

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, February 1, 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, Board Members Phil Hyjek, Steve Martin and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Budget Committee Member Randy Drury. Russ Bennett of Planetary Matters and Galaxy of Yes. Road Commissioner Vic Dwire. 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

Peter called the meeting to order at 5 PM. Since Russ had not yet arrived, the Board moved to the Treasurer's Report.

Treasurer's Report

Dorinda talked about the need to start using ARPA funds. The Board agreed to take up this issue at the March 15 Organizational Meeting. The Board discussed various truck repairs.

Presentation on Galaxy of Yes's Plans for the former Colby Property on Center Road

Russ, who is also a member of Planetary Matters, LLC, which owns the Camp Meade and neighboring properties, said new tenants in the "food and art realm" are moving into the complex. They are also working with Tesla to install an 8-station charging station at the north end of the white house, which is on the Mud Studio side of Camp Meade. He said that will bring electric cars and, considering they're Teslas, especially drivers with disposable income.

Russ said Galaxy of Yes is the LLC he formed for developing the Colby property, 226 acres at the corner of Center Road and the interstate purchased in July by Robert Napior, the other member of Galaxy of Yes. Russ said the name was chosen because they "want to say yes to community building." He said they've hired Stone Environmental to conduct septic discovery and a groundwater hydrologist to find out what potable water is available. Peter referred to a study done about twenty years ago about water sources on Colby Farm. Russ said he'd seen that report, but that rules had changed since then and more studying needed to be done. Russ said he will need to develop a water system no matter what. If they find a ton of water, they would not be averse to working on a plan to bring water to the village. If there's enough water, it might be enough to provide hydrants in the commercial district.

Rough plans for the property include establishing a daycare that would provide care for up to 150 children – at least a year or two away –and building a small music and arts school built from the ground up. Depending on the septic and water availability, Russ said the company is also thinking of a condominium-based residential development with 10% devoted to affordable housing. Amidst that would be a barn-like structure that could host "little" events like potlucks or weddings.

Russ said they've been removing debris from legal trails on the property to make them accessible to the public. They are also investigating the possibility of using a solar array that would make the project net zero.

Russ said he is going to talk to the Planning Commission, which is in the midst of redrafting the Town's land use regulations, about small tweaks to the zoning. In particular, he would like to see allowances for higher and lower buildings in the Village, instead of the standard 35-foot heights which does not allow for "an interesting selection of architecture."

Peter said he's excited to see that property developed. He said the Board will be as friendly as possible and appreciates the offer on the water. Certainly, it's appealing to bring water to the village.

Russ said he is keeping an eye on what kind of infrastructure money might be coming from the federal government to pay for creating a water system. Russ said working with condominium laws to keep the property together. Some homes will be single family, some will be multi-family and people will be able to develop equity but the goal of the project is to become a community hub that's more exciting for the original village of Middlesex. Russ left the meeting.

Highway Department Update

Vic said the road crew has been pushing back the snowbanks and ironing out the rough spots that come from the freeze/thaw cycle. Trying to keep the roads maintained while trying to keep the overtime at a minimum. Peter asked about spring contracts. Vic said right now the crew plans to repave the section of Center Road from the interstate to Steve Martin's farm in June. However, there's a lot of prep work.

Randy asked whether a small section from Center Road to McCullough Hill is part of the paving project. Vic said the \$175,000 paving grant from the state and money from the Town's paving fund includes repaving to the bridge leading to McCullough Hill Road.

Approving the 2022 Certificate of Highway Mileage

MOTION: Phil moved and Steve seconded approving the February 10, 2022 Certificate of Highway Mileage. The motion passed and the Board members present signed the certificate.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Phil moved and Steve seconded approving the minutes of the January 18, 2022 Select Board Meeting. The motion passed.

All orders were signed.

Phil discussed CV Fiber updates, noting there is an entity offering to match whatever ARPA funds the Town dedicates toward CVFiber. Also new, whatever money a town spends will be devoted to improving the internet in that particular town. Phil agreed this is a discussion for the post-Town Meeting organizational meeting. Randy asked about deadlines for the matching grant; Phil said they were months away.

The Board discussed the fact Eric Young is not going to run for reelection as Lister and all three positions are open. Randy asked about the hour commitment; Dorinda said the budgeted hours have dropped from 650 hours per year to 250 and 300.

Dorinda talked about stipends to the MVFD. The volunteers will be paid twice a year instead of once a year. According to the new chief, the MVFD bylaws were rewritten to allow an increase in stipends going back to May 2021 and the Town has been hit with a substantial bill that extends back to the closed fiscal year. Peter said his understanding was that the increase in

stipends would begin July 1, 2023. Steve said his memory was that the stipends would be effective immediately, last fall, but not retroactively. MVFD members are getting \$500-\$600 vs. \$100 in stipends, Dorinda said. Liz said the Town should just pay the retroactive months. In FY22, the MVFD budgeted \$3,000 in stipends. And for FY23, the MVFD proposed \$18,000. In FY21, the MVFD only spent \$1,200. Peter disagreed about paying all the way back to May. Phil agreed that he didn't remember approving retroactive pay back to a previous fiscal year. He preferred to fund the MVFD from September 2021 forward. Steve said if the MVFD has already been promised the money, that needs to be considered. Peter said the bill needs to be broken down into what part is a FY21 bill. He said this is another reason why the MVFD should be a Town fire department. Sarah read the minutes from May when the Board encouraged the MVFD to increase stipends if necessary.

The meeting adjourned at 6 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 15, 2022.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

N/A

MARY JUST SKINNER, VICE CHAIR

PHILIP HYJEK

STEVEN MARTIN

ELIZABETH SCHARF

DRAFT