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 15, 2025
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

Present: Liz Scharf, Zara Vincent, Larry Rooney.
Also Present: Cheryl Grandfield, Town Clerk & Town Treasurer, Eric Metivier, Road Foreman, Road Commissioner & MVFD Chief, Brendon Lareau, Paul Cerminara, Annette Halasz, Mark Harris, Shelly Desjardins, ORCA Media.
Also Present via Zoom: Stacey Skadberg, James Price, Samantha Beaudoin, Lauri Scharf.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chair Scharf.
Approval of March 18, 2025 Minutes: Vice Chair Vincent moved and Mr. Rooney seconded approval of the March 18, 2025 minutes as revised. The motion passed.
Approval of April 1, 2025 Minutes: Vice Chair Vincent moved and Mr. Rooney seconded approval of the April 1, 2025 minutes. The motion passed.
Changes and Approval of Agenda: The agenda was revised to include a report from the town treasurer and to move the budget committee forward, to occur after voting on the vacancy and before the town highway report. Vice Chair Vincent moved to approve the revised agenda for April 15, 2025. Mr. Rooney seconded. The motion passed.

Selectboard Vacancy: The selectboard received three (3) letters of interest for the seat vacated on March 15, 2025. The vacancy is for a two-year term expiring in 2027. The appointed member will serve through March 2026 and must run for election in 2026 to continue serving the remainder of the term.

Mr. Price spoke first. He moved to Middlesex in 2019 with his spouse and child. While he did not have a lot of experience in local governance, he expressed interest in the opportunity to learn more. Ms. Halasz spoke next. A Middlesex resident since 1976, she expressed interest in becoming involved in town politics. She is recently retired and has a background in the medical field as an advanced practice nurse. Mr. Cerminara spoke last. He has lived in Middlesex since 2009 with his wife and three children. He is very familiar with the town, having served as road foreman for ten years before becoming a division manager at an excavation company. Mr. Cerminara expressed interest in helping with FEMA/roadwork issues.

Vice Chair Vincent offered her thoughts before nominating Mr. Cerminara for the appointment. She noted that the Selectboard currently includes several new members—herself with just one year of service, along with the more recent additions of Mr. Rooney and Ms. Skadberg. Mr. Cerminara's experience working with the town would, she said, provide valuable perspective and support to the Board given its current composition.

Vice Chair Vincent moved to appoint Mr. Cerminara to fill the vacancy. Chair Scharf seconded the motion. Mr. Rooney moved to appoint Mr. Price to fill the vacancy. Ms. Skadberg seconded the motion. Mr. Cerminara received three votes in favor. Mr. Rooney abstained. Mr. Price received one vote in favor. The motion to appoint Mr. Cerminara carried. Chair Scharf thanked the others for stepping up to fill the vacancy.

To those not selected, Vice Chair Vincent emphasized that other appointed positions remain open, including a seat on the Budget Committee and the position of Town Lister. Chair Scharf added that the Selectboard was also seeking an assistant, a paid role at $25/hour for approximately three (3) hours per week.

Budget Committee: Mark Harris, Chair of the Budget Committee, offered an update on municipal salary wage recommendations. These pay bands would be communicated to incoming applicants and could be updated annually. Various concerns were raised. Chair Scharf noted that many town positions were "patched" together to create full time employment. Cheryl Grandfield agreed, indicating that she presently moves between multiple positions central to town administration.

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How would these wage ranges account for a person who does more than one role? For example, someone who works as bookkeeper and treasurer. Mr. Harris said that setting wage ranges presents an opportunity for the town to clarify its personnel needs, including the time that should be allocated to each line of work. Shelly Desjardins endorsed this approach, noting that wage scales are commonly used in the private sector and offer flexibility. Mr. Rooney requested more information about which positions were part-time and full-time and recommended that any wage ranges adopted by the Town be incorporated into the Personnel Policy as well.

Highway Report: Mr. Metivier reported that the International would be heading to the repair shop the following week to replace the cracked suspension brackets. The Freightliner will be taken apart and looked at later this spring. Mud season has started in earnest. A culvert on Brook Road – an old one that was not replaced in connection with the flooding-- is failing and slated for repair and replacement the week of April 28th.

FEMA Flood Reimbursements: Mr. Metivier and Vice Chair Vincent provided an update on FEMA.

- 2023 Flooding Update (FEMA-4720)
    - Dirt Tech will resume work in late April 2025 to repair and replace box culverts.
    - Chair Scharf asked if there were any concerns about potential price increases. Mr. Metivier advised that a firm price was provided and does not anticipate any unforeseen cost changes.
    - Mr. Cerminara asked where Dirt Tech plans to stage their materials and whether any town properties might be more convenient to the worksite. Mr. Metivier will follow up with the contractor regarding this.
    - Reimbursements – no changes since last meeting.
        - Total received to date: $1,209,755.43
        - Total obligated, but not received: $2,696,045
        - Total outstanding: $1,377,533.32.
- 2024 Flooding Update (FEMA 4810)
    - Still awaiting hydraulic studies
    - The Town is unable to borrow funds for 4810 work due to the lack of assurance regarding FEMA reimbursement timelines.
    - The Town will likely need to request an extension, given the funding challenges and delays already experienced in receiving FEMA reimbursements for 2023 flooding.

Miscellaneous Highway Matters: The Municipal Highway Grant application has been submitted and Mr. Metivier confirmed that the Annual Financial Plan will be completed within the applicable deadline.

Summer Hours for the Highway Department: Mr. Metivier requested reinstatement of four ten-hour days from the beginning of May through the end of October, otherwise known as "summer hours." Vice Chair Vincent expressed her support for the initiative, acknowledging how hard the road crew works and the many challenges they've tackled in just the past few years. Ms. Desjardins added that, even with a four-day workweek, the highway crew consistently responds to critical issues. Vice Chair Vincent moved to approve a four-day workweek, comprising of ten hour days, for the road crew from May 1 through October 31, 2025. Mr. Cerminara seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Middlesex Volunteer Fire Department: Brendon Lareau provided the monthly update to the Board. In addition to routine service calls, the department recently completed a training and voted to add a new member, bringing their total membership to fifteen (15). It was confirmed that Jason Merril 802-229-4797 remains the appropriate contact for obtaining a burn permit. Chair Scharf added that weatherization efforts of the station are underway. Funds were received from the Municipal Energy Resilience Program ("MERP") for outreach for energy efficiency. While they can't use the funds to pay for the weatherization, they are looking into whether those funds can still be used to train the volunteers who will be assisting with the weatherization project.

Bids for Town Website: Lauri Scharf provided an update on the town's efforts to modernize its website. Some preliminary work was done last year, and the Town Meeting Solutions Committee is now interested in reviving the initiative. Mr. Scharf noted that they have identified new vendors who may offer more affordable options. Chair Scharf confirmed that the town has budgeted $10,000 in FY25 for website updates. Ms. Skadberg did not anticipate any issues with the project under the

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town's current purchasing policy. Vice Chair Vincent moved to authorize Mr. Scharf to issue RFPs for updating the town website. Chair Scharf seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Purchasing Policy Workshop: The Selectboard began the process of reviewing the town's purchasing policy, which was adopted in 2015, and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns ("VLCT") model policy. Ms. Skadberg facilitated the conversation. The Board reached a consensus with respect to provisions pertaining to PURPOSE, LOCAL PREFERENCE, CODE OF CONDUCT, and DOCUMENTATION and will continue its review and discussion of the remaining provisions of the purchasing policy at the next meeting.

Development Review Board Reappointments: Mr. Rooney moved to reappoint Ms. Skadberg to the Development Review Board ("DRB"). Vice Chair Vincent seconded. The motion passed. Mr. Rooney then moved to reappoint Peter Raymond the DRB. Mr. Cerminara seconded. The motion passed.

Treasury Report: The town received the loan commitment letter from the Vermont Bond Bank. Loan total is $2.38M and the bank has offered a 1.3% interest rate for emergency response notes, and a 1.3 – 3.5% interest rate for capital projects. Funds from this loan will be used to pay off current notes with Community Bank and Dirt Tech's work replacing box culverts. Chair Scharf moved to authorize Town Clerk Grandfield to sign the loan note for $2.3M with the Vermont Bond Bank. Vice Chair Vincent seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

FEMA Buyout Update: Three residents have expressed interest and a willingness to volunteer their time to support neighbors through the buyout process. At this time, it does not appear that assistance is immediately needed. Town Clerk Grandfield noted that she is now up to date on the process and currently able to manage the workload. She indicated that this is something she can continue to handle for now. However, it is unclear whether volunteer support may become beneficial as the buyout process progresses. It was agreed that Ms. Skadberg would reach out to each interested individual to ask whether they would be willing to assist the Town Clerk if the need arises.

Other Business: The camper has been removed from the town's right-of-way near Rumney Elementary School. Mr. Metivier will install a "No Overnight Parking" sign to deter future incidents of this nature. Ms. Skadberg expressed interest in brainstorming ideas for the future of the town hall/municipal building and was advised to reach out to Sandy Levine, who shares that interest.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Stacey Skadberg.

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