Select Board Members

__ Vic Dwire ***resigned***
__ Larry Rooney
__ Liz Scharf, Chair
__ Stacey Skadberg
___Zara Vincent

MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD
5:00 PM
Tuesday, March 18, 2025
SPECIAL MEETING
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

PRESENT: Chair Elizabeth (Liz) Scharf. Selectboard members: (Vice Chair) Zara Vincent (Chair of the Town Roads subcommittee), Larry Rooney and Stacey Skadberg. Road Foreman/Road Commissioner/MVFD Chief, Eric Metivier. Treasurer/Town Clerk Cheryl Grandfield. Assistant Town Clerk Lorna Fortune. Listers: Annette Halasz, and Shelly Desjardins*. Michelle Johnson, Brian Voight, Katherine Biggam* and Timothy Tharp*, Paula Otenti*, Sonia Carrasco*, Paul Hanson (Ecopixel)*, Paul Seminara*
(* denotes attendees via zoom)

Call to order/amendments/welcoming guests:

>**Note: Liz informed new board members that communications between 3 or more people is considered a meeting and must be warned. Selectboard meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order.**

5:01 pm Liz Scharf called the meeting to order. Welcomed guests. The approval of the March 11 meeting will be held until the April 1 meeting, as not everyone has read the preliminary minutes.

Brian Voight from CVRPC (Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission) update

- Grant for Emergency Watershed Protection Event 5042
- 24 Projects approved for 2023 Flooding
- 4 Projects approved for 2024 Flooding
- Technical component 100% funded. Implementation, only $75% funded.
- Context – re: flood of 2023 – 8 houses are in imminent risk of falling into the river. Approved riparian work to try to avoid losing homes – covered 100% by Federal government. Feds covered 900K. Feds generally only cover 75%. They covered 100% for this. Various locations.
- Second grant for $60K to match 25% not covered by Feds for the second request. Estimate $250K or more?? Still 2023 Flood damage.
- Town has to agree to be the sponsor to cover the 25% match. How will the town recover that 25% match? State? Homeowners? – not in budget adjustment.
- Brian is here to discuss deadlines on these grants – homeowners at risk of losing homes in event of new flood event. Town needs budget for this match. 4 homes involved. This is due 04/11/25. Currently not on line for current match $$. Still process to get in the Queue for Feds to offer $$$/match. Will need commitment once the Feds get this moving. Brian recommends getting firm costs in place (State help? Feds? Increase share? Or set up vehicle to put $$ in Escrow to cover the 25% costs match). Need to sign the match before the 04/11/25 deadline.
- Signing the application does guarantee engineering designs for the 4 properties.

Liz recommends signing the application for the match, now. Engineering designs will be used to put the project out to bid.

MOTION: Zara made the motion to move forward with the application. Stacey seconded and agreed to have Liz sign and start the process. Motion carried.

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Application is due April 11, 2025. Note: Keith may help fill out the application.

Zoom Attendees, Katherine Biggam and Timothy Tharp, have had more damage with the last storms over the last few days. The bank has further fallen into the river. She is looking for some more information on processing applications. Katherine had damage from flooding in both 2023 and 2024. Liz suggested a possible funding available – disaster case management program - She believes funding is also available for property damage, not just housing. You must be enrolled and working with someone to be available for possible assistance if you are in their program.

- Brian – re: Clean Water Advisory Committee, a regional subcommittee of CVRPC. Water quality for the region.
- Great Brook Committee (Mike Klein) is currently testing water quality
- Projects? Is Town interested? Next meeting is Forest roads and forest management. Liz has a copy of the application. Looking for someone to fill a seat on the committee. Could be a random towns person. Not just someone in Town management. Brian said we are welcome to put on Front porch forum. Zara will post on FPF.
- Upcoming wastewater seminar at Yestermorrow on March 27, 2025. Reference: Aging wastewater systems. Residential, maintenance, etc. Remote option to attend is available.

5:30 pm Highway report and update from Eric and Zara.

- Highway (Eric): Equipment has not changed since last week. Filled washout on Notch road, added more stone on Lower Barnett road, filled potholes on Shady Rill. Cautious optimism on Spring Thaw. So far, it's less problematic this year.
- FEMA update (Zara): Town has received $435K from FEMA. We expect next payment of $435K, at some point. The current FEMA rep is looking to see if additional $70K is available for 2023. We are also expecting funds for Center Road and Portal Road ($1.8M) for 2023 damage.
- Zara is working on the 2024 flooding and Dirt Tech staging, etc. Cheryl has been working with the Vermont Bond Bank. We have applied for $2.5M MCRF emergency bond. H&H studies are holding us back, as we need information from the state.

Town Highway Correspondence

- FY 2026 Municipal Highway Grant application
- Eric received the application for the municipal highway grant. Town Highway Structures Grant Program: Each form needs its own application. To be applied for highways, structures, roadways. Bridges and culverts are considered structures. Town Highway Class 2 Roadway Grant Program.
- Separate applications needed by April 15, 2025
- Town Bridge Inspections: https://vtrans.vermont.gov/docs/bridge-inspections
- Town will comply. Wait until April 1 meeting to sign. Add to the Agenda
- Town Road and Bridge Standards: Each town needs to certify that we have road and bridge standards and follow them. Need date of adoption.
- Class 1 and 2 Centerline Pavement Marking Letter – repairing and retreatment.
- Town Contact information sheet for Dept. of Transportation

5:45 pm Jeff Koonz (assistant chief – MDX VFD) introduced new selectboard members, Stacey and Larry.

- Reported 4 calls (14 for the year) Max responders = 5. Engine 1 out twice. Rescue out twice. Accidents mainly on I-89. Inattentive drivers are the major problem.
- WEC does respond to calls at night. Thank you to the volunteers.

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- Communications training is very important.
- No repairs or purchases to report. Fiscal YE ends June 30.

5:55 pm Lauri Scharf – to discuss potentially weatherizing the Town Hall. Bond? Fire Station. Middlesex energy committee is all volunteers. Need costs on proposed improvements.

- Summary: Fire station - built in 2008, needs improved seals
- Building is metal Construction w/significant air leakage
- Propane usage = 1400 gallons/year ($2400)
- Electrical usage = 5mWh ($1000)

Lauri outlined some possible options for weatherization on both buildings.

- Celtek – could come in to train volunteers and apply air barrier - $4k approximately for day of work with volunteers, plus up to $7K. Electric costs – before or after space heaters?
- Attic insulation and foundation below grade. Windows and doors air sealing. Hire an expert to teach volunteers. Some volunteers have been recruited. Bigger ticket item – to replace furnace. Recommends heat pump, after insulation. Would need quotes after insulation. Plus, keep the 2 Rinnai units for back up on colder nights. GMP would give incentives, depending on what they want vs. what we want.
- Some money has been set aside in the town hall fund, to support weatherization. Capital $$ is for equipment. But nothing is in the budget for these expenses. Currently heating with propane. No $$ for current plans? Current value $450K. Town Hall may have some value as resale.
- Question came up - what was the original purpose of setting money aside – just repairs or other possibilities? No renovation plans on the table. We do need reliable heat and weatherization.
- Jeff noted Radon tests – what about the Radon mitigation plan??? How do we know if the Radon is being mitigated, currently? Exhaust could work with the existing ductwork?? Radon issue NEEDS TO BE DEALT WITH!!

Liz suggested weatherization for both FD and Hall. What are the options available?

- GOALS for 2025. Energy Fair is in May of 2025. What is the condition of the ductwork?? Ancient? Worthwhile to re-use?? Have there been studies on the Radon issues?
- Zara questions costs for future electric? Heat?
- Stacey asked ? $5K fuel costs – currently? Currently utility costs?? To correct problems…? IS it worth it to continue to try to perk up this old decrepit building??? No's - all around…
- Lauri will look into numbers for Town Hall. Unconfirmed, but real?

- Liz made motion to go ahead to reduce RADON (Ventilation) and work on weatherization. Stacey noted costs vs. reality of pouring more money into temporary fixes. Heat pumps are not good for keeping heat up to snuff in cold weather in VT
- Question – motion to move forward with volunteer labor, etc.?

MOTION: Zara made the motion to move forward with volunteer labor and weatherization prospects. Larry seconded. Motion carried.

Lauri wants to know if the Town requires a certain number of bids? Stacey offered to check into that. Zara wants to know when/how to discuss heating? Future – Zara/Liz ??? Boiler? Hot Water? Eric ? - Liz said to put it on the GOALS - rebates?? 3 people left the meeting.

Orders to sign off on…

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Correspondence – Cheryl verified with Steve. He does not wish to continue in the position of coordinator. One Vacancy for his position. Emergency Management Coordinator.

Selectboard Vacancy. And, vacancy for Budget committee. To post on Front Porch Forum.

Invite responders from Letters of Interest to the April 15 meeting to speak, discuss, and then appoint anyone who is appropriate to fill the position.

Annette is forced to resign from her position of Lister. Liz thanked her for her services to the town. Need a new notice of Vacancy for Lister, same dates, same times.
Liz also thanks Vic Dwire for his service to the town (who recently resigned from his position that he was voted in for on March 4, 2025.

GOALS: Note on Agenda for the next meeting will discuss our goals.

- Personnel policy. Same as on the Agenda
- Need new OWL
- Budget for new computer 2026 ?? 2025 – Cheryl's computer this year
- Correspondence from Sam (Mad River Valley Path project) Liz will sign. And ask him to sign and ask Adrianne Magida to connect with them as volunteer. Member for the project advisory committee – for the Mad River Valley Path - possibly Adrianne Magida??

Cheryl made Town of Middlesex letterhead

- Town contact person will be Cheryl.
- Stacey has questions – reach out to set up her own – she has her own Town email and
- Ethics rule (Zara mentioned) – 45 minute course – online ?
- Larry Rooney Roonlaw@aol.com Larry – use this one for his main email.
- Send both last one and this one to Larry. He did not receive any previous. Stacey would like to use this email, Stacey.kight@icloud.com

Board members,
Stacey, Larry, Liz and Zara signed off on orders

Meeting adjourned 6:36 p.m.

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ELIZABETH SCHARF, CHAIR

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ZARA VINCENT, VICE CHAIR

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STACEY SKADBERG

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LARRY ROONEY

_____
VACANT

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