Middlesex Town Road Committee

Date: April 17, 2025

Present:

Zara Vincent zara.vincent@gmail.com

Scott Gurley (scottgurley@rocketmail.com)

Sandy Levine (swampbear@gmail.com)

Hilton Dier (hiltondier@gmail.com)

Dexter Lefavour (lefavourvt@aol.com)

Susan Warren warrensusanj14@gmail.com

Present via zoom:

Ken Davis (gkendavis@gmail.com)

Marianne Mullen (MarianneVT@gmail.com)

Paul Cerminara (paulcerminara@gmail.com)

Guests:

Bill Preis

Road Crew members Jay Files, Ben Abare and his daughter Cheyanne Abare

Minutes from March 20,2025 were approved. Agenda for April 17,2025 was approved.

Team Fix

Road crew members were welcomed to the meeting and asked to talk about needs they have with the Road Committee. They identified the following issues:

- The shop is in terrible shape. It is in need of structural repairs. There is black mold and possibly other air quality issues. It is hard to heat.
- The road crew would like towing capability, as when plowing they frequently find cars parked where they need to turn around. They mentioned Davy Road in particular. There were “no parking” signs there but these have disappeared. A “winter policy” was developed several years ago but needs more outreach, possibly via Front Porch Forum. Zara suggested the Select Board could put out a RFP for an on-call plowing contract.
- Another issue is some residents (or their plowing contractors) leave lines of plowed snow in the road way while pushing snow across the road. This is a safety issue for town plows as well as residents.

- The road crew says one of their plow trucks is unreliable.
- The radios they have in the trucks are “terrible.” (*something to do with bandwidth?)* Road crew members frequently have to use their personal cell phones to communicate with each other and cell service is spotty.

Sandy asked about the road crew’s preferred way for drivers to handle encountering either a plow or the grader. Generally, the crew would like drivers to wait until the truck or grader can pull aside to allow passage. They are aware when someone is behind them and move aside as soon as they can. Drivers can cause damage to their vehicles by driving through snow piles or rows of gravel during plowing and grading. Sandy suggested some FPF posts could help spread information about the safest way to pass plows and graders.

Road projects planned for this summer discussed:

- culvert replacements on Center, South Bear Swamp, Notch and Brook roads. This work is contracted to Dirt Tech
- the town will be replacing a failed culvert on 3-Mile Bridge Rd.

Paul C. recommended a schedule of these projects be prepared and posted so residents will know when the work is likely to take place.

Team Friends

Hilton reported on the recent survey posted on FPF regarding how people would like/need to get information in an emergency. About 10% of respondents said they would need help in an emergency, such as getting out of their home. The means by which they would get information about an emergency situation. Email was used by the most number of people, generally read once a day. Other communication methods had varying use; it would seem that multiple methods would be needed to reach the most people. Hilton reported that a combination of email, text, and voice call would reach nearly everyone who answered the questionnaire. More information needs to be gathered, and coordination with the town’s Emergency Manager, in order to design the best system for notifying people in town of an emergency situation.

The Road Committee is planning on being at the Energy Fair on May 17th to provide information on the RC’s work, answer questions and possibly gather public comment on specific road issues. A sub-committee will meet and discuss what could be presented.

Team Future

John Rahill is collecting information about the costs and issues with paving so we can answer the question “why don’t we just pave the roads?”

Dexter collected budget and road costs from surrounding towns, and found Middlesex is somewhat in the middle regarding annual road costs. He mentioned these numbers:

Barre Town- $50,000/mile/year (highest)

Middlesex- $23,000

East Montpelier- $13,000 (lowest)

Ben has asked if Sunny Brook could be made Class 3 all the way through so that Plows and fire trucks could get through. The Road Crew said the fire trucks can in fact get through the former Class 4 section currently.

Mike Kline reported on progress on the assessment of Great Brook. He said he will be meeting next week with some UVM researchers on what they have learned so far and what additional info they need. The State Geologist is arranging for radar assessment that will identify where the bedrock is located in the stream corridor. The State Geologist will be conducting a training on identifying high water mark signs. Mike reported that the meeting with Brook Road residents went well. They gained some good information on hard feature locations (bedrock and concrete walls etc).

Team Funding

Zara reported that the Town has received reimbursement of $2.8 million worth of projects resulting from the 2023 flood damage. There is a total of $3.8 million on road repairs done after the 2024 floods that the town is still awaiting reimbursement on. Zara reports she now has a FEMA contact who has been helpful.

Mike said we should be able to get Water Quality funds for Great Brook work once those projects get funding.

Dexter suggested adding road projects to the capital budget so the town can better plan to address the road needs.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30. Next meeting is May 17.