Select Board Members
_x__Liz Scharf, Chair
__x__ Zara Vincent, Vice Chair
_x_ Stacey Skadberg
_x_ Larry Rooney
_x_ Paul Cerminara

Middlesex Selectboard Meeting
5:00 PM
Tuesday September 1, 2026
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915

Meeting Minutes

Attending: Carol Maloney, Eric Metivier, Michael Levine, Kevin Thompson, Cheryl Grandfield, Michael Braun Hamilton, Brigid Browning

5:00PM

- **Call to order and welcome guests**
- **Approve the minutes of the August 18, 2026 regular select board meeting**
    - **Amendments included:**
        - Zara Vincent reported that in the last meeting Dorinda Crowell asked about OLD Brook Rd, not Brook Rd.; minutes amended to add "old" under discussion about NE Engineering section

Motion: Zara Vincent moved to approve minutes of August 18, 2026 regular select board meeting with one amendment, Paul Cerminara seconded, motion approved

- **Approve agenda for the September 1, 2026, and consider any amendments to the agenda**
    - Liz mentioned an email from new town administrator about flood plain accreditation training he's been studying for; he sent a request to pay for training and exam at $185
    - Stacey Skadberg said Mark and Martha Harris sent a message about trails committee; will be added to correspondence discussion

Motion: Larry Rooney moved to approve agenda for September 1, 2026 select board meeting with two amendments above, Paul Cerminara seconded, motion approved

5:06

- **Highway report and FEMA roadwork updates; update on box culvert stonework repair schedule per ANR directives**
    - Bimonthly Road Report from Eric Metivier – 8/19/2026-9/1/2026
        - **Equipment**
            - Kenworth- Running no issues
            - International- Running no issues
            - Freightliner-Running no issues currently
            - Grader- New tires were installed
            - Excavator- Running no issues
        - **Road Work/Issues**
            - Old Brook Rd- Waiting on design/permits (core drilling completed 2/5/26)
            - Lower Sunny Brook Rd box culverts are completed guard rails being installed the week of Labor Day – waiting on guardrails
            - Norton Road is complete

- Winter sand is being hauled in (Barretts Trucking is using it as filler work so some days we have more truck than others)
- Grading this week
- 3 Mile Bridge Rd culvert was replaced this week; still minor work then paving to do
- New Asphalt Hot Box arrived and will be out as soon as we are able to put in service; shooting for the beginning of next week
- FEMA close out work
- Working on replacing missing signs throughout the town (still in process as weather and workload allows)

▪ Paul Cerminara asked about reaching out to Fitzgerald to ask about Old Brook
  - Eric met two weeks ago; they have a plan for doing a concrete wall
    ▪ Saw Evan at Norton Rd last week
    ▪ Back and forth about solution; they are actively working on it

▪ Liz Scharf asked if bottom of Culver Hill Road are big sand piles that need to be removed; Eric Metivier said they would remove them

o **FEMA Updates and Road Report 9/1/26 from Zara Vincent**
  ▪ 4810 (2024) Brook Rd. $1 million of $1.3M released to town; has not been received as of this date
  ▪ 1/3 way through 4810's close out of project completion and certification
  ▪ Project 800197 So. Bear Swamp Rd. missing an invoice for a culvert replaced during emergency action. It may have come from our inventory or Dirt Tech forgot to charge us for that culvert ($5,560); feds and state say it was a small project (less than $150k) and are hoping to move forward without the invoice for this one culvert
  ▪ FEMA PDMG has completed paperwork to recuperate our interest on bank and bond loans for 4720 (2023 flood); says FEMA just needs to push button to release
  ▪ Town will need to borrow again to pay for 4810 projects Old Brook Rd. and Daniel's Farm Rd. repairs expected this fall, and Bolduc and French next summer before he compiles 4810 interest repayment
  ▪ Eric Metivier is working on taking photos to complete large project close out on project 800205 Shady Rill / S. Bear ($1,013,844.28), as well as newly completed project 816422 Lower Sunny Brook and project 800204 Norton Rd.
  ▪ Fitzgerald to get town the plans this week or next for Old Brook Rd. and Daniel's Farm Rd.
  ▪ Paul Cerminara and Eric Metivier working on ANR projects with Rachael Czar

o **Work to complete**:
  ▪ Old Brook Rd. and Daniel's Farm Rd. this season; bridge to be completed this fall before winter
  ▪ French Rd. and Bolduc Rd. 2024 damages to be completed next spring/summer
  ▪ Concrete culverts are being manufactured now
  ▪ **HMP** grant 5-year culvert replacement planned; estimates given to Budget Committee; just under 30 per yr of closed, critical, urgent and poor culverts replace to correct size and HDPE or concrete begins summer 2027
  ▪ Paul Cerminara mentioned preliminary plans from Fitzgerald Engineering for Daniel's Farm Rd.; Eric Metivier ordered the box culvert and that will be installed in October

o Paul Cerminara reported on ANR deadlines
  ▪ Heard from Rachel at ANR; list is smaller than they started with

- Eric and Paul met; Eric is putting together a preliminary list of measurements he's taken and that will be sent int to Rachel for approval; will then need permitting
- Should meet fall deadline according to Paul and Eric
- Liz requested someone look at NE Engineering drawings for accuracy
    - Paul Cerminara asked Zara Vincent if she has looked at them
    - Zara responded that Liz sent out a list with billing and the questions she had about the bill; Zara sent out culvert documents
    - Liz sent out document from NE Engineering that broke out tasks and costs associated with each task, totaling $56k
    - Liz asked Paul and Zara to look at whether the work has been done, and if so, when?
    - She wants someone who knows about the culverts to take a look at the invoices
    - Paul suggested he, Zara, and Eric get together to go through to assess for discrepancies
    - Liz said the invoice is not broken out by culvert name so it may be tough to determine if culverts and other expenses match work actually done
    - Liz suggested identifying which culvert work benefited from the drawings and ask how much those drawings cost
    - Zara said they could cross reference with Fitzgerald's work on culverts to help determine value

5:24

- **Discuss email from Michael Levine regarding a change in Town email addresses from current .org to .gov**
    - RB Technologies could not attend the meeting but they sent an email
    - Michael Levine explained why he sent the email suggesting this change
        - Micheal is on a small web site committee to launch town website
        - Might see new web site go live in October
        - Dot gov has some advantages
        - If done sooner than later, there is a federal and state program that will cover the costs; noncompetitive funding
        - Reasons to change: Increase cyber security; efforts to hack will be tougher; public trust; additional resources to pay for it – includes other grant opportunities involving training in security, and more; as new web site goes live would make sense to do it at same time
        - Process: apply for new domain name through dot gov program; suggesting middlesexvt.gov as new domain name
            - Once that's approved, state and federal people (every state has a team that works on this) would sit down with town and RB Tech in a meeting to audit current security and from that recommend which of the 15 programs they have available to choose from to seek assistance from
        - Liz asked why RB Tech did not suggest this change
            - Cheryl Grandfield suggested they only worked with what the town was already using; the town would have had to recommend that change
            - Cheryl said this is the way a lot of towns are going
        - Michael Levine said deadlines are moving; initially going with July 1 deadline but that was extended
            - If in place by end of November would still be eligible for money already available

- Liz Scharf asked if town committee has volunteer capacity to help with this?
  - Michael Braun Hamilton said he might have capacity to get started; RB Tech will understand what needs to happen
  - Michael Levine said there is not a competitive grant; town would just have to complete the application with new address; once determined that no one else has that address, they would initiate a meeting
  - RB can help with technical assistance to determine what's needed to make the change; they have helped other towns
- Paul asked about implementation; Would there be a reason not to do this?
  - Michael Braun Hamilton said the change might confuse people, but would set up redirect for people to get to the new address; there is some talk that dot gov addresses will be required at some point
- Liz – Holland from RB Tech said one major benefit is aligning with what the town does on its web site; there will be some work involved; will have to reach out to everyone about the change on web site; preserve old domain for a while
- Zara Vincent said she is concerned about anything called dot gov; will town have to wait for a long time to be repaid
- Stacey Skadberg is neutral and is happy to defer to others who know the issue and have expertise and experience; if there's a protective factor, she would support that
- Larry Rooney does not oppose the change

Motion: Move forward with taking the next steps to turn domain into Middlesexvt.gov and associated emails; Paul Cerminara moved, Larry Rooney seconded, motion approved, Zara abstained

- Michael Levine asked if the committee could reach out directly to RB Tech
  - Liz Scharf will send email to the committee and Holland at RB Tech introducing them to each other
  - Michael Levine said he hoped there would be quite a long time of overlap with both new and old web site addresses

5:38

- **Discuss cell phone use and reimbursement for employees who use personal cell phone to regularly conduct town business; consider request from Kevin Thompson for $35/month cell phone reimbursement for his zoning-related town business and volunteer time performing routine office maintenance**
  - Cheryl Grandfield followed up with an email with additional information; radios don't always work as staff are too far apart
  - Paul Cerminara said town has two phones for road foreman in the past; went to one phone that is published on the web site
    - Town reimbursed foreman with stipend; was a public facing phone
    - Eric Metivier has his own phone and is reimbursed $35/month for its use
    - Asked Kevin Thompson if his phone is what is used for town business
      - Kevin stated that his pone is published as publicly available
      - He uses it for town business and to access email from the phone
  - Paul would be on board with his request; Kevin is not a volunteer; his number is on zoning forms
  - Liz Scharf asked, what about crew members using their personal phones to communicate?
    - Paul responded that there are times when radio is not effective; FD volunteers are not using those phones for business

- Cheryl said with town paying for it, that opens their phones up to public listing
- Liz said her phone is open to seizing as it has publicly available information
- Zara Vincent sees employees and elected officials as different; thinks Kevin should get the $35
  - Radios are insufficient so probably should provide $35 to road crew
- Stacey Skadberg commented that if they do for one employee, might do for all
  - Should be planning to stipend the town administrator's phone; it seems like the fair approach to reimburse employees using their personal phone for town business; it's a reasonable request
  - Need to make sure it's applied equally
  - If personnel policy doesn't address it, it would be good to codify somewhere; in long run would like to see it codified so it is universally applied
- **Jay X** from road crew added that every year the radios have gotten worse; phones are only way to get ahold of anyone
- Zara Vincent said it might be possible to differentiate between employees and volunteers
- Liz Scharf said the reimbursement could even include listers, and other volunteers, including select board; could be as much as $4200 a year for the town
  - Not insignificant amount but cheaper than getting other phones
  - Part of her wants to give Kevin the $35 and also wants to make it a policy
- Kevin Thompson likes the idea of making it a policy; more than happy to wait for results
  - $35 is a figure that was used by others; his bill is less than that
  - Will wait until there is a policy
- Larry Rooney asked about rationale for $35 and wondered about percentages for each employee
  - Cheryl Grandfield said it's too complicated to do payroll if everyone gets a different amount
- Zara Vincent said budget committee should be involved if there are implications for town budget
  - Paul suggested budget committee reach out to other towns to see what they do
- Kevin said E. Montpelier issued him a cell phone and they give one to town administrator and clerk; no one else is reimbursed
- Liz said maybe there's an allowance annually if use of phone is over a certain percentage
  - Liz will reach out to budget committee to see if anyone is willing to survey towns about cell phone plans and have that information be put on town administrator's list

5:55

- **Town Clerk's update on progress of land records recording and Nov 3 election day planning**
  - Brigid Browning reported
  - As of today's mail every land recording has a book and page
  - Have an issue with migration with new desktop; servers weren't connected; will be resolved by end of the week
    - Everything is current with new documents coming into the office; Brigid is doing most of the work and training Amy Cavanagh as she goes
    - Amy's 8 hours per week will be dedicated to land records
  - Liz Scharf asked how many requests per week
    - Brigid explained that the backlog was about 100 documents; now down to 13 to scan
    - These include mortgages, discharges, estates, waste water permits, etc.
    - Issue with Steve Martin was the number of different documents he had; there were documents that hadn't been certified since 2015
  - Elections update
    - Emphasis is on check list clean up; state will freeze list on Saturday
    - Encourage people to go on to the web site to make sure their addresses are correct

        - Everyone will get an absentee ballot in October
        - Brigid reported that there are a couple of things on the ballot she wasn't aware of; she will do a post on Front Porch Forum about that

    - Brigid added a compounding issue – there will be a second ballot with central Vermont career center
        - Have to decide if town will mail the ballot for this vote
        - Has heard from a contractor who would install the ballot box prior to the election
    - Liz said there will be two BCA meetings – one next week; there may be an outside ballot box
        - Question is whether it instills greater safety for people's votes; this is for people dropping off their ballots
        - Paul Cerminara asked about why this is being considered
        - Liz said Brigid said state pays for the box; this would replace the mail slot in town office door; this will be discussed at BCA meeting
        - Another BCA meeting in October
        - Brigid said career center issue will also be on the BCA agenda
        - Brigid said the chain of custody will be clearer than current process with new ballot box

6:09

- **Treasurer's Update**
    - A lot of tax bills returned with bad addresses; had to deliver several in-person
    - Got registered with SAM.gov
    - Some tax payments were rejected
    - Some missing files in migration
    - FEMA binder still missing
    - Fraud on on-line payment; 15 pages of details of someone trying to process a credit card
    - Quite a bit of delinquent tax payment work, and work with people who had payments returned for insufficient funds
    - Will start working on audit
    - Big issue is contacting people with returned checks – incorrect mailing addresses, phone numbers are tough to find; time consuming to find some people
    - Liz Scharf asked if for the next meeting there could be review of budget to actual figures for the year that ended in June 2026
        - Asked about town administrator's health insurance cost
        - Cheryl said figure Dorinda Crowell entered might have been amount for two people
    - Larry Rooney asked why Wrightsville Beach is over budget
        - Cheryl said it's based on a per capita figure; it's a figure not known at start of season

6:19

- **Re-announce hiring of Liam Abbate as Town Administrator, start date 9/14/2025**
    - Liz announced that Liam Abbate has been hired
        - He comes from a background working as a planner in the NEK
        - Has a lot of experience working with municipalities and select boards
        - Paul Cerminara thanked the volunteer committee that put many hours in putting in a good metric, vetting, interviewing
        - Liz also offered her appreciation to the committee
        - Cheryl needs a copy of Liam's resume

- Liz will be at town office on morning of Liam's day one and Zara Vincent will be in town office in afternoon
- Liz said she thinks it will be good for each select board member to meet with him

6:21

- **Other Business**
  - Brigid received emails from people who want to appeal their property taxes
  - Email from Tara Hewett, Docket Clerk for BCA appeals to the State of Vermont Division of Property Valuation and Review regarding important legislative updates (Act 164 H.933, Sec. 4b, eff. June 18, 2026.)
    - Extends § 4463 objection period from 14 to 30 days
    - Clarifies that the objection period starts when the Department of Taxes sends the Docketing Notice, acknowledging receipt of the appeal, not when town clerk sends the Notice of Appeal from the BCA decision
    - In the Department appeals guide, these changes are within section "32 V.S.A. § 4463. Objections to Appeal"

  - Follow up from Listers on timing of completion of reappraisal
    - Will be completed before April 1, 2027
    - Assessed values will be reflected in the 2027-28 property tax bills

  - CVRPC Regional Planning grants open for application October 1, due date 12/2/2026
    - Sandy Levine suggested maybe the FIT committee will want to explore this
    - Liam can help with this process

  - Email from Liam asking about training that costs $185 – flood plain certification
    - Board expressed interest; will ask Liam to reach out to Cheryl to have her pay for it with credit card

  - Mark and Martha Harris sent email re: trails committee
    - Question is about motorized vehicles on trails; does policy allow that use?
    - Liz Scharf said this is related to the Class 4 road and the trails policies
    - Liz suggests the message be sent to Rob Halpert as he is working on the policy
    - Zara Vincent suggested there be a conversation among the board about what it thinks
    - Stacey Skadberg said this correspondence came about because ATVs are doing loops on trails; they asked trails committee first and were told there were no restrictions so trails committee came to select board
      - Road has become a through road for dirt bikes and ATVs
      - Some have expressed concerns about "abuse" of the privilege and is out of line with spirit of trails use; thinks this issue should come back to the board after Rob Halpert reviews the Class 4 policy
      - Asked if there will there be an ordinance
    - Town policies don't address the issue of ATV and dirt bike use at all
    - Zara said conservation committee might want to have input as well
    - Liz asked if people allowed to drive ATVs on class 4 roads
      - Paul doesn't think so; most towns have adopted a recreation vehicle use policy
      - Middlesex has not adopted such a policy as it hasn't had a trail network that was of interest

6:35

- **Adjourn**

Motion: Paul Cerminara moved to adjourn the meeting, Zara Vincent seconded, motion approved

THE ABOVE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2026 MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD MEETING WERE APPROVED BY THE SELECT BOARD ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2026.

_____
LIZ SCHARF, CHAIR

_____
ZARA VINCENT, VICE CHAIR

_____
LAWRENCE ROONEY

_____
PAUL CERMINARA

_____
STACEY SKADBERG

Submitted by: Carol Maloney