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

Middlesex Select Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday August 4, 2026
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

Also in attendance: Kevin Thompson; Mary Nealon (Bear Creek Environmental); Bill Preis; Eric Metivier (Town Road Commissioner and Foreman); Jessica Beaudoin (Hiring Committee Chair); Brigid Browning (Town Clerk); Deb Martin; Steve Martin; Shelly DesJardins (Town Lister); and Dorinda Crowell.

5:00 p.m. Chair Scharf called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Approval of Minutes
Motion: Approve the July 21, 2026 Selectboard meeting minutes. Moved by Zara; seconded by Liz. Motion carried.

Agenda
Motion: Approve the August 4, 2026 agenda, as amended to include consideration of a driveway permit for Greg and Barb Whitchurch. Moved by Zara; seconded by Liz. Motion carried.

FIT Committee Update

Kevin Thompson reported that the FIT Committee is researching engineering firms to perform a structural assessment of the Town Garage. Engineering Ventures PC submitted a proposal to complete the structural engineering review for $3,000. He noted that the volunteer engineer from Stowe declined to provide a written report.

Board members discussed how the proposed assessment differs from the 2019 engineering study. Kevin explained that the firm that completed the 2019 study is no longer available and that the building has continued to age, with additional concerns identified since that time. Zara questioned whether the funds would be better spent addressing known repairs, while Liz and Stacey noted that an updated engineering assessment would assist the FIT Committee in evaluating the feasibility of renovating the building. Liz also noted that the engineering firm would provide cost estimates for weatherization improvements.

The Board recommended that the FIT Committee review both the structural engineering proposal and the wetlands information before moving forward. The FIT Committee is not scheduled to meet again until September.

Kevin also discussed the results of the wetlands delineation study with Mary Nealon of Bear Creek Environmental, who had been retained by the FIT Committee. She reviewed three maps, including the Agency of Natural Resources ("ANR") map and two maps prepared by Bear Creek Environmental. She explained that the Bear Creek Environmental maps identify substantially more wetlands surrounding the Town Garage than shown on the ANR map. Applying the required 50-foot wetland buffer would significantly limit or eliminate opportunities to expand the garage footprint.

Mary reported that she had spoken with Shannon Morrison of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Wetlands Program. Based on a review of historical aerial photographs, DEC believes fill was

placed within the wetland area after the original site was established. She explained that the Town may need to obtain an after-the-fact permit for the fill, restore portions of the site, and reduce the size of the area behind the garage to comply with wetland buffer requirements.

In response to a question from Liz, Eric Metivier stated that reducing the area behind the garage would significantly limit winter equipment storage and could require some equipment to be stored at the former town pit.

The Board agreed that the next step would be to contact Shannon Morrison to arrange a site visit. Eric was authorized to schedule the meeting, and it was suggested that Paul also attend.

Kevin announced that volunteers would be painting and rearranging furniture at Town Hall over the weekend in preparation for the arrival of the new Town Administrator. Lauri Scharf is coordinating volunteers.

Highway & FEMA Report (5:30 p.m.)

Eric reported the following:

- The International truck remains at Allegiance awaiting completion of repairs.
- The Freightliner is operating without issues.
- Repairs to the grader, including replacement of the blade control solenoid, have been completed.
- Ditching work on East Bear Swamp Road has been completed.

Eric reviewed an access permit application for Greg and Barb Whitchurch on East Hill Road, noting that adequate sight distance exists and no culvert is required.

Motion: Approve the driveway permit for Greg and Barb Whitchurch on East Hill Road. Moved by Zara; seconded by Liz. Motion carried.

Eric reported that work will begin on a temporary bypass road to facilitate repairs to the Lower Sunnybrook box culvert. The project is expected to take approximately three weeks.

Eric also discussed deterioration of the Wood Road bridge piers. He has been consulting with State Bridge Engineer Sven Scribner regarding the repairs. Estimated costs range from $75,000 to $125,000. The repairs are not FEMA eligible, but grant funding may be available through the State. Eric indicated the repairs are not immediately urgent but should be addressed before conditions worsen. Liz noted that the project may need to be considered during the budget process.

Regarding FEMA, Zara reported there were no significant updates. Liz noted that the State Treasurer's Office has expressed interest in holding a roundtable discussion with municipalities regarding FEMA recovery experiences. Zara added that Middlesex had also been invited to participate in a separate roundtable discussion concerning Brook Road.

Hiring Committee Update (5:36 p.m.)

Jessica Beaudoin reported that the Hiring Committee began its work by reviewing hiring processes used by other municipalities. The committee received eight applications, developed standardized interview questions, and conducted three first-round interviews. The committee selected two finalists to recommend to the Selectboard. The Hiring Committee will meet with the Selectboard on August 10 at 6:00 p.m., and the Board will interview both finalists on August 12 at 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Town Clerk Update (5:41 p.m.)

Town Clerk Brigid Browning provided an update regarding the recording backlog. She reported that all documents received have been entered into the daybook as of that day and that cashiering has been completed through June 4. She explained that documents must be recorded in the order received and estimated that approximately ten documents remain ahead of Steve Martin's June 30 filing. She estimated that recording each document takes approximately one hour.

Brigid explained that:

- Documents must be entered into the daybook within three days of receipt.
- Cashiering assigns book and page numbers.
- Indexing occurs after documents are scanned and digitized.
- Once documents are cashiered, indexing can be prioritized based on need.

Board members and members of the public discussed concerns regarding delays in recording and indexing land records, the impact on property transactions, and delays in election-related data entry. The last recorded document that is searchable online is from April 27.

Brigid apologized for the backlog and explained that the office has been managing tax bill processing and election preparation. She stated that recording is complex and that interruptions make it difficult to complete work requiring sustained attention. She requested consideration of additional assistant clerk hours to help answer telephones and reduce interruptions. Zara asked whether additional training or support might be available through VLCT.

Several members of the public expressed concerns regarding:

- Delays in recording and indexing land records;
- Delays in processing property transfer tax returns;
- The status of election-related data entry in the Vermont Election Management System (VEMS);
- Compliance with statutory deadlines.

Board members noted that the Town Clerk is an independently elected official and that the Selectboard does not supervise the Clerk's day-to-day work. Discussion included the previous unsuccessful proposal to make the offices of Town Clerk and Treasurer appointed rather than elected.

Brigid stated that election work had been completed but acknowledged that some information had not yet been entered into VEMS because uninterrupted time was needed to complete the data entry. She acknowledged the concerns raised and stated that she understood the importance of meeting statutory deadlines.

Development Review Board Appointment (6:13 p.m.)

Stacey disclosed that she serves as Vice Chair of the Development Review Board. There were no objections to her participation.

Bill Dorigan introduced himself and discussed his interest in serving on the Development Review Board. He described his background as a trial attorney with experience in environmental law, land development, utility siting, regulatory compliance, and working with developers. Liz thanked Bill for volunteering to serve.

Motion: Appoint Bill Dorigan to the Development Review Board to fill the March 2026 - March 2029 term. Moved by Zara; seconded by Liz. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Update (6:18 p.m.)

The Treasurer reported that equipment for the new Town Administrator, including a laptop and docking station, is arriving. She also reported that an outstanding issue with the IRS had been resolved. The Treasurer advised that several tax bills and other mailed items had been returned after being misrouted through Hartford and are being addressed.

Other Correspondence

Liz reported receiving an email from NE Engineering that prepared designs for the box culvert projects (FEMA Flood related) regarding outstand payment for work completed without a contract. Stacey suggested discussing the matter in executive session with Town Counsel, and Liz agreed.

6:24 p.m. The Selectboard adjourned to convene the Board of Civil Authority meeting.

THE ABOVE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 4, 2026 MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD MEETING WERE APPROVED BY THE SELECT BOARD ON _____.

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LIZ SCHARF, CHAIR

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ZARA VINCENT, VICE CHAIR

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LAWRENCE ROONEY

_____
PAUL CERMINARA

_____
STACEY SKADBERG

Submitted by Stacey Skadberg