

Select Board Members

Peter Hood, Chair
 Liz, Scharf, Vice Chair
 X Brigid Browning
 Randy Drury
 Vic Dwire

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
Middlesex Town Clerk's Office
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES.

PRESENT: Peter Hood, Chair, Liz Scharf, Vice Chair. Members Brigid Browning, Randy Drury and Vic Dwire. Treasurer Dorinda Crowell. Road Foreman and MVFD Chief Eric Metivier, MVFD President Jeff Koonz. Russ Bennett, Steve Dennis, Samantha Beaudoin, Shelley Desjardin and Blanche Laforce. On Zoom: Geen Day Coordinator John Udis, Sarah Lipton of the Montpelier Senior Activities Center, Lauri Scharf and Enrique Bueno of the Energy Committee, John Rahill and Barre City Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Aldsworth. The meeting was recorded by ORCA and Sorsha Anderson took the minutes.

Call to Order/Amendments

Peter called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM and welcomed guests.

Approving the Minutes of the March 14, 2023 Special Select Board Meeting

This was passed over.

Amendments and Approving the March 21, 2023 Select Board Meeting Agenda

The agenda was amended to include discussion of the energy code, issues on Mead Road, to appoint another member to the Budget Committee, paper work for the Town Hall grant and Green-Up Day.

Preparation for Green-Up Day

John Udis presented the need to hire a garbage truck for Green-Up day that would not require hauling materials up a ladder. Cost would be \$305 in addition to the \$500 set aside in the Town Budget and the \$500 grant for Green-up Day. Select board will check with Sarah Merriman when she returns on who usually secures the grant funds for Green-Up day. John Udis will check with Mitch Osiecki on the grant. Steve Dennis offered to run up and down the ladder all day in order to negate the need for the additional truck. Liz suggested going with the plan to hire the truck for pick-up citing liability.

MOTION: Liz moved and Vic seconded appropriating additional \$305 to rent a Dumpster from Casella. All in favor. Green up day is Saturday, May 6 from 9AM-3PM.

Montpelier Senior Activity Center's Request for FY24 Funding

Sarah Lipton, director of Montpelier Senior Activity Center, explained that this is her first year in the position and missed the petitioning deadline to be added to the Middlesex Town Ballot with their organization's annual request for funding. Sarah reassured the Board the Activity Center will have everything in order for next year. She added that they also missed the deadline for the Town of Berlin meeting and that the Berlin board was interested in how Middlesex would respond. She explained that in addition to Meals on Wheels service, the center offers an array of activities and classes. Peter asked the amount of the funding request. Ms. Lipton said it would be level funding of \$7,000. Peter said money is not budgeted and asked for time to look for grants and other sources to fill the budget hole. Liz asked whether Middlesex members of the Center pay a membership fee. Sarah replied that, yes, they pay a member-town funding fee which is lower than non-member towns. The current Middlesex members would be assessed the higher fee if Middlesex is unable to contribute this year. Liz asked about the number of Middlesex residents who use the facility. Sarah replied that in FY2019 – 75 residents, FY2022 68 residents and FY2023 34 residents. She cited overall declining membership and a steep drop-off due to the COVID pandemic. Peter advised the Board would take it under advisement and explore options for funding. He floated the idea of subsidizing the increased membership fees Middlesex members would incur in lieu of the \$7,000 in funds.

Highway Department Report

Eric Metivier reported on the Freightliner truck and its need of continual repairs and whether it would be more cost effective to buy a new truck or continue to repair. He explained the truck is from 2019 and the estimated replacement year is 2027, but it is unlikely to last that long. The cost of a new truck is estimated to be \$204,000 without warranty costs. Truck is in poor repair partially due to Middlesex misuse; Steve Dennis suggested there might be federal infrastructure grants available to cover a portion of the cost. Vic Dwyer offered to send specs on a potential replacement to board members.

Continued Issues on Mead Road

Samantha (Sam) Beaudoin discussed continuing difficulties with alterations to Mead Road being done by her neighbor Zach French. Vic, who is also Road Commissioner, said he received a picture of the latest alteration of a water bar. Road. Sam said Zach has been altering the grade and flow of the road. Liz asked if there is something that can be done to the area that would help mitigate whatever is causing Zach to alter the road since altering the road is a violation of the town ordinance. Alteration of a Class 4 road requires a permit application to the Select Board (via the Road Commissioner). Sam reported that the State Police said this is a Select Board issue. Peter said he would reach out to the Town's legal counsel to see what the options are. Discussion continued of the specific road alterations that have been ongoing through August.

Monthly Meeting with the MVFD

Jeff Koonz, Fire Department President, reported 17 calls for the month. Jeff said the heating system in the MVFD Station was repaired twice in last month. Bourne's is recommending a replacement of boiler and will be visiting to offer a quote on April 12, 2023. Jeff added he will be scheduling other estimates. Liz said that funding is available for energy efficiency and town infrastructure and this is good moment to add this to the grant. Jeff asked what the timeframe was for this funding. Liz said funding should be released soon and is must be spent by 2026. Liz asked Jeff to explore if repairs could keep the heating system together until the funding is available. Lauri Scharf added that the building assessments would need to be done in 2023.

Building Energy Code Discussion

Lauri Scharf of the Middlesex Energy Committee requested a letter of support for the creation of a study committee that would explore a plan for statewide education and enforcement of building energy efficiency codes. He offered that the Middlesex Energy Committee is in favor of this initiative due to surveys showing VT building codes are already out of compliance and more will fall short as energy requirements tighten due to climate change legislation. Vic wondered if there is a voluntary program for older and poorer people. Randy clarified that building code enforcements are only activated by permits for new construction or renovation projects. John Rahill voiced his support for the study committee to explore a state-wide system. Enrique added that the code is upgraded every 3 years as per State law with the next upgrade expected September 2023. He expects VT will be about 50% shy of targets after the upgrade and the biggest challenge is to weatherize existing stock.

MOTION: Liz moved to add Select Board support in favor of the VT Building Energy Code and Ordinance Compliance Project Initiative to form this study committee: Brigid Browning seconded. All in favor.

Clarification of MOU for Radio Dispatch

Joe Aldsworth, Deputy Chief of the Barre City Fire Department, discussed the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) regarding the awarded grant for an updated radio system. The current radio dispatch system is owned in part by Middlesex. Jeff explained that the MOU is an acknowledgement that Middlesex understands what is happening with the dispatch system grant. Peter said the Board had questions on the Middlesex estimated figure. Joe said Middlesex pays \$2,943 a year. Peter asked how many towns have approved the MOU. Joe said the following towns have signed off on the MOU: City of Barre, Montpelier, Town of Marshfield, Waitsfield, Chelsea, Williamstown; and that Berlin has paid 10 years in advance. Peter suggested that this be taken up at the next Select Board meeting. Dorinda asked when these fees needed to be paid because they have not been budgeted. Joe said July 1, 2023, is the first assessment, and Dorinda said the budget for fiscal year 2024 would be off by \$2,943. The Select Board decided to pass over until next meeting in order to review the financial spreadsheets. Joe will send the spreadsheet to the Middlesex Town Clerk.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vic apologized to the Town Clerk and members on the Road Commissioner questions. Vic said he enjoys working with Eric and he will remain Road Commissioner. He has no questions or issues with compensation.

Re: Town employee leave time. Dorinda clarified there was an oversight in computing PTO, and it has been resolved: paid time off can bring you up to 40 hours but not past the 40 hours. Brigid offered to do an analysis comparing 8-hour overtime day with 40 hour overtime week. Dorinda stated that this is a separate discussion. Randy suggested a full discussion on the town's leave policies. Liz suggested adding a goal to review the Personnel policy. Liz asked, as policy, if employees should be approving their own time sheets. Dorinda mentioned that several Town employees are submitting their own time sheets. Peter said to include this consideration in the personnel policy review

All orders were signed.

Regarding Montpelier Activity Center and Meals on Wheels discussion: Russ offered to talk with some people at Camp Meade to help fund the Montpelier Activity Center. Peter said it will likely be a combination of funding requests to residents/businesses/community fund/possible match. Russ continued by giving an update on the water and ARPA housing. He said the wells had been drilled on property he co-owns off Centre Road, near the interstate, that are currently supplying 100 gallons a minute. He continued that they have retained Otter Creek engineering to do initial rock planning for the water system. Not certain on units or land use yet. They have asked Otter Creek for estimate on water system or municipal water system for a designated area and were given a wide estimate of \$5-10M. ARPA money might be available to cover a portion this. Russ said he would like to explore a partnership with the Town and offered to bring Otter Creek in to discuss scenarios with the Select Board. Peter agreed the Select Board is interested in discussing. Russ added that another project was in the works, possibly a daycare for 150, a three-story building, a barn structure for maker-spaces and an event space. Russ will communicate with the Town Clerk to schedule Otter Creek at the next meeting

MOTION: Liz moved and Vic seconded approving a curb cut for the Carkeet's driveway on Macey Road. The motion passed.

Correspondence: The Board reviewed an email from Sandy Levine regarding a contract for consulting with the Central Vermont Planning Commission. The fee falls within the Town planning commission's budget and engagement will be done by end of year. The Board will be updated at its April 4, 2023 meeting. The Board agreed Peter should sign for the Town.

MOTION: Peter moved and Liz seconded appointing Randy fill a vacant spot on the Budget Committee. The motion passed.

Liz reported that the Town was awarded an ACCD Municipal Planning grant for \$25,500 for the VIA town hall study. Next steps will be to apply for funding through the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) for walk-throughs of municipal buildings assessing need for energy upgrades and associated work. Liz said the ideal would be to have one large application for all municipal buildings. Liz stressed the need for timely education for the town on what needs to be done, because bonding may be necessary. Also, the grant money must be spent by 2026. There was some discussion on whether the money needed to be allocated by 2026 or fully spent. Randy believes it needs to be allocated and that as long as the allocation was in place by 2026, money could be spent after that, though extensions may need to be filed.

The discussion moved to ARPA funds and the costs already earmarked for these funds. Dorinda will file an ARPA report in April 2023 on monies spent so far. ARPA funds must be allocated by 2024 and spent by 2026. Liz said of the \$515,000 awarded – \$225,000 is committed, leaving \$290,000.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Sorsha Anderson

THE ABOVE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS A WARNED AGENDA ITEM AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD ON APRIL 4, 2023

PETER O. HOOD, CHAIR

ELIZABETH SCHARF, VICE CHAIR

BRIGID BROWNING

RANDY DRURY

VIC DWIRE