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

Middlesex Select Board
5:00 PM
Tuesday, August 12, 2025
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915
Meeting Minutes

5:00 Call to Order, approval of minutes

- Call to order and welcome guests - Eric Metevier attending
- Approval of minutes of July 15, 2025 meeting
    - Larry moved to approve, Zara seconded, motion approved
- Approval of the agenda for the August 12, 2025 meeting
    - Zara moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved

5:04 VT Agency of Transportation

- Presentation via Zoom from the VT Agency of Transportation (Taylor Sisson – project manager, Theron Matthews, Tom Bigelow) to review the culvert replacement project on Rt 12 near the Wrightsville Reservoir
    - McFarland Johnson consultants (Tom and Theron) discussed plan to replace culvert on Rt. 12
    - Culvert is north of boat access and south of Shady Rill intersection
    - Washed out in both ’23 and ‘24
    - Plan is to replace 42” inch pipe with much larger one
    - Maps of proposed re-design were shared
    - Approx. cost is $1.23 million
    - Traffic control will be one lane with signal for four week duration of the project
    - Property owner meetings resulted in agreement to let state proceed with the plan
    - Time line: final plans developed in April 2026 and construction to occur between winter 2026 and fall 2027
    - Liz asked about time frame for the work – Temp. signal will be in place for about 4 weeks but work along the site may take place throughout the construction season – there will likely be flaggers managing the area while other work is happening
    - There is not expected to be additional run-off into the reservoir as a result of this work
    - Zara asked who is paying for this – Taylor explained the project will be paid with 80% federal funding and 20% state funds

5:17 Road and FEMA Reports

- Highway report and FEMA roadwork update from Eric Metevier and Zara Vincent
    - Equipment update provided
- Continued update on state of deteriorating Old Brook Road
    - Waiting to hear from engineer on cost analysis
    - Town received $87,606 analysis and engineering funding
- Macy Rd work is completed and Norton Road is being worked on
- Update on Dirt Tech Box culvert replacement/schedule
- Lower Sunnybrook details are still being worked out – for 4720 projects

Update on FEMA payments

- Estimates waiting for McCullough Hill
- 4810 – as of Aug. 6 town had 8 projects awaiting signature from fed
    - Four more have been obligated from feds, 4 still to go

DRAFT

- Of obligated funds town has received about $1 million
- Almost obligated (has been reviewed and needs final approval from Sec. Noem) is at about $2 million
- Town expects to receive more funds within a few days
- Leaves town that still needs approval – 2 culverts' work and Brook Rd. ($1.4 million) for 4810
- Other projects need more engineering work value/cost TBD (Old Brook Road, Daniel's Farm Bridge, Bolduc and French)

- **Central VT Regional Public Works Mutual Aid agreement**
  - It's a formal agreement the town would sign that would allow the town to lend town employees to other towns – it's already done informally
  - MDX would be on a list of towns that would make staffing available – the borrowing town would reimburse MDX when they use town employees – and MDX can "borrow" staff from other towns on the list with this reciprocal agreement; town attorney suggested contacting insurance carrier to make sure town is covered
  - Liz to check with insurance carrier to make sure our people are covered under another town and v/v.
  - Stacey will look at the agreement to make sure town is held harmless when staff are working in other towns – need more clarity re: liability
  - No further action taken – will revisit this agreement at a future meeting

5:33 Buyout Updates

- Liz provided buyout updates and the board discussed closing schedules and determined required Middlesex rep(s) for closing appointments
  - State is serving as main agency driving the process; town helps facilitate – Liz meets with state every other week to monitor progress
  - Two Three Mile Bridge Rd properties have scheduled closings in Sept. – the town is the buyer of the properties so someone has to be at the closings; Liz is not available for the Sept. 9th (10 a.m.) closing and asked for approval for remote signing – waiting to hear back on this
  - A board member needs to do walk-through of the property to make sure house is empty of its contents the day before the closing – Sept. 8th – at 138 Three Mile Bridge Rd.
  - The other closing is on the 15th (11 a.m.) and Liz won't be able to attend in-person
  - In addition to these properties at 138 and 158 Three Mile Br Rd, properties at 15 Lower Sunnybrook Rd and 13 Ridge Road should close soon
  - Larry will do the 15th closing (and preceding walk through) and Zara will do the 9th (and preceding walk through) – Liz will take over closing process if she can do it remotely
  - Demolitions of the properties will happen later in the year

5:45 OTHER BUSINESS – Actions taken

- Nominations for CV Reg. Planning Commission Board of Commissioners
  Representative: Ron Krauth
  Alternate: Mitch Osiecki
  - Zara moved to approve this slate, Larry seconded, motion approved

- Nominations for CVRPC Transportation Advisory Committee:
  Representative: Ron Krauth
  Alternate: None
  - Zara moved to approve; Larry seconded; motion approved

- Approve the ROW for WEC on the Henrick Property on N Bear Swamp Road
  - Zara moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved

- Retroactive approval of letter of support to DEC (Dept of Environmental Conservation) for the buyout property
    - Zara moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved

5:50 **Great Brook Futures Project**

- Mike Kline presentation of Great Brook Futures Project, Year 1 data collection and field observations
    - After 2024 flood put a plan together to assess Great Brook watershed
    - UVM spatial lab did a LiDAR mapping recently
    - State also completed LiDAR prior to 2023 flood so town has comparative data
    - Data was shared with residents along the Great Brook
    - Mike hopes to develop a flow model that will help track flood plain and the power of floods
    - He will ask property owners to go out during future high water events to track where debris goes so they can see the path of the water
    - Mike went to Plainfield – similar topographical situation there – talked with geologist
    - Mike prepared a report for the town – detailed erosion by the Brook over time – he is seeing a decrease in resistance and increase in power – resulting in greater erosion – ideally need a balance of resistance to match the potential power of water
        - Stabilizing the Brook bed will help save the embankments and properties along the Brook
- Mike thinks MDX needs to take on a planning exercise re: the Brook about alternatives when next flood hits
    - Avoid new hazards – new residences and infrastructure in the Great Brook valley – town has spent $2.5 million in two floods on Brook Rd
    - Lower Brook is already at bedrock
    - Upper area of the Brook has up to 80 ft. of clay on top of bedrock – and that is what is moving during each flooding event
    - Documented over 10 feet of gouging out of clay in areas of the river – this erodes banks and could compromise work already done to stabilize roads and culverts
    - Need to essentially slow the flow of the river by creating more resistance – restoring flood plains could be part of the strategy
    - Most counter productive thing town can do is the get in the way of the valley widening as natural process – are there opportunities to shift the road when next flood occurs – finding locations where Brook can expand will help reduce future problems – Are there other places to allow expanding of the Brook?
    - Some residents on Brook Rd are in the EWP program – town is done its part and state is doing its work
    - Where the road is now is where the Brook used to run; stream has been going down gradually in depth
    - Zara asked what selectboard can do proactively around new and existing building and infrastructure; are there restrictions or other actions
    - Mike believes upper part is most hazardous – are there alternatives for people to access their residences during flooding; what is cost of repair vs. buying out properties? All these need to be considered
    - Liz has talked with broad entities about how towns can budget for disasters with possibility of lack of federal aid; one person at ANR is thinking about community resiliency and how state can support towns esp. regarding roads; eventually town will have a bill it cannot pay
    - Matt Rkiauok asked – How is MDX impacted by what other towns do upstream?
        - Mike responded – Great Brook is solely in MDX; N Branch of Winooski – there is a group that is looking at Winooski watershed
    - Susan Warren asked – What more does MDX need to know to determine helpful actions?
        - Mike – assessment and planning document is getting regular updates – drafts are posted on “What’s next Middlesex?”
        - The town could retain an engineering firm that has done some of this work to assess risks and mitigation strategies re: Great Brook; the plan will identify areas of concern and potential opportunities but engineering plan is needed
        - Other thing town can do is keep people living along the Brook informed

- Mike asked: If people are displaced, do they have options to remain in MDX? Plainfield is looking at how they might assist with other housing
- Liz asked about Macy Rd and concerns about erosion there – Mike responded that the flood plain is the road; at present time from what he's seen it's got some good resistance/is "well armored"
- Road committee will continue to discuss these issues
- Board expressed appreciation to Mike for his work

6:30 Town Hall Heating System

- Quotes presentation by Energy Committee
  - Enrique Bueno attended and Lauri Scharf also joined the conversation
  - Lauri asked if long term plan is still to keep town offices in current building
  - Problems/challenges: radon, heating system, not good regulation of temperature (weatherization needed), burning fossil fuels
  - Goals: cellulose in attic; air sealing; insulate foundation from outside (high cost item); need to get quote on foundation work so that can be considered in future budget
  - Attic insulation can reduce heat loss by 50%
  - Heating system options presented: wood pellet; heat pump; propane furnace/heaters
  - Enrique proposed about 24" of cellulose with limited spray foam along edges
  - Ventilation system options: 1. In-line with hot air – use existing ducts to move air; and 2. Separate, through the wall system
  - Proposals for complete systems:
    - 1. Pellets - $69k plus site work
    - 2. Heat pumps - $55k or $44k
    - 3. Propane furnace and heat pumps - $30k
  - Big difference between options 2 and 3 – Pellergy is proposing a single heat pump that pulls air and water and pumps it around the building; On the Dot HVAC with option #3 proposes multiple heat pumps
  - Goal is to go all electric and get away from fossil fuels – solution #2 achieves this; solution #3 replaces existing furnace that continues to tie town to burning fuel; option #2 is a centralized system; option #3 has separate systems for upstairs and downstairs
  - #2 keeps all structures outside the building and a hydraulic system moves water around the entire building; advantage of air to water systems is all the refrigerant is installed in the factory with sealed connections with no possibility of leakage during installation
  - Larry asked about need for back up during extreme cold weather – Enrique said you design the unit to work for all but the coldest days and nights
  - These prices are inclusive of Efficiency Vermont rebates – GMP may have other incentives
  - Liz asked: would we still be using the heat pumps most of the time and propane on occasion? Enrique said propane would be used all the time if they chose #3; #3 includes two mini splits; ventilation system is critical to mitigate mold and other air problems with heat pumps; ventilation systems has two filters that need periodic cleaning
  - Bill Preis asked – Does town have generator so that when town loses power there is electricity? Answer is no the town does not have back up generator; Bill also asked about foundation being cracked up and lack of elevator – are these other problems part of the decision making? heating system is priority before winter
  - Larry asked what the energy committee's recommendation is – Enrique would chose #2 because there is no reliance on fossil fuels and keeps current system as back up, and refrigerant industry is changing rapidly and that means installing mini-splits in option #3 when time comes to refill the refrigerant the town will need to replace them – new technology will mean system cannot be refilled; #3 means town is committed to burning fuel for 20 years
  - Liz proposes: Put off decisions about weatherization for next meeting; once weatherization is done the contractors can better estimate the heat load; Lauri will get quote for foundation weatherization; if work can be done in fall, town can get heat load estimate to help inform best system
  - Selectboard needs to have a bigger discussion about future of building and how much to invest

- Board thanked Enrique and Lauri for their work

6:45 **Other matters**

- Town Committee vacancies – Matt Rkiouak has offered to fill vacancies on budget committee and cemetery committees
  - Zara moved to appoint Matt to budget and cemetery committees, Larry seconded, motion approved

- Notch Road squatters – Paul and Larry went to the two cabins at end of Notch Rd and noticed evidence of someone being there but didn't see any people; posted no trespassing signs – all on July 21st

- Mead Road boundary concerns – Liz has corresponded with Evelyn Prim on Mead Road who said there was paint being put on the road to determine the road center
  - Shelly Desjardin commented that Sam Beaudoin got permission from Eric to put a line in center of Mead Road so Evelyn could put up a fence and know where the right of way is; Liz will follow up with Evelyn

- Procurement policy – updated language for purchasing policy – Stacey will review the form and make sure it includes details town discussed
  - Action is postponed to a future meeting

7:20 PM Adjournment

Submitted by: Carol Maloney

Signatures:

Liz Scharf _____

Larry Rooney_____

Zara Vincent _____

Paul Cerminara _____

Stacey Skadberg _____