

**Middletown Springs Select Board Minutes  
July 23, 2015 Meeting Approved**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 6:34 pm

**BOARD PRESENT:** H. Childress, M. Lamson, S. Moyer, T. Redfield

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Sally Achey, Laura Castle, Jim Georg, Patty Kenyon, Sandy Ladd, Jenny Talke Munyak, Bill Reed

**Approval of Minutes:** M. Lamson moved to approve the minutes of July 7; T. Redfield 2<sup>nd</sup> [*all in favor, motion carried*]. Approval of July 16 special meeting tabled until next meeting.

**FY2015-16 Tax Rate:** Town Treasurer Jenny Talke Munyak has closed the books on FY2014-15. Property tax collections were roughly \$26,000 short of expectations, so although both the Highway and Town expenditures were held to below budget, the balance was close to even.

Because of lower tax revenues, the Highway budget was roughly \$12,000 in deficit; however, the Town maintains a highway surplus reserve fund, and a portion of those funds were used to balance the fiscal year budget. Town expenditures were about \$14,000 lower than expectation, but general government tax revenue also about \$13,000 short, so the town general government came approximately even.

The Treasurer proposed a 2015-16 general government and highway tax rate. H. Childress moved to set the town general government tax rate for FY2015-16 at \$0.387 and the Highway tax rate for FY2015-16 at \$0.336; S. Moyer 2<sup>nd</sup> [*all in favor, motion carried*]. The State has informed us that the homestead school tax rate for FY2015-16 will be set at \$1.7615, non-residential school tax rate will be \$1.4946. This means that the total 2015-16 property tax rate (school, town and highway combined) will be \$2.4845 per hundred dollars assessed value for homestead properties, and \$2.2176 for non-homestead properties.

Lister Sally Achey asked that we review Town penalties for late filing of homestead declarations (due each year October 15<sup>th</sup>). Because the homestead rate is higher, the town is allowed to assess a penalty of up to 8% of the homestead tax bill. T. Redfield moved to apply a penalty of 5% of education taxes for late filing of homestead declarations; S. Moyer 2<sup>nd</sup> [*all in favor, motion carried*].

**Middletown Magnet:** Patty Kenyon reported that the *Magnet* volunteer team has determined that, due to the time demands of layout and advertising coordination, the publication of the paper *Magnet* cannot continue. The Middletown news e-mail address will remain active and monitored, and the volunteer team is building a plan for handling news and announcements that come into that e-mail. The Town website and Front Porch Forum will be the primary news outlets for the Town; the volunteers will meet with community organizations to help them plan their communication strategies. Although the paper *Magnet* will certainly be missed, online posting will make information available

in a much more timely way than could be accommodated in a monthly publication.

All remaining *Magnet* funds will be used to reimburse pre-paid advertisers, reimburse subscribers, and then to reimburse the Town any funds that remain. If anyone in the community would like to propose a new publication, they'd be welcome to do so; any possible Town funding would be a decision of the Selectboard. In the meantime,

The Board expressed its regrets for the end of the paper *Magnet*, but offered thanks to the volunteers from the twenty-year history of the *Communicator* and *Magnet*, and particularly to the current group of Pat Hemenway, Patty Kenyon, Kimberly Mathewson, and Patty McWilliams.

**Town Lands:** Patty Kenyon reported that the planting and mulching of the corner property are complete. The Building Committee is at work on building programming and design priorities.

**Road Commissioner:** Sandy Ladd from R.R. Charlebois Truck Center joined us to discuss the proposal of replacing the Town's 7400 plow truck with a new Freightliner single-axle, and also brought information on financing and warranty options. H. Childress moved to purchase a Freightliner 108SD from R.R. Charlebois for a purchase price of \$142,550; 2<sup>nd</sup> M. Lamson [*all in favor, motion carried*]. Further decisions about details of financing, warranty and resale of the 7400 will be taken up at future meetings.

Other details of highway work:

- Vermont Better Backroads program has approved our grant request for \$4000 to conduct culvert and road condition inventory (Rutland Regional Planning Commission will do most of the technical work).
- North Street temporary road is in, and Waite Foundations will be bringing excavation equipment soon to clear for the culvert pour.
- Bruce Orchitt will begin roadside mowing this weekend, with roughly a one-week completion window.
- Vermont AOT has completed painting work on 140.
- We've received a proposal from Lafayette Highway Specialties on guardrail installation—North Road (183 feet, \$2,400), Buxton Ave (442 feet, \$5,100), Orchard Rd (108 feet, \$1,550), Coy Hill Rd (133 feet, \$1,700), and Fitzgerald Rd (54 feet, \$800). We will have to do the North Road portion as part of the grant for the replacement of the box culvert. We will investigate options and budget implications in preparation for decision at the Board meeting of 8/13.
- The Town pickup received warranty and recall repairs in the past week, at no cost.
- Highway crew work has been in grading, culvert replacement, ditching, storm cleanup, and cutting the new temporary road for the North Street culvert project.

**Poultney River Walk:** M. Lamson has submitted a VTRANS Bicycle/Pedestrian Program Grant proposal to fund a scoping study.

**Board Orders:** M. Lamson moved to approve the Board orders as presented; H. Childress 2<sup>nd</sup>. [*all in favor, motion carried*]

**Other Business:** H. Childress is working with David Wright and Mike Fannin on planning work to straighten stones in the Old Cemetery. The Vermont Old Cemetery Association has one grant remaining available in this year's funding, and we will apply for it.

**Confidential Personnel Matters:** T. Redfield moved to enter executive session to discuss confidential personnel issues; S. Moyer 2<sup>nd</sup>. [*all in favor, motion carried*]  
Executive session begun 9:31 pm. Executive session concluded 9:37 pm. No action taken.

**Adjourn:** M. Lamson moved to adjourn; S. Moyer 2<sup>nd</sup> [all in favor, motion carried].  
Meeting adjourned 9:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Herb Childress, Clerk