Select Board Members
_x_ Liz Scharf, Chair
_x_ Zara Vincent, Vice Chair
_x_ Stacey Skadberg
_x_ Larry Rooney
_x_ Paul Cerminara

Middlesex Select Board
5:00 PM
Tuesday, May 20, 2025
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

MINUTES

Present: Liz Scharf, Zara Vincent, Larry Rooney, Stacey Skadberg, Paul Cerminara.
Also Present: Cheryl Grandfield, Town Clerk & Town Treasurer, Eric Metivier, Road Foreman & Road Commissioner, Shelly Desjardins, Samantha Beaudin, Jeff Koontz, Mitch Osiecki, Hannah Brown, ORCA Media.
Also Present via Zoom: Sean McVeigh

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chair Scharf.

May 6, 2025 Minutes: Vice Chair Vincent moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Cerminara seconded. The motion passed.

May 20, 2025 Agenda: The agenda was revised to add a review of a driveway access permit for Dennis Hill on Culver Hill Road and adding correspondence received by members of the Selectboard to Other Business. Vice Chair, Vincent moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Rooney seconded. The motion passed.

Appointment of Lister: Sean McVeigh submitted a letter of interest for the open Lister position, a three-year term ending in March 2027. To complete the remainder of the term, the appointee must run for election at Town Meeting in March 2026 for the final year. Mr. McVeigh has lived in Middlesex for twenty years and has extensive land use experience. He is retiring in May and has expressed an interest in continuing public service. Current Listers Shelly Desjardins and Samantha Beaudin answered questions about the position. Ms. Desjardins explained that the Listers take a collaborative approach to ensure consistency in property valuations. A current priority is identifying contiguous properties and updating town records. The Listers will also be working closely with the consultant hired for the town-wide appraisal beginning in June. **Motion:** Vice Chair Vincent moved to appoint Mr. McVeigh to fill the open Lister position. Mr. Cerminara seconded. The motion passed.

Highway Report: Mr. Metivier and Vice Chair Vincent provided updates on several highway matters. The culvert near 126 Brook Road and the washout near Carr Cemetery have been repaired. The town is awaiting engineering reports for Old Brook Road, after which a request for proposals (RFP) will be issued. In addition, Chair Scharf executed a Letter of Intent to participate in the FY26 Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Program.

Mr. Metivier and Vice Chair Vincent met with FEMA last week, and FEMA confirmed that the damage to Old Brook Road qualifies for reimbursement under FEMA-4810. However, the town has not had sufficient funds to bid out the repair work. That is expected to change once obligated FEMA funds are reimbursed and the new loan from the VT Bond Bank is received.

FEMA Flood Reimbursements:

- 2023 Flooding Update (FEMA 4720)
  - Dirt Tech is finishing up the box culvert on Notch Road
  - 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)
  - Vice Chair Vincent reported they are halfway through submitting required documentation to FEMA
  - Issue regarding Dirt Tech's bookkeeping for staging materials has been resolved
  - Reimbursements – no changes since last meeting.

Truck Replacement: The town's 2018 International Dump Truck is scheduled for replacement in FY 25/26. Mr. Metivier advised that due to a two-year delivery timeline, the order should be placed soon. The estimated cost is approximately $180,000, which includes both the truck and associated equipment.

Chair Scharf inquired whether the $50,000 approved or the Asset and Equipment Fund under the Capital Project Funds covers highway equipment of this nature. Vice Chair Vincent confirmed, via a text from Budget Committee Chair Mark Harris, that it does. The Board discussed financing options, noting that the truck chassis and equipment are priced separately. Options include partial payment in cash with financing for the remainder or financing the full amount.

Permit Review and Approval. The Board considered a driveway access permit for Dennis Hill on Culver Hill Road. **Motion:** Vice Chair Vincent moved to approve the permit. Mr. Cerminara seconded. The motion passed.

Fire Department Report: Jeff Koontz advised that the department is averaging 6.7 responders per call. Notable recent incidents include a structure fire on Dolan Road and a multi-town response to a Montpelier fire. The department is purchasing new FEMA-certified hoods, which have a 10-year lifespan and offer improved cancer protection, as well as two new sets of turnout gear. Four members recently completed the 8-month Firefighter I course, a significant twice-weekly volunteer commitment. Additionally, five members are currently enrolled in EMT training, which will bring the department's total to seven EMTs (the highest to date). Mr. Koontz noted that their recruitment is on the rise. The town's willingness to invest in the fire department is yielding strong results.

Recreation Committee Mowing & Bandstand Use: Mitch Osiecki of the Recreation Committee presented two bids for mowing the town's recreation areas: Bid #1 from Chris Herring and Bid #2 from Corey Mashad, who has been performing the work in recent years. The total budgeted amount for mowing includes $5,050 for the bandstand and $3,125 for Walter Kelley Park, for a total of $8,175. Mr. Osiecki noted that the bids include brush hogging for town properties acquired through FEMA buyouts. **Motion:** A motion to authorize the Recreation Committee to contract with Mr. Mashad was proposed. Ms. Skadberg amended it to authorize the Committee to award a mowing contract valued up to $6,500. Vice Chair Vincent moved on the amendment. Mr. Cerminara seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Osiecki also reported receiving two requests to use the bandstand this summer. The Board does not currently have a policy regarding renting the bandstand to third parties. Chair Scharf recommended consulting the Bandstand Committee to determine whether they would like to serve as the point of contact for such requests and/or offer any input on renting out the Bandstand Mr. Osiecki agreed to confer with the Bandstand Committee. Ms. Skadberg suggested the Board consider developing a rental agreement for the bandstand.

Middlesex Cemetery Commission: Vice Chair Vincent moved to accept the resignation of Janet McKinstry from the Cemetery Commission. Mr. Rooney seconded. The motion carried. Chair Scharf extended her appreciation to Ms. McKinstry for her years of service to the town.

Hannah Brown of the Cemetery Commission presented mowing bids for the town cemeteries. Due to a conflict of interest, Commissioner Gary Lamell recused himself, leaving the three-member commission without a quorum. As a result, the Selectboard was asked to act on the bids. Ms. Brown presented four proposals:

- Shawn Lamson/Lamson's Property Services: $625/week or $16,875 for the season
- Park Meehan/Central Vermont Property Services: $380/week or $10,260 for the season
- Randy Richardson/R&R Property Care LLC: $220/week or $6,000 for the season
- Chris Herring: $88/week or $2,000 for the season

Ms. Brown noted that the Middlesex Cemetery Association renewed its mowing contract with Mr. Meehan, though some Board members reported mixed experiences with his work. Mr. Lamson, who has held the contract for the past 18 years, submitted a flat renewal bid. However, his quote exceeds the MCC's mowing $6,500 mowing budget by over $10,000. Town Treasurer Cheryl Grandfield noted that the North Branch Cemetery has a separate endowment of roughly $100,000, which may have covered prior overages. Mr. Cerminara recused himself from voting due to his

familiarity with several of the bidders. **Motion**: Vice Chair Vincent moved to authorize the MCC to contract with R&R Property Care LLC. Mr. Rooney seconded. The motion carried.

FEMA Buyouts: Chair Scharf reported that four properties have been identified as candidates for brownfields contaminant testing. Phase I of the testing costs between $2500-$5000 and involves an in-depth record review to determine the source of the contamination and the likelihood that contaminants are present on the property. If the record review concludes that further investigation is needed, Phase II involves soil testing which costs around $15,000 - $20,000. These costs are not a covered expense by FEMA, and there is currently no state funding available, either.

While brownfield testing is recommended, it is not required to complete the buyout. However, owners of contaminated property (the town of Middlesex, after a buyout is complete) may be liable for cleanup regardless of whether or not they caused the contamination. Liability for cleanup can continue even after a property is sold. If a town intends to purchase a brownfield property, the state offers an environmental liability limitation program known as "BRELLA" which offers certain protections. To be eligible for BRELLA though, the town must complete Phase I testing and, if needed, Phase II.

Chair Scharf has asked the town attorney to conduct additional research on this issue. She noted that the town does not have the funds budgeted for the testing and questioned the value of the testing. Mr. Cerminara agreed and questioned the likelihood that the town would be liable for contaminants from these particular properties. Chair Scharf also added that the Board may want to run the issue by the Conservation Commission for their feedback.

Treasurer's Report. The town has paid the remaining articles with the exception of the library's article which will be paid in June after the final property tax installment is received. The town-wide appraisal begins July 1 and the consultant will be working under a two-year contract paid in monthly installments. A discussion was had about whether the consultants fees should be allocated to the Capital Improvement Plan, with additional discussion on the differences between the Capital Improvement Plan and the funds within the Capital Improvement Budget. Chair Scharf requested that the Treasurer provide a budget to actual report for one of the two monthly meetings.

Purchasing Policy Workshop: Ms. Skadberg presented research on comparable towns, noting that most require Selectboard approval and multiple bids for purchases between $5,000 and $10,000. She also reported on her meeting with the Budget Committee, which supported a $10,000 limit for incidental purchases and endorsed a streamlined process for purchases between $10,001 and $30,000, requiring approval from the Selectboard Chair and the Town Treasurer. Purchases exceeding $30,000—or those where the Chair and Treasurer disagree—would require full Selectboard approval.

The Board agreed that thresholds for recurring purchases and professional services should align with the $30,000 limit distinguishing between minor and major purchases. Ms. Skadberg will prepare and circulate a final draft of the policy reflecting these decisions for review and adoption at the next meeting.

Other Business:

Motion: Vice Chair Vincent moved to authorize Cheryl Grandfield to approve liquor licenses. Mr. Cerminara seconded. The motion carried. **Motion**: Mr. Cerminara moved to authorize Cheryl Grandfield and Brenda Edelschick to execute excess weight permits. Mr. Rooney seconded. The motion carried.

The Board considered correspondence from Jennifer Tuttle about closing Brook Road as a through road and moving the stop sign from Center Road to Brook Road. Mr. Cerminara advised that doing so would require a traffic study.

Vice Chair Vincent reported she has spoken with certain individuals who have previously expressed interest in other open positions with respect to the vacancies on the Budget Committee and the Cemetery Commission.

The Clerk's office reported receiving a phone call about the town's website. A new RFP has been authorized but, to date, nothing has been awarded for website redevelopment.

Meeting adjourned 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Stacey Skadberg.

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Elizabeth Scharf, Chair	Larry Rooney
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Zara Vincent, Vice Chair	Paul Cerminara
_____	
Stacey Skadberg	