

Select Board Members
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peter Hood, Chair
<input 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
Tuesday, October 19, 2021
REMOTE VIA ZOOM + 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 Liz Scharf, Phil Hyjek and Steve Martin. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. CVRPC Planner Grace Vinson, Middlesex CVFiber representative David Lawrence, Road Commissioner Vic Dwire, Road Foreman Shane Brickey, Former Road Foreman Paul Cerminara, MVFD President Jeff Koonz, MVFD Treasurer Eric Metivier, Town Emergency Management Coordinator Margaret Schwartz, Town Health Officer Dr. Robert Penney, and MCC member George Longenecker. **PRESENT AT TOWN HALL:** Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman, who took the minutes. This meeting was virtually recorded by ORCA

Call to Order

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. There were no amendments to the agenda.

Grace Vinson Apprises the Board about ARPA

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Planner Grace Vinson presented a PowerPoint on eligible uses for ARPA (Coronavirus Relief) funding. She said the money can be spent on the following: Pandemic Response (COVID-19 mitigation and prevention) such as paying improving ventilation in municipal buildings, offsetting the impact of the pandemic by providing financial assistance to local businesses and families struggling because of the pandemic, premium pay for workers who deal with the public, and lost revenue from government services due to delinquent taxes, for example, or the costs of providing new infrastructure and/or cybersecurity. In addition, a municipality may install or improve water/sewer projects that align with the Drinking Water or Clean Water Revolving Fund and provide broadband internet to under-served communities such as Middlesex where the upload/download speeds of the internet, if available, are no faster than 25/25 megabits per second. She stressed there is no rush to spend the money. The projects need to be designated by 2024; the funds don't have to be disbursed until 2026.

Peter asked if Town employees in general would be eligible for hazard pay, including the highway department, because they were essential workers. Grace said, yes. She cautioned the Town cannot spend ARPA funds on the following: to provide a local match for federal grants requiring matching funds, pensions, infrastructure that is not pandemic-related, rainy-day funds, financial reserves or to pay off outstanding debt. Peter asked if the Town created an income-sensitive program for internet, could it use ARPA funds. Grace said yes. She said some towns are distributing surveys or forming ARPA committees to develop a list of priorities. In addition, she said, the state has a ton of ARPA money in the chute, so it's worth considering what could be funded with that. Guidelines are forthcoming.

Liz asked if parts of the town have more than 25/25 MB/second, does that matter? Grace said 25 is the minimum though 100 is the standard in the rules. Liz asked if the Town Clerk's Office has bad air quality could there be an improvement to the building? Grace said that's probably eligible, but anything beyond ventilation might be problematic. Maintenance of infrastructure is an eligible use under loss revenue, so replacing windows might qualify.

Dorinda asked if town employees had been relocated within the building for social distancing, would those modifications qualify for ARPA funds. Grace thought so. Any facility improvements to allow for social distancing should qualify. However, if money has already spent to make those improvements, it would be trickier to recoup those losses, she said. Peter asked if the CVRPC could review the Town's potential ARPA projects to see if they qualify before going forward; Grace said yes.

Mary asked if the Town could start spending the money sooner rather than later. Grace said the eligible projects she outlined are stated in a draft rule; it might behoove the Town to wait until the final rules are issued, which could be any day. She said Communication Union Districts (like CVFiber) will be getting funding for broadband from the State. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is going to initiate new projects for water, so there are additional funding sources for broadband and water. Liz said the Town created a community fund to help families harmed by the pandemic, though they were to seek assistance elsewhere first. What kind of record keeping needs to be kept regarding "grants" to residents negatively impacted? Grace said she's not sure. Hopefully, that will be in the final rules.

Peter asked David about what benefit would Middlesex receive from CVFiber if the Town donates its funds to their high-speed internet project. David said the main benefit would be that the Town funds would mitigate the amount of lending. The designation would keep the money local instead of having to pay debt service to outside lenders. Otherwise, he said, the basic structure wouldn't change. Based on his understanding, David said there is an intention to establish a low-income benefit with an initial hookup cost, perhaps to cover the drop costs. Among the service tiers, there would be a basic option of 25 megabits. Hopefully, CVFiber could provide the basic service at half the price to low-income residents. Peter asked if Middlesex gives \$500,000, would the Town's residents see an overall discount. David said the CVFiber Board is dealing with several towns, each of which has a separate contract with the CUD. The fewer vagaries between towns, the better. Peter said he understands that, but hopes CVFiber keeps in mind that if Middlesex gives a large part of its ARPA money to them, that there would be a special benefit in return. David said based on the percentage of underserved residences, Middlesex is leading the pack for initial deployment due to such a high percentage under the 25 megabits. He said a lot of DSL in Middlesex is less than that. Mary, who is also on the board of the Washington Electric Coop, said it's likely the fiber will be owned and installed by WEC on its poles and leased to CVFiber. Grace left the meeting.

Highway Report: Presentation of Possible Dump Trucks

Shane said the crew is almost done improving Bolduc Road. He confirmed that culverts on Center Road have been postponed until spring.

Shane priced four 10-wheel dump trucks for possible purchase and recommended two. The first is an International HV613-515, automatic 18-speed horsepower with a load capability of 1,850 lbs/foot. It comes with an 84-month/100,000-mile full warranty. The price was initially quoted as \$126,034 including the warranty. However, since the quote, it's increased by \$3,672 to \$129,706. With a possible trade-in of \$55,000, the final cost would be \$74,706.

The other truck is a Kenworth T880 with manual 10-speed horsepower and the same load capability. It comes with an 84-month/200,000-mile full warranty. The cost was \$126,500, though, since the quote, it's gone up to \$133,500. The warranty is an additional \$9,900. With a trade in of \$60,000, the final cost comes to \$83,400.

Shane recommended these trucks because they have the best warranties. The Kenworth can be delivered sooner. If it's ordered now, it could arrive July/August. The International would arrive around the end of October. The dates are getting pushed out faster and faster due to supply-chain issues. Shane confirmed that the pricing is locked in when the order is placed. He recommended a 10-speed manual transmission. The current Town trucks are automatic. The Board discussed stress on the drivetrain re manual vs. automatic. Liz asked what the warranty covers. Shane said everything unless you change something on your own or install something on the truck, then that might violate the warranty. She asked about the numerous repairs on the current trucks; Shane said those are on trucks that are past warranty. Peter added that "wear parts" such as brakes are not covered. Mary asked about warranties for the add-ons; Shane said he would look into that. Peter asked Shane to clarify the warranty situation and see if there's an extended warranty.

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil seconded granting Shane the authority to order the Kenworth T880-510 for \$133,500 with a \$9,900 warranty for a total of \$143,400. The motion passed. Peter asked about selling it the current dump truck vs. trading it in. Shane said he'd look into it.

Executive Session

MOTION: Steve moved and Liz seconded entering Executive Session as permitted under 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a) (1) (A) to discuss potential candidates to fill an upcoming vacancy in the Highway Department and to allow Shane, Vic, Dorinda and Sarah to attend. The motion passed and the Board entered the closed session at 5:54 PM. All other participants were moved to the Zoom waiting room. The Board ended the session at 6:14 PM. There was no action. Shane left the meeting. The other participants were allowed back in.

Town Board of Health Meeting

Peter convened a meeting of the Board of Health at 6:15 PM to discuss issues raised by George at the previous Select Board meeting concerning the lack of sanitary facilities at Shady Rill Park and the boat launch at the Wrightsville Reservoir. Peter noted both areas are State property and the Town has no jurisdiction. Dr. Penney said he first heard about the problem from a VT Fish & Wildlife officer. He visited both areas with George last month and again this morning. One area at the boat launch had an accumulation of beer cans and there was also a site with human waste. He agreed with George's request for a portable toilet and at the Shady Rill Park. He said he has contacted the State and the general response is that the State does not have the personnel to patrol and/or maintain these areas. He said he will do some follow up to get the discussion going again. Since the Town has no jurisdiction, there's really no other recourse than to keep bugging them. Peter said the State has provided a latrine at Shady Rill in the past. The Board's direction to the Health Officer would be to be persistent and perhaps follow up with a letter. George said that approach would be fine with the Conservation Commission. Peter noted the State set up a portable toilet at the Hunger Mountain hiking trail, so that's a precedent. Rob asked about

water testing at Wrightsville, noting that the Health Officer should work with select boards to make sure public swimming areas are tested on a weekly basis. The Board concurred and Peter suggested he contact Jane Dudley, the Middlesex representative to the Wrightsville Beach District. The Board of Health meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM. Rob left the meeting

MVFD Monthly Meeting with the Select Board

Jeff updated the Board on the Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department's activity since the last joint meeting on September 21st. Jeff said the MVFD has responded to a total of 50 calls this year and 10 calls over the last month with two calls out. There were several false alarms at Red Hen and the MVFD responded to a suspicious burn at a barn at the bottom of Shady Rill which required a call to the Vermont State Police. The MVFD is reviewing another application to the force. Jeff also said he is administering booster shots of the COVID-19 vaccine at the Berlin Mall. Anyone can walk in during the day as long as it's been 6 months from the date of their second vaccine. You must bring a vaccination card. Liz asked about news reports that the Berlin Fire Department has been facing similar issues regarding recruitment, etc. that the MVFD has been handling. Jeff said he hadn't heard about it, but noted the BF's budget is not included in the Town's annual budget; it's a special article voted on at Town Meeting. Jeff said he plans to apply for grants to offset the cost of bunker gear next year.

Appointing a Town Emergency Personnel to the Regional Emergency Management Committee

MOTION: Mary appoint MVFD Chief Doug Hanson to the newly formed Regional Emergency Management Committee, but if he can't accept, then Eric Metivier will step in.* Phil seconded. The motion passed and Eric and Jeff the meeting. *Jeff informed the Board by email on 10/21/2022 that Doug declined and that Eric will accept the position.

Treasurer Report

The Board discussed how best to address employee compensation in light of pay for a new hire and pay for an upcoming hire. The Board agreed to hold a Special Meeting at 5 PM, Tuesday, November 9, 2021, to focus entirely on employee compensation.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Steve moved and Mary seconded approving the October 5, 2021 Select Board meeting minutes. The motion passed.

All orders were signed.

The Board discussed the Town's 1999 Speed Ordinance which needs updating and agreed to pass over this until the FY23 budget was completed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Board was apprised of an email from Amy Whitehorne that as of November 5, 2021, she would no longer be able to serve as Lister because she was moving. **MOTION:** Liz moved to accept Amy's resignation as Lister her and thank her for her service; Steve seconded and also thanked her. The motion passed.

Peter proposed extending hybrid Zoom/in-person Select Board meetings until the end of the year due to the high local COVID-19 rates. The Board agreed.

Liz noted there would be a farewell party for retiring Highway Department employee Bruce Fitch at 4 PM, Thursday, October 28th at the Highway Garage.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 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 NOVEMBER 2, 2021

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF