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
Tuesday September 15, 2026
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Carol Maloney, Brigid Browning, Matt Rkiouak, Eric Metivier, Sandy Levine, Liam Abbate, Shelly Desjardin, Dorinda Crowell, Dave Magida, Elias Gardner, Chris McVeigh, Jan Thouron

5:00

- **Call to order and welcome guests**

- **Welcome and introduce new Town Administrator, Liam Abbate**
  - Liam Abbate spoke briefly about his experience in the NEK

- **Approve the minutes of the September 1, 2026 regular selectboard meeting**

Motion: Zara Vincent moved to approve minutes of Sept. 1, 2026 regular selectboard meeting, Stacey Skadberg seconded, motion approved

- **Approve agenda for the September 15, 2026, and consider any amendments to the agenda**
  - Liz Scharf amended the agenda to include discussion re: email from Elliott Burg about tennis courts
  - Liz Scharf also received emails about update of moving town digital addresses from dot org to dot gov

Motion: Zara Vincent moved to approve the agenda with two amendments, Paul Cerminara seconded, motion approved

5:05

- **Highway report and FEMA roadwork update; Updates on FEMA from Zara; Update on box culvert stonework repair schedule per ANR directives**
  - Eric Metivier reported on highways
    - Equipment
      - Kenworth- Heading to dealer for a fuel leak. Should be under warranty.
      - International- Running no issues
      - Freightliner- Running no issues
      - Grader- Running no issues
      - 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 waiting on guardrail installation
      - 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
      - Ditched and resurfaced Daniels Farm Rd was ditched and resurfaced
      - New Asphalt Hot Box arrived and working on putting into service
      - FEMA close out work
      - Working on replacing missing signs throughout the town (still in process as weather and workload allows)
  - Zara Vincent reported on FEMA – no updates as state rep and federal rep have been on vacation
    - Wrapping up Daniels and Old Brook Rd this year
  - Eric Metivier said more work to do re: permitting process with Rachel at ANR regarding box culverts
    - Hope to be done by arrival of snow

        - Matt said yes
        - Eric Metivier as road foreman will meet with budget committee so they'll get information about road related expenses for next year
    - Stacey Skadberg asked about survey Matt referred to
        - What are plans for the survey?
    - Matt shared a handout with budget projections on planned expenses
        - Town budget includes about 6% for total interest payments; that's the maximum that the VT bond bank advises a town should owe in annual interest payments
        - Long range projections include exploring and getting feedback from town residents about options re: borrowing more upfront or saving over time so need to borrow is less
        - Budget committee has not finalized its recommendation
            - Want to get more feedback; wants selectboard feedback about how to do the survey; outreach is important
            - Discussion about whether or not to mail the survey to all households – how best to get best response
        - Zara Vincent asked about interest rates; is committee aware that FEMA repayment is happening for 2023 borrowing and 2024 expenses will be repaid. Committee Responded that they are aware of this FEMA repayment.
        - Paul Cerminara shared that it's critical that information is shared about longer term savings if town approves short-term increases
        - Liz said there is currently concern about interest rates for borrowing
        - Paul said going public with survey and information is great; a mailing gets to everyone
        - Zara said if mailer is done could add more information about new web site and email addresses
        - Matt said if there is other information that needs to go out to the town the committee would need to coordinate with other committees to make sure there aren't many other surveys going on at same time
            - Asked SB for thoughts and feedback about the survey concept; draft survey would be shared with SB for their approval
            - Nov. 3rd voting day – could make survey available on that day
        - Paul said common themes from the past year is transparency
            - If people want more input this is the opportunity; at this point he's all for whatever the committee can put together
        - Liz added that current draft has a lot of words
            - Matt said it would be shortened and there would be an abbreviated version
        - Liz asked if the gist of the question is whether to borrow now, or pay later?
            - Matt responded by saying the basic questions that need answering by residents are:
                - 1. What do you think happens now to pay for things?
                - 2. What would you like to see happen? Will frame the specific questions in terms of tax bill impact
        - Liz said selectboard has struggled with this for years; when interest rates change it's tough to know what the best way to move forward
        - Dorinda Crowell said there haven't been capital improvement funds historically; now trying to build those funds so the borrowing need is lessened
        - Matt said the secretary of state has loan funds available at 0% interest for small amounts
        - Liz asked what's in CIP account – response was $340k
        - Paul asked about timeline
            - Matt responded that next budget meeting is Oct. 6
        - Larry Rooney asked, where would survey be put out?
            - Matt responded that they want a good representative sample of residents and would like selectboard to agree to pay for mailing
            - Hard copies when people come in to vote would help
            - Strong commitment among committee and selectboard to reach diverse town residents (not everyone uses computers)
            - Estimate is $2k for mailing a postcard with links to web site with survey, and information about how to receive a hard copy of survey by mail
        - Liz asked about public meeting to discuss budget, such as a forum, rather than at a regular budget/selectboard meeting
            - Matt said budget committee would like to do it when they have preliminary budget figures and use town meetings solutions committee to help plan the event
            - Bottleneck now is meeting with department heads
            - Selectboard asked to be kept apprised when the committee is ready to hear about staffing budget needs

        - Municipal planning grants are available and applications are due Dec 2nd.
            - Liam Abbate confirmed after the selectboard meeting that the deadline is Dec 2nd
    - Paul Cermiara expressed concern about town residents not yet having information about proposed garage replacement
    - Sandy Levine said if the town is going to apply for a planning grant, look at overall options for location
        - Don't presuppose where it will be
        - That location (sandpit) is not in town plan for where municipal buildings/services will be
    - Liz asked if there's a possibility for cost of building itself could be scoped with location TBD
        - Sandy said one of values of planning grant is it includes experts to do public outreach
        - Liz said it's another year to wait for the municipal planning grant (MPG) if we do not pursue the FY27 grant
        - Zara Vincent said Larry Rooney is drafting public notices for starting to alert community about what FIT has been doing; why they've landed on Notch Rd as a site; and get conversation going with the public
    - Matt Rkiouak said the idea that this site will work for a planning grant and have site identified seems optimistic; agrees that town garage needs work
    - Liz Scharf said municipal planning grant could be used for scoping study for building, regardless of where it's located
    - Shelley Desjardin said when listers were doing research for Bailin property they learned town owns property on left side of flower shop; asked: is it buildable?
        - Eric Metivier said an acre or two is not adequate
        - Zara Vincent met with Mike Kline about municipal sewage for village housing and that site would be used for that purpose
    - Liam Abbate asked if the planning grant would be for a scoping study for town garage and its potential location? Answer is yes
    - Liz Scharf asked about fire station location
        - Eric Metivier said town owns down to the river; he doesn't think there's enough room there
        - Dave said future sites can be discussed down the road once needs of town garage are clarified
    - Dave Magida said conclusion of committee is that new town hall will not occur soon
        - Said there's been good progress on improvements, thanks to many volunteers
        - Especially noted work by Kevin Thompson and Lauri Scharf
    - Liz said the Paul Bruhn grant could be used for weatherization if the town hall is on the state historic register
        - If that grant funding is available could be used for lower insulation; digging around foundation and insulating that area
        - Town hall needs new siding in places as wood is rotting in a lot of places
        - Dave will send the information by email to the SB
        - Liz asked about future of Rumney school
            - Future of school is unknown
            - Need to continue to talk about town hall work
    - Matt Rkiouak asked FIT to provide budget committee details about town garage funding needs when those figures are available

6:16

- **Planning Commission update on what the PC is up to & to share information about the Community Forum about housing and flood resilience on Tuesday October 13th at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall that the PC is hosting**
    - Sandy Levine reported
        - Before floods PC met with selectboard periodically and it was helpful
        - Since floods that hasn't happened
        - Would like to meet quarterly
        - Wants to talk now as PC is organizing a public forum regarding flood resilience and housing opportunities on Oct. 13
    - They're working with a 2026 municipal planning grant re: housing and climate resilience
        - Answering the question: What can town do to help protect people's health, safety, and property?
        - Want to be proactive, tying together housing and community resilience
        - Where in town can new housing be added?
        - Community forum will have experts and small group discussions
        - While it's a longer term conversation, they want ideas about short term needs
    - Postings on FPF, mailing went to residents of Brook Rd.

        - There is movement on this project
    - Elliott Burg has asked in multiple emails about what town will do about tennis court repair needs
        - There is $10k in tennis court fund
        - Liz said it looks we need clarity on who (town or school district) owns the tennis courts. Historically, the town has assumed they own the tennis courts, however the latest parcel maps suggest otherwise
        - Chris McVeigh said the district bought whatever the school district owned prior to the consolidation
            - Chris may have a deed at home because there was an easement for town to access the property
            - Several expressed interest in seeing the deed
        - Jan Thouron said tennis courts haven't been worked on since her son was in school
        - Liz said there needs to be community members who will do fundraising for those courts; if people want pickleball they need to work on fundraising to support the town's share of the courts' rehabilitation. Jan and Chris expressed enthusiasm in participating in the fundraising effort.
        - Chris said there needs to be a policy re: access because people will feel strongly if they've raised the funding
        - Dorinda Crowell said the town has always had the tennis courts

6:51

- **Adjourn**

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

THE ABOVE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2026 MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD MEETING WERE APPROVED BY THE SELECT BOARD ON OCTOBER 6TH, 2026.

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LIZ SCHARF, CHAIR

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ZARA VINCENT, VICE CHAIR

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LAWRENCE ROONEY

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PAUL CERMINARA

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STACEY SKADBERG

Submitted by: Carol Maloney, edited by Liam Abbate (town administrator)