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 26, 2025
Meeting Minutes

5:00 Call to order and welcome guests

- Approve the minutes of the August 12, 2025, meeting
  - Zara moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved
- Approve the agenda for the August 26, 2025, regular select board meeting
  - Amendments – WEC request to put a line in – needs action under other business; town hall future will be discussed under town hall weatherization
  - Zara moved to approve revised agenda, Larry seconded, motion approved

5:04 Highway report and FEMA roadwork update – Eric Metevier and Zara Vincent

- Update on state of deteriorating Old Brook Road
  - Eric hasn't heard from engineer – Dexter Lefavour
  - Dorinda Crowell – Old Brook Road – Since beginning of May son can't get fuel delivery
  - Larry Clements – concerned about coming weather – propane company is same as Dorinda's son; concerned about emergency vehicles getting access
  - Liz asked Eric and Zara – Even if we had engineering study, is this a 4810 issue? Eric – We need the study to proceed with the work. Eric thinks Dexter has been to the road many times, and he has not been billed for any work so far
  - Liz asked, "If we go out to bid do we have money to pay for it?" The answer is yes because town has income from FEMA, and the town will borrow if necessary.
  - Zara will reach out to Dexter tomorrow and Eric thinks his report might be available by the end of the week
  - Eric added: Asphalt work needs to be done – trying to get quotes and running out of time – Pike submitted bid for $58,700 for work at bottom of McCullough and Shady Rill
    - These are FEMA expenses covered; no other quotes have come in
    - Zara will confirm town can move ahead with one quote since Eric can document reaching out to several companies requesting quotes
    - Once town gets approval to go forward it will proceed
    - Next meeting agenda will include update and possible action on this item
  - Zara has numbers for floods for both years and would like to leave the information on the town office door for people to see and post on FPF

- Update on Dirt Tech Box culvert replacement/schedule
  - Norton road is all ditched
  - Molly Supple work is near completion
  - Road side mowing complete
  - Direct Tech box culvert replacement schedule is done

- Update on FEMA payments
  - Zara reported that one more funding request is now obligated to the town for $637,690 – meaning FEMA has agreed to pay this
  - FEMA 4810 work – Waiting on Brook Road payments of about $1.4M

5:20 Fire Department update for August – Brendon Lareau reporting

- Total calls in 2025 – 48
- Calls this period – 7
- Mutual aid out – 1

- **Fast Squad**
  - 21 responses in reporting period
  - 19 medical calls
  - 2 members still enrolled in EMT class
  - No new purchases
  - Eric added there may be another new member who may enroll in EMT class in Sept.

5:20 Town Hall

- Continued presentation by Energy Committee
  - Zara spoke about the issues with the town hall and town garage states of disrepair
    - Suggest town makes plans to sell town hall and build new one with town garage
    - New equipment is coming and needs a space to be housed
    - When power is out there is no generator to get into the garage
    - There are mold issues
    - There is no heater that works in the building
    - Need to find out what town as a whole is interested in supporting
  - Liz – Town plan goal is to keep municipal offices in the village
  - Sandy Levine – Town plan is done every 10 years and most recent is 2023; town plan says village is the commercial and civic center and that's where those buildings should be; moving elsewhere would require a vote by the town as it would be out of compliance with the town plan and hinder possible grants that expect the town to follow the town plan.
  - Zara – Received estimate from realtor that building may be worth between $450-500,000 as is.
  - Eric – It's a lot cheaper to build one than two buildings
  - Liz – Asked if town garage needs to be in current location; Eric – It could move as there's some land available; sand pile and other things are in current location; he's not opposed to new location
  - Dorinda – Previous discussions about using school space for town offices; would not resolve town garage issues; district is talking about low enrollments and how to adjust across district; Rumney just completed big weatherization project
  - Town needs to figure out interim plan for making the existing structures work while long term plan is developed and implemented
  - Larry – Suggested forming a committee to discuss and look at options – Liz responded that town would definitely form a committee to move the issues forward
  - Sandy Levine – Suggests that town hall and town garage issues get looked at together; solicit volunteers to do the work; many experts in town who may be able to help
  - Liz – Appreciates the conversation and acknowledged that these processes take years and meanwhile town has more urgent issues; town will not leave current buildings within a year; Other points made:
    - Probably no funding from state or feds for this work – will require bonds
    - E. Montpelier town shed building was about $5M
    - People may prefer putting money into roads than buildings
    - Liz asked Eric to get quotes for replacing heating system components in town garage for this coming winter

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- **Town Hall Weatherization and heating system** -– Lauri Scharf presented
  - Propane for current use is $1.65/gallon – which is substantially cheaper than electricity at this time
  - Committee wants selectboard to know that 75% of expenses for fossil fuels go out of state while 60% of electricity payments stay in-state
  - Energy committee recommends going fully electric
  - Lauri proposes insulating attic first in the fall; a volunteer is willing to blow in the insulation for free with town paying for the materials – est. $10,000 for cellulose and spray foaming
  - Foundation leaks and makes floor very cold
  - Last year's estimate was $10,000 for foundation work
  - Total of $20,000 for weatherization and $20,000-$30,000 for heating system – also includes air flow to reduce radon concerns; includes donated time from Randy Drury
  - Committee wants to proceed with foundation and attic work ASAP
  - Sandy Levine – asked about roof concerns and snow load – suggested committee look at that issue
  - VIA report will tell committee about structural issues or concerns – may need a structural engineer to look at it
  - Liz will give Lauri access to the VIA folder; selectboard already approved weatherization work
    - No need to get competing bids as projects are all volunteer work and town is only paying for materials
  - Liz reported that the building's structure is sound and has some value
  - Lauri – Could put two ventilation/exchange units to move the air downstairs; would not do big investments if town plans to sell building in a few years
  - Sandy Levine – Need to know where we are in the roads and fire station bond; decisions about a big financial commitment in near future needs to be done in context of other obligations
  - Dorinda – Asked if town garage in worse shape than town hall. The answer was YES; She expressed concern about throwing heating money away
  - Liz – It will be expensive and believes best strategy is to combine the two needs for adequate space
  - Is there someone in town who could dig around the town hall so insulation could be put in? Zara will post in FPF asking if someone with equipment would be willing to volunteer

- **Office Space – Cheryl needs to move Listers stuff upstairs**
  - Cheryl wants to move her files downstairs as she needs to be in the office to monitor activities down there
  - Kevin Thompson would like the lister space upstairs too; he would put a small desk in Cheryl's office where the lister file cabinets currently are.
  - Discussion about assuring security for the files as there are no digital records – discussed need for locking cabinets so that only listers and town employees who need access can access them.
  - Cheryl will proceed with this move
  - Liz acknowledged that these changes are ultimately not a selectboard decision and that the listers and the town clerk will have to work together.

5:50 Website committee progress – Lauri Scharf presented

- Demos being done by 2 companies tomorrow
  - Both companies are well under $10k for full implementation
  - Both do municipal web sites currently
  - They migrate all current info into new sites
  - Committee will come back to selectboard for final approval of contract – funds already approved

6:00 Middlesex Purchasing/Procurement Policy

- Stacey proposed a draft

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- Due to technological challenges with Stacey's connection the board will revisit this at next week's meeting

6:05 OTHER BUSINESS

- **Commission Nominations**
  - Betsy Davis and Matt Rkiouak for Cemetery Commission
    - Zara moved that these two be approved for the Commission; Larry seconded; motion approved
  - Selectboard will not participate in decision making of the Commission now that the cemetery commission has a quorum

- **Correspondence**
  - AT&T will do work on Feral Mt. Road on cell tower-work
    - Updates mostly – no major work or structural changes
    - Board has no action to take

- **Other matters**
  - Times Argus had a couple of articles in response to discussion about town hall; they also did an article about the town tax rate
  - Liz clarified that tax rate is set by selectboard while town budget is voted on by voters; Zara added that budget committee suggests town may need a fund to cover emergency issues since FEMA's future is uncertain
  - Dorinda responded – She doesn't believe the town can create a "slush" fund – there was an asset account created because voters approved this
  - Liz reached out to VLCT and asked Dorinda how the selectboard can best set funds aside for future emergency needs and what the selectboard's authority is related to setting the tax rate after the town approves a budget
    - VLCT has clear guidance on how town budget is created and approved – selectboard sets tax rate to raise necessary funds to meet the budgetary needs of the town.
    - Dorinda – Voters approve expenses (budget) but not income
    - Amount collected from tax payers is less than total expenses – other revenue sources fill the gap
    - In March there is no accurate information about other revenue sources: PILOT, grand list, and other revenue sources
    - Once those revenue amounts are determined the selectboard sets tax rate to pay expenses. PILOT had gone down, so the tax rate was set to make up for some lost revenue.

- **WEC seeking approval permit**
  - WEC wrote seeking permission to clear brush and construct a distribution line – 7200V electric distribution line on N. Bear Swamp Road
  - Zara moved to approve the request; Larry seconded; motion approved

6:25 Adjourn Regular Select Board Meeting

- Zara moved to adjourn, Larry seconded, motion approved

Submitted by: Carol Maloney

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