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

Middlesex Select Board Meeting
5:00 PM
Monday, November 3, 2025*
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602

Meeting Minutes

5:05

- **Meeting called to order and guests welcomed**
- **Approve minutes of October 7, 2025 regular board meeting**
  - Paul moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved, Liz and Stacey abstained as they did not attend the meeting
- **Approve minutes of special meeting on October 14, 2025 re: culverts**
  - Paul moved to approve, Zara seconded, motion approved, Stacey and Larry abstained as they did not attend the meeting
- **Approve the minutes of the October 21, 2025 regular select board meeting**
  - Zara moved to approve, Paul seconded, motion approved, Stacey abstained as she did not attend the meeting
- **Approve Agenda for Monday November 3, 2025**
  - Zara moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved

5:07

- **Highway report and FEMA roadwork update from Eric Metevier and Zara Vincent**
  - **Old Brook Road**
    - Dexter Lefavour, engineer and Middlesex resident reported – Work to repair Old Brook Rd. damage was put out to bid and GW Tatro was low bid
    - State has concerns about submitted design that includes geo-grid (synthetic soil reinforcement material); engineering firm looked at four alternatives; stream alteration division at ANR has never seen this type of design before using geo-grid; Dexter thinks they may deny the design application based on his conversations with them and said they don't feel confident reviewing this design as it's new to them
    - Dexter suggested the design could be changed and state said they might be able to approve with changes; the work could happen quickly once a plan is approved
    - If current design is not approved by the state, Dexter suggests new "low tech" design with retaining wall, as opposed to geo-grid material
    - Dexter doesn't think town needs to put the entire project out to bid again, even with an altered plan; he suggests concurrent plan re-design and negotiations with three lowest bidders to keep project moving
    - Concern expressed by select board about moving forward with something the state hasn't approved
    - Questions arose about how a design was put out to bid before state approved the design; Dexter explained state point person was in the conversations and expressed no reservations; no time line has been offered by state
    - Town submitted the plan in August so state elected officials have been contacted to assist with communicating with the state to get them to make a decision
    - Dorinda Crowell, resident of Old Brook Road, expressed frustration and said the time taken to repair this road is not reasonable for residents and she's concerned about access in an emergency or if heating fuel cannot be delivered
    - Select board apologized for the time line and committed to continue working to get the issue resolved
    - Larry Clements, resident of Old Brook Road, attended and commented that if the road can't get done quickly some work needs to be done to make it wider and safer; wants it to be open for fuel trucks; one resident has reported that the fuel company will not drive up; concerned about other issues such as fire truck access
    - Paul Cerminara suggested better barriers be put up for now and town continue to monitor any changes to the problem area
    - Select board decided that continued discussions with ANR are important and no board decision is needed

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- Zara will continue communication with state representative for help to push state to take action

- **Update on FEMA payments from Zara Vincent**
  - 4720 (2023) = $1.7 Million remaining from the three projects below
    - East Hill – Work complete - awaiting permitting and obligation
    - Portal Rd. – Work complete - awaiting permitting and obligation
    - Lower Sunny Brook – Work to be done Summer 2026 awaiting permitting and obligation
  - 4810 (2024) = All projects OBLIGATED except BROOK RD. = $1.4 million remaining

    Percentage of work complete for the following projects (that were submitted on estimates):
    - Macey Rd = 100% completed this June or July 2025
    - McCullough Hill Rd = 50% two culverts and ditching touchup to be done June/July 2026
    - Norton Rd and Notch Rd = 50% completed. More slope stabilization needed summer 2026
    - Shady Rill South Bear Swamp = 100% completed – Nov. 2025
    - Wood Rd and Upper Sunny Brook = 100% completed summer 2025
    - Old Brook Rd Damages = 0% completed. Awaiting permits from ANR. Targeted completion fall/winter 2025-2026

  - **Update on the following A&Es and timelines:**
    - Daniels Farm Rd & Bridge A&E = Engineering plans with ANR. Goal is to complete prior to December 2025
    - Bolduc Rd Road and Culvert A&E = Engineering plans with ANR. Work TBD Summer 2026
    - French Rd and Culvert A&E = Engineering plans with ANR. Work TBD Summer 2026
    - Old Brook Rd Undermined Damage A&E = Engineering plans with ANR. Goal is to complete prior to December 2025

DRAFT

- **Discussion about Nov 10th warned meeting with Dirt Tech to discuss six culverts with deficiencies**
  - Paul put a report together that was sent to Dirt Tech (DT) – it's a complete list of deficiencies as identified by the state and it breaks out responsibilities likely the sole responsibility of DT, responsibilities that are likely shared between town and DT, and those issues that are town responsibility only
  - Liz expressed concern that while culverts were being installed, ANR noted for all the culverts there were not pre-construction meetings and DT had not submitted a water management plan (a plan for how to deal with water while working on the repairs)
  - Liz asked: ANR knew these culverts were being installed so why didn't they communicate their concerns at that time?
  - To avoid similar situations in the future Liz suggested the town consider hiring a project manager to oversee the work
  - DT's website states that they are environmental experts and town has spent millions to have them do the work
  - Zara said it would have been helpful if the state had a checklist for repairs following flooding events
  - Paul said certain things are required and have had permits approved based on a plan; town has never experienced this level of work needed in a short period of time
  - Dexter – Since July 2025 the "old ways" of approving the plans have changed – nothing changed on paper or in the rules; he observed behavior of stream alteration professionals has changed and there has been no explanation of different process; Zara concurred with this statement

- **Changing a Yield sign to a Stop sign at the intersection of Molly Supple and Center/East Hill Road**
  - Zara explained that the road committee suggests a stop sign instead of a yield sign to improve safety at that intersection
  - No decision made – will review again at future meeting

- **Road crew update:**
  - Eric reported that equipment is in good shape, winter sand is done, and as of Nov. 3rd the paving is complete on Shady Rill and McCullough Hill

5:35

- **Listers' Budget**
  - Shelley Desjardin handed out a draft budget she created using last year's information and reported that listers need to meet to go over the information and discuss in more detail
    - NEMRC New England Municipal Resource center has been hired to reappraise property this year and next. The reappraisal budget is already budgeted for this year; $105,000 was total cost for town-wide re-appraisal; that fee is broken down into monthly payments of $4,375 over two years as per June 2023 agreement
    - Cheryl Grandfield stated town agreed to continue putting funds away each year to keep up with on-going demand for re-appraisals
    - Liz asked Cheryl to find out how much is owed to NEMRC currently for town wide appraisal; they are currently working on the reappraisal; also need to determine what town has in the town appraisal account for this work
    - Shelley also said postcards need to be sent to all property owners; she thinks listers can create these forms and mail them out to save money paying for printing and mailing
    - Shelley talked about a new state mandate that listers need to be certified within one year starting January 2026; assessors also need to be certified

6:03

- **Meeting adjourned for Board of Abatement meeting regarding Welch Park Dissolution**

6:28

- **Meeting reconvened**

- **Planning Commission and Conservation Commission Budgets**
  - Conservation committee wants a special article at town meeting requesting town funding for $5,000; past years they've been approved by the town for this amount
    - The conservation commission has some funding but the amount was not readily available at the meeting
    - Motion made to give permission for conservation commission to have a special article with a request $5,000 at town meeting to support the reserve fund.
      - Zara moved; Larry seconded; motion approved; Paul abstained
    - Conservation Committee budget of $500 was submitted.
  - Planning commission needs $4,850 in next year's budget for anticipated expenses
    - No action needed – Dorinda is creating a spreadsheet with these figures and board will review in December

- **New Conservation Commission Membership**
  - Middlesex residents Sage Romey and Katy Farber submitted letters of interest to serve on conservation committee
  - Liz read letters from both candidates expressing their interest in the commission
    - Zara moved to approve both new volunteers; Paul seconded; motion approved
  - Both new Commission members were thanked for their interest in serving the town

6:38

- **Town Hall – New heating system and weatherization**
  - Lauri Scharf joined the meeting via Zoom on behalf of Energy Committee
    - He believes it's prudent to invest less in the town hall given there is a new building committee working on long term plan
    - Randy Drury will continue to insulate the attic this week; more than a dozen volunteers helped shore up the attic for snow load once the weatherization starts to work and heat doesn't escape.
    - Decided to delay foundation insulation this fall and will consider doing work in spring or summer 2026

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- $7,700 spent so far for attic materials – all labor volunteer – half was for structural work to shore up roof and half for air sealing insulation
- Need a new calculation of energy demands of the building once attic insulation work is done; historically used 1200 gallons of propane/year
- Board thanked all the volunteers and people who contributed
- Paul thinks it's worth getting the furnace assessed to make sure it will last the winter
- Lauri will reach out to fuel provider to ask them to clean the furnace and assess it's life expectancy
- Bill Preis joined by Zoom – He supports looking into life expectancy of current system and talking with contractors about lead time for replacing system and time line on supply chains should it need major repairs or replacing during cold weather
- Dorinda will put a note in for future budget re: replacing furnace
- Lauri addressed radon mitigation and air filtration issues – he has names of people who can install stand-alone system; estimates cost of $2,000 for that work which would come out of building fund

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Orders**
  - Rich Road site that was purchased in the Hurricane Irene buyout – Liz and Zara cleaned up the site that was quite littered with garbage
    - New trespassing signs were installed in the area and on current buyout homes from the 2023 flood in response to VSP suggestion
    - Discussed possibility of putting up a barricade on Rich road property to keep people out without impeding farmer accessing their property; future action possible

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- **Correspondence**
  - Email concern from Linda Jackson requesting a guardrail on Center Road culvert by Zdon Rd. Board acknowledged her request. No action taken

6:50

- **Health insurance for town employees**
  - Open enrollment time so town must decide if it is staying with same plan
  - Both options for medical insurance are close in terms of cost
  - Cheryl will reach out to road crew to hear their thoughts; neither plan includes dental or vision; town would have to pick up the whole plan for NE Delta Dental insurance
  - Deductible currently is $6,000 for town employees and HSA contribution is $2,300
    - Some expressed interest in increasing the contribution to the employee's deductible
  - Board decided to discuss next year's plan and increasing HSA contribution at next meeting – Cheryl will talk with road crew about best medical plan and check out cost of vision and dental

7:04

- **Meeting adjourned**

Submitted by: Carol Maloney