Select Board Members
_x_ Liz Scharf, Chair
_x_ Zara Vincent, Vice Chair
_x_ Stacey Skadberg
_x_ Larry Rooney
___ Vacant

Middlesex Select Board
5:00 PM
Tuesday, April 1, 2025
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

Present: Liz Scharf, Zara Vincent, Stacey Skadberg, Larry Rooney.
Also Present: Cheryl Grandfield, Town Clerk & Town Treasurer, Eric Metivier, Road Foreman, Road Commissioner & MVFD Chief, Ben Abair, Town Highway Dept., Lisa Kolb, Hazard Mitigation Grant Supervisor, VT Emergency Management, ORCA Media.
Also Present via Zoom: Michele Johnson, Paul Cerminara, Shelley Desjardins.

The meeting was called to order at 5:12 PM by Chair Scharf.
Approval of March 11, 2025 Minutes: Mr. Rooney moved, and Vice Chair Vincent seconded approval of the March 11, 2025 minutes as drafted. The motion passed unanimously.
Review of March 18, 2025 Minutes: Vice Chair Vincent expressed questions regarding the March 18, 2025 minutes and the approval of the March 18, 2025, minutes was adjourned to the next meeting on April 15, 2025.
Approval of Agenda: Vice Chair Vincent moved to approve the agenda. The motion carried.

Vermont Emergency Management Homeowner Buyout Update: Lisa Kolb, Hazard Mitigation Grant Supervisor for Vermont Emergency Management ("VEM") provided an update on the FEMA buyouts for Middlesex homeowners. Ms. Kolb believes there are twelve (12) flood-affected properties in Middlesex that have been approved for a buyout. The buyout requires (i) appraisal; (ii) duplication of benefits; (iii) executing the voluntary transaction agreement ("VTA"); (iv) closing on the sale; (v) asbestos testing and remediation (if necessary); and (vi) demolition of existing structures. Once complete, the property will be owned by the town and must be maintained as undeveloped land in perpetuity. All utilities will be capped. Future uses of the property could involve landscaping and/or additional flood hazard mitigation.

While VEM has agreed to assist Middlesex with the buyout given the number of eligible properties, for optimal results, VEM asks that the Town coordinate with property owners directly to obtain the necessary information and carry out each step of the buyout. Given the amount of coordination needed for this process, Ms. Kolb offered that other towns have been successful where a townsperson, often someone who is retired or semi-retired and has daytime flexibility-- has agreed to volunteer as liaison between the homeowners and the Selectboard/VEM.

Presently, some appraisals have been returned while others remain outstanding. Once the appraisal is complete, homeowners must gather and submit documentation and receipts for repairs and betterments to their property – known as the duplication of benefits. Once this paperwork is finalized, the VTA is executed. The Town will need to authorize someone to execute the document on behalf of the Town – typically a member of the Selectboard. Once the VTA is fully signed, closing papers are sent to a real estate lawyer to facilitate the transfer of the property from the homeowner to the Town. The attorney is retained and paid for by VEM. Homeowners are advised to retain their own counsel. If the title is clear, closing is scheduled, and the Town will take ownership of the property with funds paid to the homeowner through VEM/FEMA. VEM will conduct asbestos testing and remediation and demolition.

Chair Scharf asked whether the current political climate might affect the availability of funds for these buyouts. Ms. Kolb was confident that the funds for this program, which have already been awarded, will remain available. Ms. Kolb added that she would be happy to attend future Selectboard Meetings if needed.

Ms. Skadberg recommended the Selectboard put out a call for a volunteer to help facilitate this process. Vice Chair Vincent asked about the anticipated impact of the buyouts on Middlesex tax revenue. Chair Scharf noted any impact is still in question considering the upcoming town-wide reappraisal.

Highway Report: Mr. Metivier reports that repairs were made to the international truck to that the crew could sand after Saturday's snow. They are still down one truck since March 7, 2025, and believe the issue might be in the transfer case. Mr. Metivier is cautiously optimistic about mud season, which has so far proven to be fairly manageable.

Ms. Skadberg asked about the 2024 Selectboard Goal "Wood Road Bridge." Mr. Metivier said the bridge would benefit greatly from the replacement. The angle of entry is very difficult for the plows and the bridge is narrow. The barrier to replacement is funding and procuring the necessary grants to finance a replacement. The road crew is aware of the deterioration in the bridge's surface and will patch with quick-drying concrete once weather permits.

FEMA Flood Reimbursements: Mr. Metivier and Vice Chair Vincent provided an update on FEMA. The FEMA representatives continue to turnover. They will be meeting with the newest one, Monique, at the end of the week. With respect to the FEMA reimbursements for the 2023 Flood:
Total reimbursements received to date: $1,209,755.43
Total reimbursements obligated, but not received: $2,696,045
Total reimbursements outstanding: $1,377,533.32.

Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory: Reviewed and authorized by all members of the Selectboard.

Treasury Report: Town was approved for the Vermont Bond Bank Loan in the amount of $2,388,000. The Town had applied for $2,500,000. The bank would like to close on May 7, 2025, and will need additional information as to whether the Town seeks as 12-month current expense note or a long term refunding note. Likely that this loan would be used to pay down the Community Bank loan and may also fund roadwork and flood repairs this coming summer.

Vice Chair Vincent added that, because the Town has not yet bid out work for permanent repairs of the 2024 flood damage, extensions will likely need to be requested from FEMA for 2024 flood damage reimbursements. Chair Scharf acknowledges the difficult position the two floods have created for the Town's finances.

Middlesex Emergency Management Plan: Plan was prepared by the Emergency Management Committee and Chair Scharf is the acting Emergency Management Director until the vacancy is filled. Discussion regarding designating Rumney Elementary as an emergency shelter. It can be used for a warming shelter and a place to charge electronics during the day but cannot shelter people overnight. Middlesex does not currently have any overnight sheltering capacity. Those in need are directed to the Barre Auditorium, which is run by the American Red Cross. **Motion:** Vice Chair Vincent moved to approve the plan, and Mr. Rooney seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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Budget Committee: Presentation on municipal salary wage range recommendations adjourned to the next meeting on April 15, 2025

Selectboard Vacancy: To date, the Town has received three letters of interest for the vacant selectboard position. The deadline to submit a letter of interest is April 10, 2025. All interested persons are invited to meet with the Selectboard at the next meeting on April 15, 2025.

Selectboard Goals: The goals for the Selectboard were reviewed and discussed. These include updating the Town Personnel Policy, replacing the Town Hall heating system before winter 25/26, updating the Town Purchasing Policy, discussing the future of the Town Hall and the Town's municipal offices, updating the Town Junk Ordinance, updating the Town Speed Ordinance, and updating the Town website.

Motion: Chair Scharf moved to enter Executive session to discuss a personnel issue pursuant to 1 VSA §313(a)(4) with the Town Clerk, Ms. Grandfield, also present, and to adjourn the regular meeting immediately thereafter. Zara seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Selectboard entered the Executive Session at 6:25 pm. The Selectboard adjourned executive session, and the regular meeting concluded at 7:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Stacey Skadberg.

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

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VACANT

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