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
Tuesday November 10, 2026
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
MEETING MINUTES

Attending: Liam Abate, Eric Metivier, Matt Rkiouak, Dorinda Crowell, Bill Preis*, Lincoln Frasca*, Stacey Bryant*, Carol Maloney, Sean McVeigh*, Shelly Desjardin, Sam Beaudoin, Adrienne Magida

5:00 PM

- **Call to order and welcome guests**
  - Liz thanked veterans and current service members for their service

- **Approve the minutes of the October 20, 2026 regular select board meeting**

Motion: Zara Vincent moved to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2026 regular select board meeting, Stacey Skadberg seconded, motion approved

- **Approve agenda for the November 10, 2026 regular select board meeting, and consider any amendments to the agenda**
  - Liz suggested adding approving minutes for emergency meeting on 10/15/26
  - Recognize a former board member for their service under other business

Motion: Zara Vincent moved to approve the amended agenda for the November 10, 2026 regular select board meeting, Larry Rooney seconded, motion approved

Motion: Zara Vincent moved to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2026 select board emergency meeting, Paul Cerminara seconded, motion approved, Liz and Larry abstained as they were not present at the meeting

5:08

- **Highway report and FEMA roadwork update from Eric Metivier - 10/21/2026-11/10/2026**
- **Equipment**
  - Kenworth- Running no issues
  - International- Running no issues
  - Freightliner- At Buzz's for a running issue
  - Grader- Running no issues.
  - Excavator- Running no issues.
- **Road Work/Issues**
  - Old Brook Rd- Project is moving along, the in-water work is complete and the work building back the slope is starting. Still on schedule to finish the first week of January.
  - Daniels Farm Rd Box culvert is complete just waiting on the installation of the guard rails.
  - Winter sand is all in

- Continued maintenance work on trucks for the winter season.
- Patched Shady Rill, Welch Park Dr., and 3 Mile Bridge Rd
- FEMA close out work
- Working on replacing missing signs throughout the town (sill in process as weather and workload allows)

- **Updates on FEMA from Zara Vincent**
  - Lower Sunnybrook – FEMA rep has worked with managers to recoup missing money due to bad measurements by FEMA estimators; SOW changed and is being accepted;
  - Center Rd. – Able to add the $146k missing into the project; FEMA says that portion should obligate next month
  - Daniel's Farm Rd. – Found cement that needed to be hammered out and this will change the SOW; FEMA & state are aware; awaiting bill to add to final costs reconciliation; may need extension past Dec 1, 2026 depending on when guardrails arrive
  - Old Brook Rd. – Waiting for more billing to sign SOW
  - French Rd. & Bolduc – Will do extension letters six months to May 2027, then extend again when estimated completion dates are known in 2027; Eric said town should know cost before Thanksgiving
  - Eric taking photos of McCullough, Notch, Center and LSELECT BOARD before snow fall to wrap up those small 4720 (2023) projects in the system
  - Gave Cheryl Grandfield list of projects from both floods to report on what we have been paid due by Dec 15, 2026 so can figure out what if anything is missing before budget season
  - **4720 / 2023 written on actuals; Middlesex was overpaid by $6,049.03 – which town gets to keep**
    - 741387 Culver/Government/Shady = +$3,224.34
    - 741383 Davy / Upper Sunnybrook = +5,156.99
    - 730142 B Government Hill = +76.59
    - 741379 Wood/Macey/ Bolduc = -$2,216.96
    - 759027 Zdon/ Nelli/ Upper Barnett = - $192.52

5:12

- **Town Clerk update from Brigid Browning**
  - Election update regarding 11/3 general election
    - Over 700 absentee ballots
    - Everything is in vaults and working on post-election reporting
    - School ballots passed, had 20 volunteers
  - Taylor is an unpaid intern; will help take tax payments and post-election data entry and staff the desk on Friday when taxes are due
  - Deadline for petitions for town meeting is Jan. 14 2027
  - Town report work starts soon
- Liz Scharf said the deadline for warning for town meeting is January 14
  - Liz asked Liam to check calendar re: when the board needs to vote on its warnings
  - Select board thanked Dorinda Crowell for all her work on election day

5:20

- **Treasurer update from Cheryl Grandfield**
  - Taken files to Bonnie Batchelder's office for audit

- Because of the town's single audit requirement, the report may go past town meeting date as it did last year
- Worked with bank to do fund transfers
- Accts. payable is challenging – mail is not consistently received
- Inquiries on tax balances from residents are common
- Sent out six certified letters to ask about payment plans for past due tax bills

5:25

- **Lincoln Frasca from CVRPC presents the two lowest bids for Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)**
  - Lincoln Frasca talked about good turnout for pre-bid and bid meetings re: watershed protection; seven bids received
  - Seven bids received ranging from $163,718 to $225,440 for the three sites on Brook Rd.
  - Referred to memo – 25% of project costs has to be covered by landowner; all landowners have seen estimated project costs
  - For projects to be done this year, need a DEC-approved plan for high water event because work will take place past Oct. 1
  - Suggested select board think about change orders; it's possible that more material may be needed and won't know that until the work is underway; Lincoln suggests approving the chair to sign change orders outside of the regular meeting up to budget amount approved by NRCS
    - If there's a big change, it's likely warranted to have a special meeting
  - Liz Scharf asked if $196,034 is the amount approved by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) –
    - Lincoln said $183,576 is approved amount that includes NRCS, land owner, and other funds that is available for the project
    - There are many variables, and regardless of which bidder is chosen, costs could go up
  - Larry Rooney said price can go up but maybe SD Ireland took that into consideration because their bid is so much higher
  - Stacey Skadberg said maybe J. Merrill saw something different than the other bidders
  - Paul Cerminara said the proximity of contractors could be a factor; asked if there were exclusions in the proposals
    - Lincoln saw no exclusions
    - Not a lot of information about costs in the proposals
    - Jason Merrill was at the bid opening and is familiar with the sites
    - Paul said as long as the SOW is the same among the bidders, J. Merrill's proximity has a big advantage
    - Liz said her gut is to go with J. Merrill. His bid comes under the other bids, and is close by
    - Liz said she would take a motion to go with J. Merrill
  - Zara Vincent said if J. Merrill can handle the work, and given his familiarity with the work, there's no reason not to go with him
  - Stacey Skadberg expressed concern about the really low bid for 77 Brook Rd; maybe it's a fiction or maybe it's the most realistic; aside from that concern she thinks he might be the best
- Paul asked about oversight of process before change orders are approved
- Lincoln included a template change order in the package – engineer would have to sign the change order that it's warranted

Motion: Zara Vincent moved to authorize the select board to issue the notice of award and issue the agreement to J. Merrill for construction of the Middlesex Emergency Watershed Project (EWP Project), for three properties on Brook Road (#77, 203, and 255), and countersign the agreement upon receipt of required certificates of insurance and performance and payment bonds, and receipt of written approval from the DEC extending in-stream work beyond October 1; Larry Rooney seconded, motion approved

Motion: Paul Cerminara moved to authorize the select board chair and town treasurer to approve change orders to the Middlesex EWP Project as long as cumulative cost of change order stays within appropriated budget by NRCS, and it's signed by the landowner responsible for the 25% match and the project engineer, Zara Vincent seconded, motion approved

- Lincoln will send out official notice once Liz signs the agreement
- Liz said that the treasurer has set up accounts for the families
    - Billing discussion: Landowners have to pay the town
    - Matching funds from each family needs to be in-hand before work starts
    - Liz asked Adrienne Magida to let families know that they need to send in funds before work starts
- NRCS has a go-between for town: Adrienne Magida. She is in communication with the landowners.
- Adrienne will bring the approved numbers to the families and will let them know that the numbers could change and they will have to approve any change.
- Bill Preis asked who is going to represent the town for inspection of the project?
    - Response was Stacey Bryant, the USDA's engineer; she will be on-site
- Lincoln will send email tomorrow with documents to sign

5:52

- **Update on Errors and Omissions from Listers**
    - Shelly Desjardin explained there was a historic purchase of property that abutted another one, making it a contiguous property. The purchased property was converted to an LLC, which created challenges with the data systems
    - The problem occurred when separating the property. Instead of value being $564,900, it should have been $505,700 – so they were over-taxed
        - Now both systems match
        - Updated tax bill so Cheryl Grandfield will have to credit the landowner $1,478.01 per quarter for 2024, and $1,502.82 per quarter in 2025; 2026 tax bill is accurate
    - Sam Beaudoin said the revised tax bill has been sent out
    - Listers will work with Cheryl Grandfield to credit the landowner
    - Matt Rkiouak asked if the tax bill will be credited or will the repayment be needed as a special line item
        - Dorinda Crowell explained that no special item will be needed to credit the landowners, as it is a change in revenue not spending.

Motion: Zara Vincent moved to have the select board sign the errors and omissions document, Larry Rooney seconded, motion approved

6:08

- **Discussion of clarifying several town administrator duties**
    - Liz Scharf explained that she and Liam Abate have been talking about clarification of duties
        - Anticipated some clarification would be needed since it's a new position
        - Need chain of command clarity and that will be discussed in detail at next week's select board meeting
    - Need to delineate responsibilities for Open Meeting Law requirements (posting of minutes and agendas) between Town Clerk and Town Admin.
        - Liam said that town archives must contain minutes of meetings and town clerk is responsible for archives
        - Statute assigns responsibility to the town for posting minutes and agendas, but it's not stipulated who is responsible
            - It's unclear who will be doing the posting of minutes and agendas for all town committees on the new web site
            - Zara asked Liam what he thinks; he responded it's a lot to do and it requires access to the web site
            - Liz asked Liam if he would take on responsibility to post the agendas and minutes on the web site for all committees
                - Liz suggested Liam could ask for support when he needs it
            - Larry Rooney asked how many committees there are; Liam responded that there are 17 committees
            - Dorinda Crowell asked who does the committee send their agendas and minutes to?
                - Need to direct all minutes to town administrator and town clerk
                - Liam will be primary person for web site and Brigid will be responsible for posting the physical version in public locations
            - Matt Rkiouak suggested an automated system for uploading minutes and agendas to the web site; offered to help Liam set up a process for this
    - Long term planning of minute-taking during select board meetings
        - Carol Maloney explained that she is heading south for the winter and said it's difficult to do minutes remotely and would like to retire from the job
        - Paul Cerminara suggested putting out an ad in FPF
        - Larry Rooney said he uses AI all the time at work and described ways he uses it; he would go either way and go for a notetaker
        - Liz Scharf said Berlin has had trouble with AI; suggests they try an AI notetaker and if it's a mess they can go back to hiring someone
        - Larry said maybe asking audience members to introduce themselves
        - Zara said she thinks that AI vendors should be looked into. An AI notetaker could be used by all the town's committees.
        - Liam will research AI options
        - Matt Rkiouak said if a vendor is hired, make sure they know the context
        - Stacey Skadberg said town administrator job description states the town administrator is a back-up note taker; would like to keep Liam as back up and thinks they should find someone willing to do it
        - Liam will ask Amy Cavanagh if she's interested; if not, he will post on FPF
    - Stagger select board member attendance at supervisory meetings with Liam

- Liz checks in with Liam regularly and would like other select board members to join those sessions; two people can join
- Liam will re-send Microsoft Teams link to the full select board so select board members can participate in the check in session
- Liam said he finds meeting with Select board members outside of the regular meetings very beneficial
- Petitions for re-election for select board need to be submitted by Jan. 25th; Stacey and Paul are up for re-election
- Dorinda Crowell said the clerk needs to go through the list of elected officials and the list needs to go out ASAP letting residents know what positions are open for election in 2027

6:40

- **Appointment of Liam Abbate as Municipal Project Manager for the Mad River Path Scoping Study along Route 100B**
  - Liam assumed he would be the project manager; VTrans said if regional planning person or town employee is not the project manager, it has to be put out to bid
  - Liz explained that she thinks Jeff Doolittle will do the work
  - Liz suggested Liam contact Scott Robertson at VTrans and ask him if Liam is the project manager in name, can Jeff Doolittle actually do the work?
    - Agreement among the select board that there is lack of clarity about what the project manager is responsible for; concern that there is inconsistent information from the partners
  - Liz said if there's a requirement that the project manager has to do the work, the select board would have to look at that
  - Stacey said the contract is not clear and she would not sign as it is
  - Select board will revisit this issue at next select board meeting

6:49

- **Updating personnel policy discussion including who will update, will town use the 2022 policy as a starting point, or start from scratch, timeline for adopting new policy**
  - Cell phone reimbursement for Kevin question
    - Liz Scharf suggested the town reimburse same as Eric Metivier's
    - Paul Cerminara said there is a designated town phone for those who need it; doesn't believe employees will be in favor of that solution

Motion: Paul Cerminara moved to ask Cheryl Grandfield to work out a way to reimburse Kevin Thompson $180 per year in whatever way is easier for her; Zara Vincent seconded, motion approved with four votes in favor and one opposed

- Liz said they should use the 2022 personnel policy as a starting place and not rely on AI
- Ask Liam to go through it and present revised draft to select board
- Zara Vincent disagreed; she said she gave the 2022 version to Larry who has had it for a year
  - Suggested they give the policy to Jess Beaudoin who has offered to create a draft at no cost to the town

- Paul Cerminara complimented the crew of volunteers that put together the job description and led the hiring of the town administrator; would like to put task force together in combination with AI
- Larry is more in line with Liz – i.e., start with 2022 policy and ask Liam to draft something from that; at this point there's no rush even though it's been going for a long time
- Liz said town has hired a town administrator to reduce burden on volunteers; and she's not averse to Jess Beaudoin doing some work on that
- Zara Vincent asked how many policies are needed
    - Liz said there's no requirement
- Liam said volunteers may not have understanding of day to day operations
- Stacey Skadberg said the purchasing policy process worked well – drafting and workshopping the draft with the full board – but it didn't work well for roads policy
    - Suggests a hybrid: i.e., Liam takes a stab at improvements and then "workshop" with some folks from hiring committee if they're interested; try to set up a meeting or two to brainstorm; keep the work group small
    - Look at other municipalities and their policies
- Zara would like to have a deadline for the project
    - Stacey suggested an analysis with recommendations and rationale of those recommendations come to the select board in about three months
- Next steps: Liam will look at current (2022) policy and compare to other municipality policies

6:40

- **Update on the state's creation of the Wrightsville Dam Pilot Emergency Plan**
    - Liam said state is coming up with a plan in case dam bursts
    - There will be six meetings in 2027, and those with emergency management skills or someone from town needs to participate
    - Liz Scharf thinks Liam should go and town will get reimbursed up to $5,000 for his time
    - There will be work involved in the project; Liz suggested Liam ask Cheryl Grandfield about special codes on time sheet for this project

7:10

- **Town Administrator Update**
    - Update on the new website
        - Will launch on Thursday
        - Liam will test tax payments on Thursday
    - Update on Tennis courts; Chris McVeigh wants town to seek legal counsel
        - Lengthy discussion
            - Courts have an easement deed
            - Larry Rooney has a correspondence related to this issue
                - Received letter from Elliott Burg asking if FIT Committee could reach out to the school district; Larry said that's beyond FIT scope
            - Stacey Skadberg said school conveyed an easement of 2.2 acres to the town; includes the perpetual right of the town to enter on the parcel to install, replace, maintain, and/or repair water and sewer lines

        - Stacey's interpretation is that the tennis courts belong to the town; the easement allows for putting water systems and septic for use of the recreation facilities
        - Responsibility to maintain the facilities is on the town in her opinion
        - If town can confirm it installed the courts, town would have the corresponding duty to maintain them
    - Dorinda Crowell said the courts were there when the school was a town school; she was on recreation committee back then; it has been maintained by the town in the past
    - Zara Vincent said it needs to be fixed or torn out
    - Liz Scharf said this is coming up because the town sold the school to the district
        - Liz suggested the town continue to operate under the assumption that town owns the courts and is responsible for maintaining; it will cost about $50,000 to upgrade the courts; if people are passionate about it, they can take responsibility for fundraising
    - Paul Cerminara said those volunteers could get the funding request on the town meeting warning to fix the courts
        - Maybe the select board could discuss that option with Mitch Osieki and Elliott Burg; it's important that the select board is transparent; may get some push back
    - Liam said there is no recreation committee – it's just Mitch Osieki
    - Liz asked Liam to get some quotes on the cost of repairing or removing the courts for the select board to contemplate
- Replacement of town clerk's computer: laptop or desktop
    - RB Tech notified Cheryl Grandfield they recommend computers get replaced every 3-4 years; Brigid Browning has the oldest one and that's a desktop model
    - Liz suggested Liam put a line item in FY28 budget for a laptop for Brigid
- Shrubs on northwest corner of Town Hall
    - Kevin Thompson and FIT committee would like to remove them before winter to prevent further damage
    - Select board agreed to support removal of the bushes
- FY 2025 Municipal planning grant closeout, FY 2027 Municipal Planning Grant application
    - Trouble drawing down funds from 2025
    - Sandy Levine and Liam and Nicki from CVRPC are working on grant application for scoping study re: town garage location and beefing up cap improvement re: town's structures
        - Grant is due Dec. 2nd
- Trails committee emails
    - Liam said trails committee co-chairs want town email addresses so they don't have to post their personal email addresses
        - Paul said if those emails are not required for a legal reason he doesn't see why they're needed
        - Liz said the purpose of having an email of something like: trailscommittee@middlesex.gov , is because it's not tied to an individual's personal email address
        - No agreement among select board members to support the request
- Update on town administrator's role in budget process
    - Meeting with budget committee on Dec. 1 to review portions of the budget like costs for town hall
    - Current stipend for select board is $700 per year

- New web site
    - Zara Vincent asked about why there's a picture of Camel's Hump on the new web site, and she would like to see Hunger Mt. there
        - Liam explained that there is a picture of Hunger Mt. on one of the web site pages
- Stacey said she received a complete copy of town's insurance policies and would like to go through them and give select board a primer on what's in there

7:40

- **Adjourn**

Motion: Stacey Skadberg moved to adjourn the meeting, Larry Rooney seconded, motion approved

THE ABOVE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 10TH, 2026 MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD MEETING WERE APPROVED BY THE SELECT BOARD ON NOVEMBER 17TH, 2026.

_____
LIZ SCHARF, CHAIR

_____
ZARA VINCENT, VICE CHAIR

_____
LAWRENCE ROONEY

_____
PAUL CERMINARA

_____
STACEY SKADBERG

Submitted by: Carol Maloney