

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liz Scharf

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, January 18, 2022
REMOTE VIA ZOOM + Town Hall
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES.

PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Chair Peter O. Hood, Vice Chair Mary Just Skinner, Board Members Phil Hyjek, Steve Martin and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Budget Committee Member Randy Drury, WCUUSD Clerk Rosie Laquerre, Town Moderator Susan Clark, MVFD Chief Eric Metivier and President Jeff Koonz, Planning Commission Chair Sandy Levine and PC Member Theo Kennedy. WCUUSD Middlesex Rep. Chris McVeigh and Times Argus Reporter Dave Delcore. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes and was present at Town Hall, which was open to the public and recorded by ORCA.

Call to Order, Welcoming Guests, Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. The agenda was amended to add a motion to accept the Enhanced Energy Plan before adding it to the 2022 Town Meeting Warning.

Enacting S. 172: Holding the March 1, 2022 Annual Town Meeting by Australian Ballot

MOTION: Mary moved and Steve seconded enacting the emergency COVID provisions in S. 172 by holding the March 1, 2022 Annual Town Meeting by Australian Ballot. The Board asked for Susan's opinion; Susan said town-wide discussion at an in-person meeting is great, but COVID is a mess. The motion passed.

Mailing all Town and WCUUSD Ballots to Active/Registered Middlesex Voters

Rosie said all five towns in the Washington Central Unified Union School District need to mail out all WCUUSD ballots or none can. The Board discussed adding an insert that would inform voters that they will need to request a Central Vermont Career Center ballot. Peter said he sees issues with not including the CVCC ballot, but he was not in favor of being the town that holds up mailing school ballots to all; there is a better chance more ballots will be voted on this way. Dave chimed in about the reasons the CVCC ballot can't be included in the automatic mailings.

Sarah suggested sending out a postcard informing voters of the Australian Ballot, the need to request a CVCC ballot and the informational meeting. Susan asked that the postcard mention that in-person Town Meetings haven't eliminated; this is a one-year thing due to COVID.

MOTION: Phil moved and Mary seconded mailing Town and WCUUSD ballots to every active/registered voter and to mail postcards to every Middlesex voting household with information about Town Meeting, absentee voting and the informational meeting. The motion passed and the Board set the Informational meeting at 6 PM, Tuesday, February 22, 2022.

Accepting the Enhanced Energy Plan as an Appendix to the 2019 Town Plan

Peter referred to previous Board meetings about the Enhanced Energy Plan, noting that one person largely objected, but many others were in favor of its passage. He said he was moved by Theo's description of the plan as an aspirational document. People put a lot of work into this plan and he was willing to support it.

MOTION: Mary moved that the Board accept the Enhanced Energy Plan submitted by the Planning Commission without changes: Phil seconded. Liz asked for a clarification on how voting on the Energy Plan affects the Town Plan. Sandy said Town Plans need to be brought to the voters every eight years. Even though Town voters just passed the Town Plan in 2019, by amending it with the Enhanced Energy Plan and going through the formal adoption process, it changes the Town Plan's viability to 2030. The motion passed.

Approving Separate Cannabis Articles on the Warning for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting on March 1, 2022

The Board discussed Article 15 and 16 asking voters to approve retail sales of cannabis products in Middlesex and/or allowing State-licensed entities to grow, produce, sell and test cannabis products. Liz said these should be two separate articles so voters can choose. There might be people who don't mind a store, but don't want licensed growers. Theo noted the purpose of these statutes is to add a component of local control, but that the "licensees" in Article 16 would be regulated by the state. Phil noted that the Zoning Board of Adjustment approved a medical marijuana facility off Center Road and it's likely they might want to expand to production for commercial use.

Susan requested a separate forum on the cannabis articles since they might be controversial; Peter suggested holding off on that until the Board sees what kind of discussion arises at the informational meeting. The Board discussed the definition of "integrated licensee" in Article 16

MOTION: Liz moved and Steve seconded breaking the questions of selling cannabis via retail or authorizing integrated cannabis licensees into two separate articles, Article 15 and Article 16. Steve seconded. The motion passed. Susan expressed concern that people won't understand the articles as well as they should. Peter suggested if the Town Meeting solutions committee wants to hold an info meeting on this, they can.

Approving the Warning for the 2022 Annual Town Meeting on March 1, 2022

MOTION: Mary moved and Liz seconded approving the Warning for the March 1, 2022 Annual Town Meeting. The motion passed and the Board would sign the Warning ASAP.

MVFD JOINT MEETING

January 16, 2022 Fire on Culver Hill

Jeff ran through the calls the MVFD has handled since December. On January 16, 2022, a structure fire at a home on Culver Hill required responses from multiple local fire departments, as well as the Middlesex Road Crew. The call came in at 10:01 PM and the firefighters never lost water.

Firefighters left the scene at 5 AM though they returned and stayed until noon the next day. Jeff said even though the MVFD had gone through one training with other departments, it paid substantial dividends with cooperation and organization. Montpelier Fire Department was the first to arrive, but got stuck in the driveway. Middlesex's Engine 6 arrived with chains and 4-wheel drive. They were able to squeeze past Montpelier and get the hoses going. Jeff said it was a "case study in how mutual aid works" with a bunch of small departments working together. Even the Vermont State Police fire inspector and State Fire Inspector commended the effort which saved the first floor and the garage, though the roof and second floor were burned. Jeff described it as a "very rebuildable" situation. Five people went to the hospital to be checked for smoke inhalation and were found to be okay; cats were rescued. Liz asked about financial assistance; Peter said the family has insurance. The Board thanked them for an excellent report and commended them for a job well done.

Thanking Former MVFD Chief Doug Hanson

The Board recognized new MVFD Chief Eric Metivier and thanked long-time former Chief Doug Hanson who stepped down on December 31, 2021. The Board suggested a formal recognition ceremony for his contribution to the Town; Jeff suggested this summer when the Bandstand is open. The MVFD joint meeting ended at 6:20 PM

Reviewing the Procedure for the Town and its Residents, Access to the Rumney Memorial School Pursuant to Easement

MOTION: Steve moved and Mary seconded entering executive Session under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1). The motion passed. The Board entered executive session at 6:30 PM and exited at 6:35 PM.

Peter said to him the school benefits from the agreement and Town doesn't. Still, he agreed there has to be a process to access the school. He said the Board doesn't believe the WCUUSD has the right to exclude the Town, but the Board agrees the Town has to be reasonable. Chris, who drafted the proposal, said it's not an agreement, it's a procedure and was written in response to reports that certain Town committees had been denied access to Rumney. The Board discussed those times, including denying the Bandstand access during a rained-out concert and the Capital Planning Committee. The Energy Committee was not permitted to have an outdoor fair. Mary said the procedure should not involve approval as much as notice. Chris said as a practical matter, someone has to let people into the school. Dorinda noted that, while the tennis courts are Town, not school, property, people have been kicked off by the school during school hours. Peter said the Board understand COVID provisions; he suggested the Town try out the procedure and see how it goes. Liz asked about community groups like the Boy Scouts or Knitting Club; Chris said this procedure applies only to Town uses. Otherwise, groups can fill out a school-use form. The Board discussed who would grant permission if, say, the principal, was on vacation. Chris suggested the janitor; the Board suggested a citizen board member. Susan said the Board should note we live in a town with no public gathering space. Chris said he will redraft the proposal and get back to the Board.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Phil moved and Liz seconded approving the minutes of the January 4, 2022 Select Board Meeting. The motion passed. Steve and Mary abstained because they did not attend.

MOTION: Phil moved and Steve seconded approving the minutes of the January 11, 2022 Special Select Board Meeting. The motion passed.

MOTION: Phil moved and Liz seconded approving Jane Dudley's resignation from the Wrightsville Recreation District Board. The motion passed and the Board thanked Jane for her many years of service.

The Board reviewed the draft of the 2021 Select Board Report and suggested adding an explanation about Articles 15 & 16, thanking Doug Hanson and adding Phil's budget analysis. Sarah would make the changes and the Board would review individually.

The Board discussed and rejected moving the Select Board meeting dates from the first and third Tuesdays of the month to the second and fourth.

Susan talked to the Board about the Town Meeting Solutions Committee's idea of creating a candidates' page and other information about Town Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Merriman, Select Board Assistant

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON FEBRUARY 1, 2022.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF

DRAFT