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

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Liz Scharf, Zara Vincent, Larry Rooney, Paul Cerminera
Also Present: Cheryl Grandfield, Town Clerk & Town Treasurer, Eric Metivier, Road Foreman & Road Commissioner, ORCA Media,

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

5:00 Meeting called to order and welcome guests.

- Approval of minutes from June 17th – Larry moved, Zara seconded, approved motion
- July 15th agenda – amendment
  - Listers asked Board to add Omissions Certificate form for Delena property
  - Town hall weatherization and web site conversation will be discussed under other business item

5:03 FEMA Buyout

- Polan and Martin families present – both have properties on Three Mile Bridge Road
- Liz talked with town attorney about brownfield Phase I testing – town becomes owner of any property that is bought out; property is destroyed, and nothing can be rebuilt in perpetuity; town assumes all liabilities including contamination issues
- There is no budget for Phase I testing
- Larry Martin spoke about his property – ANR map shows contamination at 138 Three Mile Bridge Road; map went back to 1998 and there was a mistake identifying the property as one that is contaminated; after corrections by ANR the property was correctly not included on potential contamination list
- Liz learned that there is minimal risk to town of not doing Phase I testing; decision by selectboard is whether to say to state that they should continue buyout process without Phase I testing
- Action: Zara moved, Paul seconded – move forward with purchase and forego Phase I testing; motion approved; Liz will get in touch with Lisa Kolb at the state and let her know town has voted not to do testing

5:30 Highway report and FEMA roadwork update

- Eric Metevier and Zara provided highlights
- Working on Macy Rd (4810/2024 related) and waiting to hear from engineer for method of repair and cost analysis for Old Brook Rd.
- Dolan Road is done
- Working on inventory of signs throughout the town – take a picture and place them on GPS and grade each one to track replacement schedule
- Permits for box culverts – expect to have 2-3 tomorrow – awaiting reply from state
- Old Brook Road is holding up – FEMA has done A&E and that work has been submitted
- 4720/2023 Flood damage – remaining 3 roads – waiting for ANR permits Lower Sunnybrook should be done this year
  - 2023 – still $1.3M remaining to be repaid
  - 2024 – over $4M waiting from FEMA
  - Currently all expenses over $100,000 go to head of Homeland Security for approval
  - About ½ way to repayment from feds
- Guardrail issue

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- Added rails to Old Brook Rd to replace trees
- FEMA will not reimburse because of form town signed in 2019 saying there were no guardrail standards in the town
- Concern expressed about future obligations if we change the form to say we have guardrail standards – potential that many town's roads might in the future need guardrails as a condition of funding; Eric will ask state how we change town's answer so town can get reimbursed by FEMA for the $14,000 it cost to put the rail in; next step may be to discuss if town wants to change it

- Update from State Rep. Ela Chapin
  - MDX might qualify for new municipal grant in new state budget; Liz reached out to Keith at Regional Planning Commission – funds can be distributed in August; funds will follow process of last year's grant; town will get form to apply for funding; funds for MDX could be as high as $50,000 (if expenses are between $2.5 and $5M)

5:36 Fire Department update – Jeff Koonz

- 41 calls this year – 10 during this period
- Rescue out 5 times
- Numerous I-89 and Route 2 callouts
- Fast squad – 12 total call-outs for the period
- Participated in training with capital dispatch to talk about mutual work; E-911 maps are much more accurate than Google Maps
- Repairs – state inspection due on all five vehicles this month
- Two people enrolled in EMT classes
- Advised about health risks to heat and humidity over next few days
- Montpelier passed a local use tax and because MDX shares a zip code with Montpelier residents may be taxed an extra 1% that will go to Montpelier
- Eric added – Dept. wants to get a shipping container; would like to purchase with existing funds; Board acknowledged and appreciated heads up – Dept. is authorized to make the purchase without permission due to low cost (approx. $2,000)

5:45 Errors and Omissions Form

- Selectboard is being asked to sign form that they agree with certificate that property burned and the property owners have not started their rebuild at this date
- Action: Board agreed to sign the form

5:50 Squatter Concerns

- On Notch Rd there is a rough cabin that town acquired when town purchased land
- Current resident may have been there in the past
- Liz called State Police, and they went there and found stuff with his name – the person is a known entity to state police – he has a parole officer who state will contact.
- State Police advised town to put up No Trespass signs on the building and on trees around the building; Board discussed future use of the building/cabin and safety/liability concerns
- Paul mentioned that town forest is used a lot by hikers and many are women; supports talking with Conservation Committee about their interest in the property – if it continues to be a liability maybe it either needs to be maintained or destroyed
- With No trespass signs State Police can arrest those who violate
- Liz will invite Conservation commission to attend future Selectboard meeting to discuss plan for the building
- Shelly – The building is accessible by 4-wheeler; one of the cabins has a life-time lease with it
- Action: Zara moved, Liz seconded – Paul and Larry authorized to purchase No Trespass signs and sign them on behalf of Board

6:00 Tax Rate

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- Cheryl walked the group through some samples of budget amounts
- Shared budget spreadsheet
- Ed tax is dropping $.05
- For every cent increase in municipal rate the town raises $24,000
- Cheryl expressed a preference to pay now rather than borrow and pay interest for town expenses
- Town Wide Appraisals – Man who was hired by contracted firm to do the work left the position; process will be completed in 2027
- The board needs to decide whether to add to tax bill to repay unreimbursed flood-related expenses
- With education tax reduction, a five-cent tax increase would not be felt
- Voters approved a budget in March – Discussion about the Board's discretion and authority re: increasing budget above what was approved; Liz will check with VLCT
- Shelly stated that the State Tax Dept. adjusts tax obligation based on the CLA (latest appraisal was in 2017)
- Action: Larry moved, Zara seconded – Set the town tax rate at .7972 for 2025/2026 tax bill; motion approved; tax year follows fiscal year calendar

6:18 Web site

- 27 responses to RFP
- A team of seven volunteers are reviewing proposals and making decision.
- Budget of $10,000 for this project

Fire station and town hall

- Report by Lauri Scharf
- Town Hall heating system – received one proposal for $30k to install new furnace, ventilation unit downstairs and upstairs, and 2 heat pumps
    - Expecting proposals from two other organizations
- Town hall weatherization – attic needs insulation – will use volunteers to prep the attic and air seal other parts of the building; foundation will be expensive as it will require an excavator
- Fire station weatherization – 15 volunteers worked with contractor Cell Tech helped reduce air leakage by 98%
- Lauri is working on another $5,000 grant from Efficiency VT – total cost to town for all the work is $4,257

Cemetery Commission

- Zara reported that she met with Gary the only current member; he would like Hannah to come back on the commission
- Zara will post in FPF to ask for volunteers
- Board will work with commission re: North Branch tree overhanging problem for vault trucks, and painting Carr fence – both issues need to be taken care of next year

Next Meeting

- Changed August dates to 12th and 26th
- Culvert work near Wrightsville (VT Route 12) is on future agenda

6:30 PM Paul moved to adjourn; Zara seconded; motion carried

Submitted by Carol Maloney

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