Town of Middlesex
Facilities Improvement Team (FIT)
Regular Meeting
Wednesday December 3, 2025 – **4:30 PM**

Meeting Minutes

Attending:
Dave Magida – chair, Dorinda Crowell, Sandra Levine, Cheryl Grandfield, Larry Rooney, Eric Metivier, Jay Files, Kevin Thompson, Lauri Scharf, Bill Preis, Dexter Lefavour

4:30 Welcome

- Approve minutes of November 5, 2025 meeting
    - Larry Rooney moved to approve, Eric Metivier seconded, motion approved
- Approve or amend agenda for December 3, 2025
    - Dorinda Crowell moved to approve agenda, Sandy Levine seconded, motion approved

- No changes made to logistic and protocol related decisions made at previous meeting

4:35 Sub-committee's report out to full FIT

- **TOWN HALL**

    - Work completed to date – Kevin Thompson reported on sub-committee work
        - Couple of meetings have taken place
        - Considering converting old fire house to town hall
        - Building is about same size as current town hall
        - Would need to add a vault
        - Might consider taking current building and moving it and connecting to old fire house to add large meeting space
        - Also considered taking current structure, taking foundation off partially, and making a ground level entrance for meeting space
            - Kevin talked with Concrete Cutting – said it's possible – could cost about $40,000
            - No need to replace foundation and building becomes totally accessible
            - John Rahill came to a meeting – he is willing to do some rough drawings once committee knows more about what it wants
            - Putting the building on the same lowered foundation will save costs of creating a new foundation
        - Committee is mostly working with and talking about general concepts
            - By using fire house town could move into the new space, and then work on the town building – minimal interruption of work in town offices. An excellent solution for maintaining business continuity
            - Parking options were discussed
            - Septic issues were also discussed
                - Using current means septic system can be grandfathered
                - 2006 study showed capacity of 300 people in current building

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        - Rumney site (where town garage is located) has a high water table so that area is more limited in terms of people it can accommodate
        - Cost for septic work at each site would be comparable
    - Re: accessibility – would it be cheaper to make current building accessible by adding ramps or other similar traditional access structures
        - A ramp to the main floor would be difficult in existing space due to height; also need to be covered to be useful in winter
        - Elevator could be repaired? May be obsolete? – there are other accessibility issues with the elevator
        - Downstairs town office space is poorly configured as a functional office space – old fire house could be laid out more functionally for town offices
        - Vault would need to be added or moved. Is asbestos a concern?
- Additional comments about the old firehouse
    - 2nd floor in fire house is underbuilt but is not needed
    - Idea is to preserve structures that are part of the village and the town's history – Group is unsure if this is a value the community shares
- Additional comments about town hall
    - Lauri reported that work is being done to vault to improve air flow
    - Furnace has corrosion so a CO detector was installed
    - Quote for downstairs heat unit is in the works – likely in the $5,000-$7,000 range
    - Lauri reported that the structural support system throughout the attic appears to be sound. There was no evidence of roof leaks or water intrusion.

- **Next steps**
    - Bring in a structural engineer to figure out if foundation and other work that would be needed is cost-effective
    - Compare cost of fixing old firehouse to adding 2,000 sq ft at town garage location

- **Time Frame**
    - Town hall or old firehouse renovations is a longer term project
    - Recognize that the renovation of the Town Hall is not as high a priority as replacing/renovating the town garage
    - Also realize town can consider adding space at town garage
    - Timing on bond(s) were discussed – some have concerns about going back to voters twice for two separate projects – garage and town offices

- **<u>TOWN GARAGE</u>**

David Magida reported
It's in abysmal condition
The building had an expected life of 20 to 30 years. It is now almost 50 years old.

The building is 3,000 gross square feet.

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Life Safety/ Code

- no smoke/fire detection system
- The only exhaust fan is, what appears to be, a single residential unit (i.e. home kitchen fan).
- The exhaust system for the bathroom vents out to the working garage area.
- There is no make-up air anywhere in the building
- The hazardous materials storage area is a closet with no ventilation system. Gasoline is properly stored in a stand-alone fire proof vault but the vault is in the same closet with no ventilation system.
- There is no designated indoor area for welding. A portable welding unit is used throughout the garage. Note: there is no welding apron for staff to use when welding.

Water/Environmental Issues

- The water well is located approximately 10 feet from the building septic tank
- There is a single water drain in the garage. The garage is the location where trucks are washed and serviced. It is reasonable to assume that oils, salt, anti-freeze etc. are washed off the trucks and into the drain. All fluid entering this single drain is discharged "to daylight" (above ground) near the water well
- It is believed that the septic tank needs to be replaced

Structural steel and steel wall panels

There are, literally, dozens of examples and/or indications of damage to, or deterioration of structural steel and steel wall panels throughout the building including:

- numerous indoor and outdoor locations with extensive rust including structural steel, wall panels, doors etc.
- any penetration through the exterior walls (i.e. propane fired heating exhaust flue) is surrounded with rust. In some of these locations the rusting has been so significant that daylight can be seen at these penetrations
- all doors, and especially garage doors, have significant rust on panels and track systems. Some garage door tracks are so rusted that parts have pulled away from the building
- There are dozens of examples of dented, damaged and rusted wall panels that have caused some of these panels to separate from seams.

HVAC

- As noted above, there is virtually no ventilation system in the building. The concern is that a lack of ventilation in most buildings can be harmful to those using the facility. The risk is exacerbated when it is realized that trucks are routinely driven into and out of the garage and small engines are routinely used in the garage (i.e. pressure washers). It is likely that the largest source of ventilation is holes in the exterior wall panels.

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- Black mold can be found in several locations including bathroom, break room, hallways and ceilings
- Some insulation is visible and shows water damage at some point
- Staff reports that the heat is insufficient throughout the building

ADA Issues

There are no examples of addressing any ADA issues.

Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E)

- The project budget should support the purchase of several yet to be identified FF&E items

Other Issues

- Garage floor has several large cracks
- There is no safe place for visitors to enter the building and/or wait for staff. Visitors enter directly into the working garage
- There is no lift system for the vehicles thereby requiring staff to routinely crawl under vehicles and equipment
- Staff would like more lighting
- The electrical system throughout the building is insufficient and routinely pops breakers. The staff report that getting shocked is common. The system serving the southwest wall is particularly bad.

Conclusion of subcommittee

- Prohibitively expensive to rehabilitate current building; initially built as a 25 year building it is now over 50 years old
- Discussion about possible renovation – considered too extensive and expensive

▪ Discussion

- Where would new building go? One idea is near where fire house is
- New garage could accommodate one fire truck
- Every year the building is visited by insurance rep. and some questioned how it passed inspection
- Eric thinks a new structure could be 10 or 11 bays – need to accommodate currently owned equipment: grader, 3 dump trucks, bucket loader, backhoe and excavator
  - Minimum of 7 bays needed plus fire truck plus one for working on trucks
  - Have to plan for future needs while fixing current problems
- Frank asked if site would be suitable for roof top solar? Some thought it could

Next steps

▪ Get estimates for square foot needs and approximate costs

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- Present to select board at Jan. 6 select board meeting to update them on progress

5:10 Status report to Select Board on January 6, 2026

- **General discussion about presentation to Select Board and how best to start involving/sharing information with the Middlesex community**
  - Possible issues to be included in this discussion:
    - If committee is sharing info at Town Meeting someone will need to be prepared to respond to questions
    - Sometime in Feb there could be a more public meeting of the committee and then present more concepts at town meeting; would give opportunity for input prior to town meeting; could use a short survey to get input and increase understanding of the issues
    - It's important people understand why the committee is doing this; most probably don't understand the condition of the town garage; committee has to educate community about current state
    - Considering using "What's Next MDX" web site to post pictures of the garage and additional information; more education of community is important
    - The price tag will get people's attention; maybe show big pictures of condition of the garage
    - Could offer information about E. Montpelier's garage which cost about $6M; Barre is spending about $3.5M to convert old bar warehouse to new town garage; Warren is spending $9M
    - For town hall it's possible to get a square footage price; David suggested they include full project cost when sharing price tags with public, not just construction costs
    - Demolition adds costs – likely contamination considerations
    - Cost for engineering for town garage are higher than town hall but it's a priority over town hall
    - David stated that people tend to latch onto the first cost estimate they hear or latch onto the lowest cost estimate. It is critical that we don't use just construction/renovation cost but project costs. The project budget should cover all related costs such as professional fees, business continuity costs, insurances, temporary storage, contingency, furniture, fixtures and equipment.
  - Larry shared that select board has not identified priorities and given clear direction to the committee. He will bring up to the board that it should give an official charge to FIT.
- Board is meeting again on the 6th and Liz told David that she will put FIT on the agenda for a 10 to 15 minute presentation and discussion.

Group's Next Steps

- Dorinda suggested select board probably will be receptive to whatever the committee comes up with
- Sandy will help Dave put a slide show together with summary of information and will share out to the group for comments
- Kevin will send his notes to Dorinda, David, and Sandy
  - Will get some square footage costs for a baseline to compare options
  - May look at E. Montpelier information to see what they've done
  - Eric may go over there to see what it looks like and how it might function
  - David will reach out to a few contacts to try to get price estimates

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5:50 PM Meeting adjourned

Sandy moved to adjourn; Larry seconded; motion approved

Submitted by: Carol Maloney

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