>st</sup>, provided said employee is still employed full time by the Town.* The motion passed and the policy will be amended and delivered to the five full-time employees for signatures of receipt.

This was accidentally inserted into the Parental and Family Leave section which should speak to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Vermont Parental and Family Leave Act (PFLA). It also conflicts with Section 23: Personal Leave. The policy will be corrected and brought before the Board as a warned agenda item on September 21, 2021.

This issue aside, Dorinda asked how the bereavement question should be addressed since the Personnel Policy does not cover bereavement leave. Peter said the employee should use either personal time or vacation time. Peter said he doesn't want to create a bereavement leave policy if the policy doesn't have one. Vic noted that paychecks outline exactly how much sick, personal and vacation time so the employee should know exactly what his options were.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 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 21, 2021

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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