

Select Board Members

Peter Hood, Chair
 Liz, Scharf, Vice Chair
 Randy Drury
 Vic Dwire
 Phil Hyjek

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2022
Remove via Zoom and in Town Hall
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES.

PRESENT: Peter O. Hood, Chair and Liz Scharf, Vice Chair. Members Randy Drury, Vic Dwire and Phil Hyjek. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Samantha Beaudoin, Shelly Desjardin, Evelyn Prim and Zach French. Road Foreman and MVFD Chief Eric Metivier. The meeting was recorded by ORCA and Select Board Assistant Sarah Merriman took the minutes.

Call to Order

Peter called the meeting to order at 4:58 PM. The agenda was amended to include an executive session to discuss a potential Road Crew candidate and a revised bid from J. Hutchins for Center Road repaving.

Mead Road Discussion

In response to an August 6, 2022, email to the Town from Sam Beaudoin raising concerns that her neighbor Zach French was planting grass and installing a speed bump on Mead Road without permission from the Road Commissioner, Vic (who is also the Road Commissioner) said he and Eric visited the Class 4 road and spoke to abutting neighbors, including Zach. Vic said he did not see any obvious upgrades to the road and he informed Sam that the Town could not be responsible for disputes between neighbors. The Town's only jurisdiction was what was happening to the road. Eric agreed with Vic's assessment.

Shelly, who lives nearby and is Sam's mother, said people need clarification of what can and cannot be done on a Class 4 road. Referring to the Town's Class 4 Roads and Trails Policy, Peter confirmed that no one can upgrade or change a Class Road without prior approval from the Road Commissioner who must then apprise the Select Board. No one, he said, has authority on their own to make changes to a Class 4 road. He said filling in holes with gravel isn't of concern, but building speed bumps, diverting water and changing direction of the road are definitely not allowed.

Sam said a speed bump was put in the road and the SUV they were driving bottomed out because it came as a surprise. She said Zach told her it wasn't a speed bump but a water bar. In addition, she said Zach was parking heavy equipment on the road. Peter said you can park vehicles on the road; you just can't block it.

Zach said water was running off the road onto his property so he "took a hoe." He said he's been back dragging that road for years without complaint from neighbors. If he didn't, there'd be huge potholes. Sam showed Randy and Liz a photo of the speed bump and they agreed that while the magnitude of the bump was hard to discern from the photo on her phone, it was significant.

Peter said he appreciated that Zach was trying to improve the road, but Zach needs to get the Road Commissioner's permission first. That includes digging out ditches and cleaning culverts. Otherwise, no matter how well intended, it's a violation of Town policy. He encouraged the neighbors to work together to resolve their other disputes. If there's a plugged culvert, let the Road Commissioner know.

Shelly raised the issue of Zach's heavy equipment parked on Mead Road in front of a bridge washout. Randy confirmed it was there and that it blocked access to what otherwise would have been the bridge. Evelyn said people would be driving into the creek if that equipment weren't there. The Board agree with Vic that the Town should install a sign noting the bridge was out. Peter said it's the Town's responsibility to block that with some sort of barricade so unaware motorists don't drive into the creek. Vic asked for contact information with the parties to keep them apprised of the road and said he's not taking sides. The Mead Road neighbors left the meeting.

Executive Session: Potential Highway Department Hire

MOTION: Phil moved and Vic seconded entering Executive Session to discuss potentially hiring a new member of the road crew as permitted under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) and to include Eric and Dorinda. The motion passed and the Board entered Executive Session at 5:25 PM. The Board exited Executive Session at 5:50 PM.

MOTION: Phil moved to grant Vic and Eric authority make an offer of \$24/hour to the candidate discussed. Randy added the offer should be made after a satisfactory review of the candidate's references. Phil agreed to the amended motion. Vic seconded. The motion passed.

Revised J. Hutchins, Inc. Bid.

Vic presented a revised bid from J. Hutchins to repave Center Road. At \$340,165 it is around \$56,000 less than the previous bid, he said, and will not require raising the height of road. Randy asked where savings came from; Vic said from the method of cold planing and restoring the pavement. Phil said maybe Center Road should remain dirt. Vic said that would save money. Peter said the decision had been made to pave the road. The Board decided no motion was needed to approve the bid. Eric said he picked up repaired truck on August 3rd which means the Highway Department trucks are back in full force.

Joint Meeting with the MVFD: Setting Public Hearing for Merging MVFD into Town Department

Eric ran through the fire department activity. (See report, attached.) The Board designated its October 4, 2022, meeting for a public hearing on merging the MVFD into the Town. Peter asked if Eric could put together a quick presentation.

Considering a Letter of Support for the Capital Region Communication Systems Project

MOTION: Phil moved sending the letter of support. Liz seconded and letting Peter sign. The motion passed.

Treasurer Report

Dorinda reported that despite unanticipated costly pay hikes and other unbudgeted expenses, the Town ended the 2021 fiscal year June 30th with an over expenditure of the budget at just under 3%. The Town is now getting ready to submit reports for the annual audit.

Dorinda asked about expiring Microsoft Office programs. Phil suggested buying Microsoft Apps for Business which would cost the town about \$650/year. The program allows remote support from RB Tech and also Microsoft and it will work on people's phones. Randy said if it saves on IT travel time, he's in favor. As for RB Tech, Dorinda said the Town keeps getting bills for diagnostic services that tell the Town there are computer/network problems. However, the problems are not being solved. Peter asked Dorinda to send copies of the bills to the board members.

ARPA/Town Hall discussion

The Board reviewed a spreadsheet of potential projects for funding from the Town's \$515,000 American Rescue Plan Act award. Already, \$100,000 has been committed to CVFiber to expand high-speed internet in Middlesex. That leaves \$415,000, though the wish list of projects is \$709,000. The Board discussed whittling down money to repair Town Hall since Town Hall may need a serious renovation and no one wants to throw good money after bad. The Board agreed to leave \$15,000 for a possible heating system to carry the building through the next few winters and leaving in \$30,000 for a Town Hall feasibility study since the Town was not awarded a planning grant to cover that cost.

There was much discussion about using the money for mud road mitigation. Vic said the Town is in desperate need of gravel which costs \$37,500 to adequately crown a mile of road. There are 47 miles of roads in town, though the Town would start with the most major arteries. Though there's been a lot of talk about Build Back Better funding coming down the pike to pay for infrastructure, that has not yet materialized. Randy calculated a project like that would cost \$1.65 million. Liz said in that case, \$300,000 of ARPA funds – tentatively earmarked for mud mitigation in the spreadsheet – would be a drop in the bucket. She advised waiting for the Build Back Better funding. The Board discussed the challenges of keeping to a five-year road plan during recent labor shortages.

Phil said in his mind \$20,000 for MVFD turnout gear is a priority. He disagreed with putting any money to repair Town Hall. The Board asked Vic and Eric to come up with specific projects that would cost about \$300,000 since, as Peter said, people in Town are very concerned about the road. Liz supported that. Vic and Eric said they would do so. Randy said he was concerned about kicking cans down the road. If the Board is committed to allocating \$70,000 toward air packs for the MVFD, then the Board should just approve that now.

MOTION: Randy moved allocating up to \$70,000 from ARPA toward air packs. Vic seconded. The motion passed. Eric said he would pass that along to the MVFD and left the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board discussed a \$1,400 proposal from Dick Picard to paint the rear of the old fire station behind Town Hall. Sarah said there's no reason to paint that since you can't see the back of the building. Randy said he had reservations on spending money on a building whose future is uncertain.

MOTION: Phil moved to hire Dick Picard to paint the rear of the old fire station for \$1,400 and Vic seconded. Peter and Phil voted in favor; Rand and Liz were opposed. Vic abstained. The motion failed.

MOTION: Phil moved and Liz seconded approving the amended minutes of the August 2, 2022 Select Board meeting. The motion passed. Randy abstained.

The Board discussed the Memorandum of Understanding from CVFiber and the town attorney's comments. An attachment was left off the memo that the Board wanted to review first, so they passed over it until the September 6, 2022, meeting.

All orders were approved and signed.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Merriman, Town Clerk/Select Board Assistant

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2022.

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

ELIZABETH SCHARF, VICE CHAIR

RANDY DRURY

VIC DWIRE

PHIL HYJEK

16 Aug MVFD Report

Total calls to date: 40	E-1 out 3 times
Calls over the last month: 4	E-6 out 0 times
Mutual Aid out: 2	T-1 out 0 times
Mutual Aid in: 0	R-1 out 1 time
Max members respond: 5	
Min members respond: 2	
Avg members respond: 4.25	

Calls:

19 Jul, MA out, Called to Montpelier for vehicle accident, canceled when Cap West realized it was in Montpelier, 2 responders
22 Jul, MA out River Road, Moretown, motor vehicle accident, E-1, 5 responders
12 Aug, I-89, vehicle accident, E-1, R-1, 5 responders
14 Aug, MA out, vehicle vs bear, E-1, 5 responders

Training: Sign set up on road scenes

FAST Sq:

15 total for the reporting period
11 medical only calls

4 in conjunction with FD calls

DRAFT