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 January 6, 2026
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Dave Magida, Eric Metivier, Carol Maloney, Cheryl Grandfield, Brenda Edelschick, Carl Balin, Susan Clark, Bill Preis, Shelly Desjardin, Dorinda Crowell, Bridget Browning, Sam Beaudoin, Lauri Scharf, Elias Gardner, Mark Harris, Matt Rkiouak

5:03PM

- **Call to order and welcome guests**

Motion: Approve the minutes of the December 16, 2025, Regular Select Board Meeting
- Paul moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved

Motion: Approve special select board meeting of Dec. 19, 2025
- Zara moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved

Motion: Approve agenda for Tuesday January 6, 2026 meeting with two changes: 1. Remove dissolution form related to Welch Park item, and 2. Add additional correspondence to Other Business item
- Zara moved to approve agenda with changes, Paul seconded, motion approved

5:07

- **Highway report and FEMA roadwork update from Eric Metivier**
  - All equipment is running well
  - Road updates:
    - Old Brook Road waiting for design and permits
      - Engineer may be able to get bores with thaw later this week
    - Working on replacing missing signs
      - Sign theft continues – about a dozen missing

- **Updates on FEMA payments from Zara**
  - Met with FEMA project dir. at state – no payments from FEMA have gone out since Sept.
  - Pushing for repayment Brook Rd work for $1.2M – would make town whole

- **Update on any design work from Fitzgerald Engineering for future culvert projects including Old Brook Road and Daniels Farm Road**
  - Email sent and awaiting response

- **Updates from Liz Scharf on Agency of Natural Resources' Notice of Alleged Violation dated 11/17/25 and received by the Town 11/20/2025 regarding six box culvert installations and timeline for directives pertaining to corrective actions**
  - Liz reported measurements of wetlands are needed for Old Swamp Rd by Jan. 26th

- **Update on home buyout demolition progress**
  - 9 buyouts
  - Two properties demolished: 13 Rich Rd and 158 3 Mile Bridge Rd
  - Property at 138 3 Mile Bridge needs asbestos testing
  - Town waiting for permits for properties at 140 and 148 3 Mile Bridge
  - Next property will be 158 Lower Sunnybrook Rd.
  - Kevin Thompson is communicating with neighbors that demotion is happening
    - He reported that state permit for 140 3 Mile Bridge has come in
    - Houses seem to be vacated and untouched

5:15

- **Update from Facilities Improvement Team (FIT), Dave Magida, regarding work to date and town garage evaluation**
  - Dave Magida presented for the committee
    - Big issues and money involved is significant and wants to make sure channels of communication between town and SB are smooth and open
    - Charge as committee understands: Evaluate all town buildings and determine condition and ability to meet town's needs and goals moving forward
    - Committee discussion and decision making includes these priorities:
      - Adherence to health and safety codes
      - Structure of facilities
      - ADA as reference for all improvements

- Energy efficiency
- Focus on planned maintenance to avoid deferred maintenance
- Address things that *need* to be done

- Group formed 2 subcommittees: one on town hall and one on town garage
  - Town Hall
    - Kevin Thompson reported and clarified that all discussions in the committee and subcommittees are just ideas at this point
    - Current town hall has no reliable ADA access and layout isn't ideal
      - Vault space is inadequate
    - Still need to look into option to combine new garage with new town office space – that would be connected to town garage near the school
    - Another option is to lift town hall, cut foundation, drop building back to ground level
    - Kevin responded to a question about why past work re: fire station discontinued: He didn't know why and thinks there is nothing wrong with the building – it's a historic building and is centrally located on Route 2
      - Paul stated that reason the building is being used for cold dry storage is due to structural assessments and concerns - Kevin reiterated there are safety issues with second floor
    - Renovating current space would require setting up a temporary space and asking staff to move twice
    - Next steps: Assess town needs and interests and then assess costs

  - Town Garage
    - Dave reported that it was designed for 20 years and is in it's 50th year
      - Described condition as deplorable
    - It has issues related to water, ventilation, hazardous material storage, ADA, mold; may be cheaper to demolish and rebuild than renovate
      - Environmental issues on site all need to be addressed
      - Project costs need to include these environmental factors and considerations
      - Everything needs to be included in final cost estimates: Professional fees, applications, taxes, insurances, environmental assessments and remediation
      - Need to take a long-term view re: building and equipment needs
    - Paul thinks that because of wetness (possible wetlands) at the current town garage site, that space may not accommodate both garage and town offices/town hall
    - There are also well and septic issues at town garage site
      - Matt asked if it's less expensive to do all construction at once or do town garage first and then town hall? Can town move town garage to another site to put both together?
    - Dave suggested potential schedule
      - May be possible to get details ready for fall vote
    - SB supports town garage being a priority
      - Priorities for town hall need to be assessed to keep it working for time being while town garage project proceeds
    - Dave assured the group that the committee will consider all options
      - Larry mentioned that committee wants to show pictures of town garage at town meeting and make information available to the community
      - Susan Clark, town moderator, thinks town meeting is a good opportunity to get information out to the community
    - Committee will create communication pieces, including FPF posts and information for residents attending town meeting, to begin informing the community about their discussions
    - SB needs to know if the committee will need funds for engineering and other design work in FY'27
      - Committee will put out request to town residents to see if anyone can do the work

5:49

- **Update on Radon Mitigation work, Lauri Scharf, Energy Committee**
  - Lauri reported
    - Mike Cosgrove of company putting in the system will be in town office Weds. Jan. 7, to put in a large fan to move air out of vault
    - Will drill a hole in the floor and install ductwork up and out of the building – will draw gases out of the subfloor which will include the entire vault and under town clerk's office
    - This should expel all gases under the floor
    - Electrician will install outlet for the fan once Mike is done with his work
    - Will continue to monitor radon levels after the work is done

5:51

- **Consideration/acceptance of conveyance documents related to the dissolution of Welch Park Association, including Articles of Dissolution, miscellaneous shared easement rights for fire protection, and conveyance of Welch Park Drive to Town of Middlesex**
    - Carl Balin attended
        - Liz reported that Welch Park was created 19 years ago
        - Town was a member of the association and shared bills with two other groups
        - For many years the town and others have been working to dissolve the association
        - Shared easement right means shared costs
        - Carl asked to be included in emails between Liz, town attorney, and Benderson – dissolution document is missing from signed documents from Benderson
        - According to town attorney, documents on hand can be signed and other missing document re: dissolution can be signed when it comes in

Motion: Authorize Liz to sign three documents related to Welch Park Association: 1) articles of dissolution (not available at the meeting), 2) the shared easement rights, and 3) the conveyance of Welch Park Road to the town

- Zara moved, Paul seconded, motion approved; Stacey abstained and asked to read the documents

6:10 – Other Business

- **Approval and signing of Select Board Report to the town for 2025 Town Report**
    - SB members signed last draft of the report document

Motion: Approve SB report for 2025 with final edits made at the meeting

- Larry moved, Zara seconded, motion approved

- **Correspondence**
    - Town Clerk (TC) role
        - Bridget Browning attended the meeting
        - She is interested in the position and another person reached out to Liz and Cheryl with interest
        - Discussion about job description
    - CARE (Citizen Assistance Registry for Emergencies)
        - This is a site for town wide emergencies
        - When Town Emergency Plan is engaged, town would go to this site to see who from town is on it and check in with the person that they're ok
        - If person calls 911 and they're registered, it might tell town what limitations or disabilities they have relevant to emergency response
        - Requires annual registration and is not a guarantee of rescue during emergency
    - Class 4 Road inquiry from Mike Hill
        - Mike requested town sand because his equipment was broken for his class 4 section of the road – town attorney suggested Mike come formally to the board and ask the SB to sand the class 4 road
        - He can also ask for consideration of the road to be re-classified to a class 3 road (S. Bear Swamp Rd) – in 2022 town refused to grant this status
        - He can come to SB and ask for vote OR get a signed petition from 75 town voters with their support to reclassify the road
            - Town attorney suggests petition option because it demonstrates town benefit because 5% of the town population would be indicating their support
            - Could come up in future meeting if Mike decides to pursue it
        - Stacey mentioned that SB members were not copied on town attorney's response to Mike Hill
    - Liz will post in FPF about town residents reaching out to Senator Welch's office with problems with mail delivery

6:21

- **Budget Discussion**
    - Latest draft of Town of Middlesex budget shared with the SB
    - Dorinda reported out from budget committee
        - Dorinda walked the SB through suggested reductions from previous version, including reductions of hours and pay rates for some employees and addition of town administrator position
            - Those changes brought budget increase down to 14%
        - About 10% of the increase is the result of adding treasurer and town clerk as separate positions next year; in current year they are one position
        - In budget committee the discussions always came back to need for clarity about responsibilities for each position
            - Administrator can help create job descriptions to help define duties and responsibilities
        - Cheryl talked with town clerks in other towns about town administrator work
            - Reporting and grant work is a big part of what administrators do in other towns
            - She believes there are many grants available that no one has time to pursue and follow up

        - Liz stated that she believes town administrator is essential for next year or near future; workloads will continue to grow
    - Mark Harris suggested it would be to town's advantage to break down the increase: how much each piece costs; e.g., town administrator would be X% of increase
        - Budget Committee will create a draft communication piece for voters
        - Mark reported that budget committee agrees there are few places to cut
            - Past employees probably worked excessive hours they did not get paid for
            - Health care runs about 6% of budget for many years and with new staffing it will go to 9% of budget
            - These are figures the town has no control over
    - Elias Gardner said the budget committee has gone through line and there is no way to cut
    - Matt explained that if town hadn't cut so much in last two years the increase might have been closer to 10%
        - He expressed concern about town burning out staff
    - Dorinda reminded the group that the TC election in 2026 will be a three-year position; SB cannot change that term of office
    - Liz will seek guidance from VLCT about moving TC position after this election cycle to become an appointed position, which would mean non-residents would be eligible for it

Action: Liz asked for new draft budget as an option for town voters with following positions included:

- *TC duties at 32 hours*
- *Town administrative at 8 hours/week*
- *TC Asst. at 32 hours*
- *Treasurer at 32 hours*
- *Special Projects Administrator (including FEMA related work) hours – 10 hours week*
- *SB Wages for Chair and Vice Chair*

- There will be two budgets for the SB to vote on next week
    - One will include town administrator, and one will have increased hours for other positions to cover the work
    - Both versions will include reduction of $20,000 in legal expenses

7:45

Motion: To adjourn

- Zara moved, Paul seconded, motion approved

THE ABOVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2026, MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD WERE APPROVED ON JANUARY 13, 2026.

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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 Carol Maloney