Town of Middlesex
Facilities Improvement Team (FIT)
Regular Meeting
Wednesday January 7, 2026
5:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Participating: Eric Metivier, Dave Magida, Zara Vincent, Dorinda Crowell, Larry Rooney, Carol Maloney, Bill Preis, Kevin Thompson, Susan Clark, Lauri Scharf, Sandy Levine, John Rahill

5:01

- **Welcome**
  - Approve minutes of December 3, 2025 meeting
    - Dorinda moved to approve, Eric seconded, motion approved
  - Approve or amend agenda for January 7, 2026 meeting
    - Zara moved to approve agenda, Eric seconded, motion approved

5:02

- **Select Board meeting (1/6/26) presentation reflections**
  - **The need**
    - Deplorable condition of town garage is widely acknowledged
      - Also, town is buying two $.25 million vehicles that will sit outside due to condition of town garage – Liz Scharf feels that this now makes addressing the Town Garage "an ASAP situation"
    - All reasonable means of addressing the needs should be evaluated. Need to prove that the best option is that the existing building needs to be demolished and a new one built.
      - It's important to take time and do a thorough job to let voters know that all the issues have been considered and assessed
      - It's a planning exercise and is complex with many pieces
      - More likely to be successful with lots of information and good communication
    - Urgency and consensus re: town garage with interest around town hall but no agreement about what's the best way to move forward

  - **Possible actions and decisions**
    - Does town have an appetite for moving town offices nearer the school (would require changing the town plan)?
    - Limitations of existing town garage site (water, sewer, wetness) may preclude adding town offices to any new construction at that site
    - Socializing the issues and decisions that have to be made will require multiple efforts – ahead of town meeting and afterward
      - Slide show at town meeting ?
      - FPF postings
      - Middlesex town web site
      - ***What's Next Middlesex***? web site
        - Can have a FIT tab for this information – Can be a repository for all information as well as be a source of new information
        - Put posting in FPF to direct people to go to ***What's Next Middlesex***?

        - Need to post information as information is obtained – with any new changes
        - Land purchase for new construction may be an option – extra costs
            - Property north of the Park and Ride site is owned by regional transportation company – don't know the status of their plan for using that land
            - May depend on wet areas and any limitations from that
        - Consultants are needed to get information about options (and funding to pay them)
        - Will Act 250 be involved?
        - Committee wants to educate the town before going to ask for a vote on a bond
            - To educate the community consultation work is needed to help with plans and providing cost estimates.
            - It's essential to see what's possible at existing site before going further
        - Key question: Does the committee want to find a place for one building, or approach with separate buildings using existing sites?

- **March 2026 town meeting**
    - In addition to any speaking/presentation during Town Meeting, there should be a static display in the hallway available all day. Should it be staffed? It will be important to present voters with the many options
    - At town meeting need to outline the options and present them without numbers – present just the facts; put forth what the committee envisions for options at town meeting
    - Purpose to inform people – could be under section of town meeting under reports; could also survey people about their thoughts
    - Could ask voters at town meeting to spend $50,000 or $60,000 for planning, to include expenses related to consultations and engineering – select board could include this in budget or put as a special article; benefits to special article is it can educate voters about the upcoming bond

- **Other considerations and next steps**
    - Suggestion to have a structured conversation about the options and all considerations for each
        - What are the things the committee needs to educate itself about and then what does the committee need to educate the community about?
        - Could Regional Planning Commission assist with this conversation?
            - Eric will ask if they have something that would guide the committee with basic questions or a rubric to move forward in a logical way
        - Get engineer to assess wetlands to help determine if larger structure is possible there
        - Dorinda will research bond bank timelines and rates – she believes there are awards 2x per year
        - Chase and Chase, Grenier Engineering – two companies that are familiar with the town and the soils
            - There may be funding from the state
        - What specific experts are needed? Can the committee ask the town members if they can assist at no cost?
        - 6 weeks away from town meeting so need for dropping info on FPF can start happening right away – with weekly postings – Larry will lead this communication effort but others need to assist. Community outreach will be our highest priority for the next few months.
        - Put cost into context – how long the building will last, compare to other towns (E. Montpelier spent about $5M, Barre City is spending $3.5M to renovate a building, Waitsfield is working on a building)

5:50

- **Action steps**
  - Outreach
    - Larry will post in FPF each week before town meeting
      - Zara has already posted when recruiting for the committee so there is foundational information to use in new posts
      - Posting should include 1) goals of the committee, and 2) why is a new building needed?
      - Susan said there may be people willing to help with outreach
    - Lauri will ask Sam at CVRPC if she has info about what other towns are spending for their town garages
    - Eric will talk with CVRPC about guidance documents or facilitation assistance they might offer

  - Assess users' needs
    - Eric will bring written description of town garage needs
    - Susan will put some ideas together about the status of the town hall and how things have improved, and what questions will be explored re: the town hall

- **Suggestions for Town Meeting Communication**
  - List current issues and challenges with each building
  - Gather info from voters' about their thoughts re: moving town offices near the school and town garage
  - Do an open house at town garage
  - Explain that the town is working on two projects with different timelines
  - Describe pros and cons for each option (e.g., septic system limitations at town garage site if it's going to include town offices; putting town garage on Rt. 2 means a lot of extra travel to the roads)
  - Describe why town garage plan is for current site
  - Compare investments in town garages in other towns
  - Pictures will be helpful
  - Lauri will capture suggestions about what to include in hand-outs and/or slide deck

- **Next Meeting agenda**
  - Town meeting plan

6:38 Adjournment
- Zara moved, Eric seconded, motion approved

Submitted by: Carol Maloney