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 20, 2026
Middlesex Town Hall and via Zoom*
5 Church Street
Middlesex, Vermont 05602
(802) 223-5915
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Eric Metivier, Cheryl Grandfield, Carol Maloney, Brenda Edelschik, Dorinda Crowell, Brandon Lareau ,Mike Hill**,** Rob Halpert

5:01

- **Call to order and welcome guests**

- **Motion: Approve the minutes of the January 13, 2025 regular Select Board meeting**
  - Paul moved, Larry seconded, motion approved

- **Motion: Approve the minutes of the July 16 special Select Board meeting**
  - No action taken

- **Motion: Approve agenda for Tuesday January 20, 2026 and consider any amendments to the agenda**
  - Larry moved, Paul seconded, motion approved

5:05

- **Highway report and FEMA roadwork update**
  - Eric Metivier reported
  - All in good shape
  - Met with Fitzgerald re: Norton Rd and Lower Sunnybrook Roads (these are 4720 projects)
    - Engineering costs for Fitzgerald will be paid by FEMA
    - Once design is done, another project will be created under the 4810 flood event
  - Core samples are being taken from Old Brook Rd
  - Work on Daniels' Rd is 4810 related
  - Regular plowing and sanding are going well

- **Updates on FEMA payments from Zara**
  - No movement re: payments
  - Three 2023/4720 projects awaiting ANR permitting, then payment is imminent (East Hill, Lower Sunny & Portal)
  - One 2024/4810 project still in
  - Large project review underway (Brook Rd.)
  - Five extension letters sent for 2024/4810 projects to be engineered
  - Costs and repairs for the following have been sent in:
    - #799985 - Daniels Farm Rd & Bridge A&E
    - #800201 - McCullough Hill Rd and Culverts Damaged
    - #952792 - Bolduc Rd - Road Work and Culvert A&E
    - #952794 - French Rd and Culvert A&E only
    - #952798 - Old Brook Rd undermined damages A&E only

- **Update on any design work from Fitzgerald Engineering for future culvert projects including Old Brook Road and Daniels Farm Road**
  - See above for Eric's updates

- **Updates from Liz Scharf on Agency of Natural Resources' Notice of alleged violation dated 11/17/25 and received by the town on 11/20/2025 regarding six box culvert installations and timeline for directives pertaining to corrective actions**
    - Paul reported that he and Eric went to the site and measured the wetland
        - Used delineated line that ANR identified
        - Estimated about 800 square feet with erring on the wetland side
        - Measured general work area, too
            - Estimated 4,700 square foot area will be needed for the remediation work
    - Town is in good standing with state
    - Liz may need to meet with ANR in spring
    - Dirt Tech hasn't done any work at this site since town received notice from state

5:10

- **Monthly Update from Fire Department**
    - Total calls for period – 9
    - Average of 7 people out
    - Rescue out 5 times
    - 12/24/25 responded to motor vehicle crash
    - Several crashes on I-89
    - Fast squad total of 10 responses
    - More staff will attend training in near future

5:12

- **Update on electrical wiring for vault radon mitigation work**
    - Liz reported that electrical wiring is completed
    - Brenda inserted fan, it's been inserted for a week, and she mailed test kit to get radon levels
    - Awaiting results to see how successful this work is to reduce radon levels
    - Will monitor regularly

5:15

- **Review, approve, and sign the March 3rd, 2026 Town Meeting Warning**
    - Susan Clark, if elected moderator, will go by articles distributed to the board
    - Liz ran articles by attorney to make sure they all comply with state law
        - Also discussed with Susan to make sure the sequence of items makes sense
    - Liz, Cheryl, and Susan met on 1/20 to make sure times, dates, and details are accurate
        - Walked through the warnings, article by article
    - As part of SB duty, they must approve the warning
        - Zara mentioned that FIT committee would like to speak at the meeting and share information about town garage
        - Larry responded that there will be a booth with information
        - Liz added that Zara or anyone on the committee could speak up about it and/or use opportunity of questions from the floor to give more information about the town garage and/or general FIT discussions

Motion: Approve town warning for March 2026 town meeting

- Paul moved to approve, Larry seconded, motion approved

5:26

- **Review and Approve purchasing policy for Town of Middlesex**
    - Stacey walked the select board through the lengthy draft policy
        - Noted two substantive changes from previous version
        - She trimmed out a bit of language
        - 2 categories of the policy: 1) all municipal funds, 2) funds that are part state and part federal
        - Town designates and authorizes agent to make purchases with caps on those authorizations
        - Major purchases are those over $30,000
        - Discussed number of vendors who receive purchases with municipal-only funding
            - Preference indicated for minimum of three vendor bids for any major purchase

- Paul asked for flexibility in the language, to generally require at least three competitive quotes, and allowing fewer if not feasible to get three
- Town can waive bidding process for professional services up to $30,000
  - If determined that there is only one source of the service, the board can waive the requirement for three bids
- A change was noted in the language re: documented thresholds for small purchases – there is an increase in federal funds requirements as follows:
  - Micro purchases are below $15,000 – agent is authorized to make these purchases
  - Simplified acquisition process for small purchases between $15,000 and $350,000
  - Large purchases begin with $350,000
    - If work exceeds $350,000 there needs to be a sealed-bid process– details about complying with federal process are laid out in the policy
- The federal policy components is language per VLCT

- Town attorney, Rob Halpert, will review the draft version before it's adopted at next meeting
  - Discussion among the board members about triggering emergency purchase authority and when number of bids are required and procurement agent can bypass the sealed bid process
    - Board can convene and approve spending without competitive bids if there's an emergency
  - Liz asked to include a town administrator in the named agents in case town approves hiring one

5:45

- **Consider request from resident Mike Hill of South Bear Swamp Road to authorize the road crew to sand a 100 yard portion of South Bear Swamp Road beyond the limits of the Class 3 portion of the road, until such time as Mike's own sander equipment is repaired or replaced with the understanding Mike will cover additional costs of this sanding**
  - Mike clarified that all five families on a .34 mile section (Mike provided this figure of the distance) asked for maintenance for this section of the road in 2022
    - Town has turned down request in the past
    - From 2019 to 2022 Mike made offers to improve road at his expense
  - Chose not want to do 5% voter petition
  - Wants town to be responsible for plowing and sanding for the .34 mile section where the families live
  - There is a Road Closed sign there now and Mike argued it's a danger, and he gave examples of families who got stranded in unimproved section of the road
  - Believes the families who live on the road aren't being treated equally with other town's residents
    - Argued that select board may be violating the residents' rights
  - Liz responded to Mike's comments:
    - She explained there are two ways to request an upgrade: 1) come to SB meeting and request action by the board to update the road to Class 3, or 2) get 5% of registered voters to sign a petition and present that to SB for their consideration
    - Rob clarified that the to get the road re-classified using the petition option, there is an official process including a public hearing
      - He also added that the select board cannot decide on its own to upgrade the road – they must do the public hearing and offer the public a chance to speak up
  - Mike stated that a majority of the board could decide tonight that they want to hold a hearing on the issue
    - Mike believes none of the things promised in the past were followed through with
    - John Lund spoke – he lives on S. Bear Swamp Rd
      - Explained threat to turn road to a trail from past board member
      - Moved to town in 2021; didn't really understand Class 4 status at the time
      - Since 2022 he has been interested in upgrading the road

- Given permission to repair parts of the road following the floods which created options for egress and ingress for over 20 families
- Explained that the road is a through road during times other roads are impassible and it's worth investing in

- Liz responded by asking the group to return to agenda item of sanding and plowing the road; asked if it makes sense to reclassify the (almost a mile) or the .3 mile where the families reside entire road
  - Some SB members believe it makes the most sense to do the entire road
  - Mike asked for .34 mile to be upgraded to last family's driveway for emergency and other services to have access
    - Mike said he'd do the .2 mile section to his driveway and wants the town to plow and sand the .14 mile section past his property to the Lund's driveway
    - Requested immediate action from the SB to start the process to reclassify the road for .3 miles – he expressed it as "the right thing"
- Liz asked if Mike's sander is still broken; he said yes
  - Mike repeated long-standing concerns and bad treatment by the town
- Liz asked the SB to make a decision about the road – whether or not to support the request to go forward with a public hearing or to require them to get petition to force SB to hold the hearing
- Larry talked with Mike prior to the meeting and expressed concern about length of time the issue has dragged on and thinks town owes property owners a hearing
  - Wants town to investigate and give residents a chance to weigh in publicly
  - Asked Eric for approximate costs
    - Eric said he'd have to look more closely to know how much it would cost
- Liz stated that part of the SB's thinking needs to include it's for the better of the community overall
- Zara said some of the statements shared were not accurate
  - Stated she cares about the people on the road and supports going forward with a hearing to consider the question
- Paul also lives on a Class 4 road; stated that the last time this type of situation was addressed on McCullough Road it was because trucks and others were getting stuck, and the road became a major thoroughfare during mud season and repairing it gave an alternate pathway in case of emergency on Brook Rd.
  - John said Bear Swamp is used as a through road by many people when other roads are impassible
  - Mike shared there are 5 families within .34 miles and condition has deteriorated over time
- Stacey would endorse taking up the issue without a petition and thinks those who came to the meeting tonight presented a compelling argument
  - Thinks it's a reasonable exercise of board's authority to take up the issue
  - Framed issue in terms of flood resilience – creates options when other roads are impassible
- Liz also supports going through the process with public hearing and inviting public to comment to the change
  - Class 4 policy gives permission for residents to upgrade the road with SB approval
  - Rob advised that the warning for the public hearing has to be very specific and precise about which part of the road will be reclassified
- Paul is concerned about condition of the road beyond the five family's houses, and thinks it will be much more expensive than the .34 mile section due to its bad condition
  - Recognizes value about doing the full road but is concerned about cost
- Liz is concerned that limiting the work to the first .34 miles would mean the improvement is not for the greater good of the community – doing only .34 miles might jeopardize support from the town; worried there will be less appetite for supporting it if the full road is not improved

- Asked if Class 3 or 4 status impacts lister's work – Shelly Desjardin said it does not
- Mike responded he believes it's ok for town to accept private funding for the work
- Rob stated that in the initial correspondence to him from Mike (and copied to the SB) the request was for the town to sand 150 yards of the road
    - Mike sent a check for $1,000 from his personal account to pay for this work – Rob has hung on to the check
    - Rob advised that anyone can make unrestricted gifts to the town at any time so Mike's offer to fund part of the road upgrade to his driveway does not create a conflict of interest
    - Michelle Johnson – asked if road is upgraded by private investments but not to town's standards, and then town is taking care of it, is town obligated to repair it further or can the town charge the people who fixed it initially
        - Paul said so many of the town's roads do not meet state standards for Class 3 roads he is not concerned about this potential issue
- Paul would like to get more information about potential costs before approving a motion to reclassify
    - Would like to come back in February with more information
- There seems to be broad select board support for holding a hearing and going to the next step for the .34 section at minimum
- Eric and Paul will bring budget figures to the next meeting in February for both the .34 mile section and for the full road

Motion: Table the question about whether or not to propose making full road or just .34 section of the road to until the next meeting on Feb. 3, 2026

- Larry moved, Zara seconded, motion approved

7:00

- **Adjournment**
  Zara moved, Stacey seconded, approved

THE ABOVE MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2026 MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX SELECT BOARD WERE APPROVED ON FEBRUARY 3, 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