

Select Board Members

Peter Hood, Chair
 Steve Martin,
 Vice Chair
 Randy Drury
 Phil Hyjek
 Liz Scharf

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
Tuesday, May 3, 2022
REMOTE VIA ZOOM
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES.

PRESENT: Peter O. Hood, Chair. Steve Martin, Vice Chair. Members Randy Drury, Phil Hyjek, and Liz Scharf. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell, Road Commissioner Vic Dwire. Bruce Stevenson. E911 Coordinator Mitch Oscecki and Road Foreman Shane Brickey. The meeting was recorded by ORCA and on Zoom. Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman transposed the minutes from Dorinda's notes and the Zoom recording.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. and greeted guests. There were no amendments to agenda.

Allocating \$100,000 of the Town's ARPA funds to CV Fiber

MOTION: Phil moved and Steve seconded allocating \$100,00 of the Town's American Recovery Act (ARPA) funds to CVFiber as a subgrantee to install broadband internet in Middlesex in areas with poor internet service. The motion passed.

Peter asked about the process. Dorinda said she'd need some paperwork. Phil said there is a Memorandum of Understanding that needs to be signed by Peter and CVFiber. Dorinda requested an invoice.

Appointing Bruce Stevenson to the CV Fiber Board as Alternate Member

Bruce asked about the structure of the Board and the history of CV Fiber. Phil explained that the Middlesex delegate is David Lawrence. (Wendy Freundlich had been the alternate member before resigning recently.) Phil explained that Bruce could attend all CV Fiber meetings if he wanted to. The Board discussed how to connect Bruce with David and the CVFiber Board. He said he has an interest in bringing improved internet to Middlesex.

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil seconded appointing Bruce Stevenson as alternate member of the CV Fiber Board. Bruce left the meeting.

Renaming PR3 to Picard Lane and a Road off Molly Supple Hill to Black Bear Lane

Mitch said the Picards who live on PR3 have been trouble getting their mail and hoped that by changing their private road, they might have better success with that. Steve pointed out that there was a push to get the numbered private roads named to help emergency services. Mitch discussed the procedure with the state and USPS. He said the State E911 Board had already signed off on Picard Lane and Black Bear Lane. Randy asked if all the Picards were in agreement; Mitch said they were. In addition, a private driveway at the bottom of Molly Supple has two homes and a subdivision with a prospective house which means it will become a private road.

MOTION: Steve moved and Phil seconded naming the new private road on Molly Supple to Black Bear Lane and renaming PR3 to Picard Lane. The motion passed. Mitch left the meeting.

Updating the Town Personnel Policy re: Town Health Insurance & Boots

The Board reviewed the Personnel Policy re: changes regarding the safety-boot policy approved at the April 19, 2022 Select Board Meeting. Dorinda said the Board should consider changing the effective date on the Personnel Policy to July 1, 2022, since that's when the fiscal year starts and when the Board's budget to pay for the health insurance premiums of Town employees begins.

MOTION: Randy moved and Steve seconded approving the following changes to the Town's Personnel Policy effective July 1, 2022: 1) *The Town of Middlesex pays 100% of the monthly health insurance premium for coverage selected by the Select Board each year for a Town employee and his/her spouse. The Town of Middlesex pays 50% of the premium for dependent(s) and*

2) *The Town of Middlesex requires all employees working in the highway department to wear safety-toed boots which meets the ASTM F2413-18 certification standard. This footwear is required to ensure that employees don't sustain foot crush and ankle sprain/strain injuries while on the job. The Town offers a safety-boot program in which the Town will reimburse Town Highway Department employees up to \$200 to purchase one (1) pair of safety boots annually on or about the anniversary of the employee's date-of-hire. The boots must be at least 6" high and conform to the ASTM F2413-18 standards and that these specifications must be stated on the voucher submitted to Lenny's Shoe & Apparel. The Town has set up a voucher purchase program with Lenny's Shoe & Apparel for pre-approved boots that meets the safety standard outlined in this policy.* The motion passed.

Clarifying 2021 Bonuses for Health-Insurance Premiums

Dorinda said Shane inquired why he didn't get the bonus to pay for spousal health insurance in 2021 when Assistant Clerk/Bookkeeper Cheryl Grandfield and Sarah received their bonuses as employee-retention incentives. Dorinda said when Cheryl was hired, the Town matched the benefits of her then employer. Sarah then went to the Board requesting she, too, be reimbursed for spousal insurance premiums since the new bookkeeper/assistant clerk had better compensation though Sarah had been there ten years. The Board discussed how those bonuses came about. Randy said the minutes from the 2021 meetings addressed only two employees, not three, and that they were tied to hiring and retention and that future changes would be implemented in the next fiscal year. Randy suggested the Board reread the minutes from the December 7, 2021 Select Board meeting. Shane entered the meeting. Peter said the Board wasn't violating the Personnel Policy because it was granting discretionary bonuses. Shane referred to an executive session in 2021 when the Board was discussing potentially hiring a new road crew member that any new employee given spousal health insurance would affect other employees. Shane said he was looking for clarification; Peter said the Personnel Policy has been amended to clarify that premiums for spouses be covered effective July 1, 2022. Liz clarified that the Town didn't pay for the insurance. Instead, the Town granted bonuses to Cheryl and Sarah who still have to pay half of their spouses' health insurance until July 1, 2022. Phil said there were no strings attached to the bonuses; the employees could spend them however they wanted. Liz asked if the Personnel Policy should be clarified to note a spouse should not be reimbursed for not taking the Town's health insurance. The Board reviewed this and decided it was not necessary. Liz said the bonuses were to address two unique situations in the Town office.

Peter said the minutes should be reviewed and the Board address Shane's concerns at the May 17, 2022 Select Board meeting. Dorinda said the Board needs to also review how vacation time is accrued. In two instances, employees were hired at higher vacation time than current employees. Randy noted those were part of negotiations to hire employees. Liz says Town employees should receive letters from the Town, perhaps during the new fiscal year outlining pay and benefits. Dorinda she would work up a sample letter.

Highway Department Update: FY23 TA60 Approval

Shane said Tangletown has been hydroseeded and improved with stone. Bolduc Road will be done by the end of the week. Liz said Jamie Bolduc sang Shane's praises. As soon as the crew is done with Bolduc, the crew will start pulling up the pavement on Center Road starting from Steve Martin's farm to the interstate. Shane said it's likely that Hutchins will lay down the new pavement in August.

Vic said there were concerns about pot holes in that area; Shane said the crew planned to put in Stay Mat.

MOTION: Phil moved and Steve seconded approving the FY23 TA60 (Annual Financial Aid to Highways.) The motion passed.

Executive Session to Discuss Grievances.

MOTION: Randy moved and Steve seconded entering Executive Session under per 1 V.S.A. §313 (a)(1) (D) and to include Shane and Vic. The motion passed and the Board entered Executive Session at 6:08 PM. The Board exited at 6:32 PM. There was no action.

Treasurer's Report

Dorinda updated the Board about the current finances and it appears that due to unexpected expenses in 2021 the Town will be going over budget. Peter asked if ARPA funds could be used to reimburse the Town for extra expenses before the end of the fiscal year. The Board discussed gravel costs and how they are coded.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: Liz moved and Phil seconded approving the minutes of the April 19, 2022 Select Board Meeting and the April 26, 2022, Special Meeting. The motion passed.

All orders were signed

The Board discussed returning to in-person meetings and decided against that due to high COVID-19 rates in the area. The Board agreed to review the matter in June.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 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 MAY 17, 2022.

 PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

 STEVEN MARTIN, VICE CHAIR

 RANDY DRURY

 PHIL HYJEK

 ELIZABETH SCHARF