

Middletown Springs Selectboard • Thursday, September 13, 2018
Regular Meeting Approved Minutes

BOARD PRESENT: H. Childress, C. Fenton, P. Kenyon, T. Redfield

TOWN OFFICERS: Sally Achey, Lister; Juanita Burch-Clay, Auditor; Laura Castle, Town Clerk; Sarah Grimm, Auditor; Bill Reed, Road Foreman (8:20 pm)

PUBLIC AND GUESTS: Vicki Arsenault, Art Castle, Joe Castle (volunteer fire association).

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:06 p.m.

Minutes: T. Redfield moved to approve the minutes of the August 23 meeting; P. Kenyon 2nd; [*all others in favor, motion carried*].

Town Officers: Sally Achey asked the Board to sign a form for errors and amendments on the grand list, related to the BCA's revision of property 21-317, and an error in the acreage allotted between properties 01-006 and 01-010 discovered during a property title search. P. Kenyon moved to approve the two errors and omissions related to 21-317, 01-006 and 01-010; H. Childress 2nd [*all in favor, motion carried*].

The Auditors reported back from their monthly meeting last night.

- They have gathered information on an external audit. There are not many firms that do town audits, but Graham & Graham estimated that their work would be \$13-14K, and noted that single-year audits are more normal than multi-year. The reserve fund has \$15K, so it's possible for the Board to move ahead. The auditors are working on an audit timeline, and provided the Board with a template for an RFP to solicit proposals for an audit contract.
- The auditors have noted some discrepancies in cash balances related to the funds moving between the transfer station and town office. They recommended changes in cash handling processes, which seem to have resulted in improved accuracy in the past two months. Every time cash changes hands, a receipt should be issued, signed by the person receiving the funds. The Board discussed whether Transfer Station revenues should be given directly to the Treasurer rather than passing (perhaps unnecessarily) through the Town Clerk.
- The Auditors are reviewing the FY 2018 Treasurer's Report, and have reviewed the town facility reserve fund as one of their focal areas to spot-check. If the Board has specific areas to attend to, the Auditors will use that as one of their topics of review.

The Town Clerk has received the programming card for the November election, which means that the ballot has been laid out.

Public Comment: Joe Castle reported that the Fire Company is moving forward with plans to replace the fire station. They may have experienced a recent lightning strike, with damage to the electrical system. The roof continues to leak, with related damage to

the electrical system, as well as structural and mold impacts. The fire association believes that there is no economically sensible way of resolving the current building's problems. He asked whether there was a possibility that the Town would transfer ownership of the town site to the fire association. They're proposing a 60x120 building rather than the current 40x142, using prefabricated steel frame construction. The need to temporarily house fire equipment during construction limits the available window of construction. The contractor they've talked with believes that once site work is completed, the building can be constructed within two weeks.

The configuration would result in a one-way access road around the firehouse for the public to get to the transfer station.

The current estimate for construction is \$736,000, including a 15% overrun. The financial agencies they spoke with would not underwrite a loan with the property being leased rather than owned. In addition, if the Town took on the obligation rather than the fire association, it may be possible to obtain significantly reduced interest rates.

The fire association voted unanimously last night to ask the Selectboard to put a ballot measure on the November election that the Town take out a \$736,000 bond for construction (inclusive of demolition, sitework, and occupancy-ready construction). The plan would be for spring 2019 construction, ready to be occupied by mid-summer. The election must be warned no less than 30 days before the election (October 6), which gives us three weeks to investigate financing and prepare a ballot item. The projection is that savings in electricity and heating fuel, insurance, and vehicle damage will offset a significant proportion of the construction cost.

The fire association investigated the possibility of co-locating the firehouse and town garage, but the town's property, even if the transfer station were relocated, would not suffice to house both a fire station and a town garage. They also investigated the possibility of relocating the fire station to another part of town, and found that it would both increase response times and would put some residents outside the boundaries for reduced homeowners' fire insurance.

Next steps:

- the fire association will provide as much information about the construction details and costs for conversion to electronic format.
- the fire association, fire company, board representatives and Treasurer need to meet to develop the details of the bond. This meeting should be within the next week.
- the Board needs to adhere to the purchasing policy to avoid conflicts of interest

The Board will determine whether to move forward at the September 27th meeting.

Highway: VTRANS has a “Transportation Alternatives” grant program for the fall that may allow us to pursue planning for the West Street property use for salt and sand storage, and possibly for town garage construction as well. H. Childress will follow up to investigate.

The new road crew member, Brent Clark, began full-time work on Monday September 10, and the crew has already caught up on a lot of the problem areas on Coy Hill and Mountain Road. Buxton shoulder construction is continuing, with Agency of Natural Resources oversight for riverbank fill; we may have to go past the October 1 construction deadline, but ANR has informally okayed an extension.

The crew has been grading, clearing culverts, ditching... general road maintenance and winter prep.

The Norton Road project is moving well, but still ongoing problems with VTEL coordination. The deck has been poured on the second of the two culverts, so timing of the project still looks good.

There’s been a service recall on the backhoe, and Liftech should be onsite to do recall repair soon. Bill has received an invoice for the annual service, which is inexplicably larger than expected; Bill advises investigating that before payment is issued.

Coming work will include not only regular maintenance and winter preparation, but also tree trimming overhead on several roads, especially Buxton and Pleasant View.

Ashley Waite is the only contractor offered a quote for pouring the headwalls for the Spruce Knob Road culvert installation. P. Kenyon moved to award the contract to Ashley Waite for \$8700 for foundation concrete work at the Spruce Knob Road site; T. Redfield 2nd; [*all in favor, motion carried*]. Bill has also gotten quotes for resurfacing the Route 140 section from the bridge to the Poultney line: Pike, \$25,219, and Wilkes, \$22,922. The Board decided not to pursue that paving project this year, but to try to incorporate it into next year’s 140 paving project.

Winter sand will not be available from the Parker gravel pit this year in the quantities needed. Bill hopes to put up 2000 yards. Chet McClellan can do it at \$10.50 per yard delivered. We can get it for \$5.50 per yard not delivered from the Holcomb pit, but trucking fees would raise it to slightly higher than the delivered price. P. Kenyon moved to buy 1500 cubic yards of sand from Chet McClellan at \$10.50 per yard; H. Childress 2nd [*all in favor, motion carried*]. Delivery can begin by next week.

H. Childress moved to send the 7600 to Earle’s Truck Repair for needed repairs, at an estimated cost of \$8,180; P. Kenyon 2nd; [*all in favor, motion carried*]. The truck will go in for service next week.

Town Lands: the Building Committee met with Christine Graham of CPG Consulting, a professional fundraising consultant, to consider plans for fundraising for the town office/library project. The Building Committee decided that they would like to hire her to conduct two studies; a “listening tour” and a fundraising feasibility study. The two studies together are estimated to cost between \$17,000 and \$20,000. The committee requests that the Board approve that expenditure from the Town Facilities Reserve Fund. H. Childress moved to hire CPG Consulting to conduct a listening tour and fundraising feasibility study, at a cost not to exceed \$20,000; T. Redfield 2nd; [*all in favor, motion carried*].

Solid Waste: We should have the West Street site brush hogged before large waste day. Terry has been in contact with Hubbard for the dumpsters for large waste day.

Correspondence:

- Letter from Neighborworks asking the Town to nominate properties for them to renovate and offer to low income residents. P. Kenyon will follow up.
- Request from Stephen Craddock for tax abatement related to 668 South Street.
- VLCT Fall Planning and Zoning Forum. H. Childress will schedule a Board of Tax Abatement hearing to discuss 668 South Street.
- Middletown Springs Historical Society newsletter
- American Red Cross request for \$250 next year
- Ad for Comcast

Board Orders: H. Childress moved to approve the board orders as presented; T. Redfield 2nd; [*all in favor, motion carried*].

Fire Association Request: We returned to a discussion of the fire association’s request. The Board agreed that the town site is the preferred location for the firehouse, but the request has come in such short order that we’re not sure that we can perform our due diligence with regards to the construction project, the sand/salt shed, and the transfer station, all of which will be impacted by the proposed new firehouse. We discussed the possibility of a single large bond request to cover fifty years of facility neglect, incorporating the four major building needs of the Town.

H. Childress moved to enter executive session to discuss personnel issues; P. Kenyon 2nd; [*all in favor, motion carried*]. Executive session begun at 11:03 pm.

Executive session closed, with no action taken. Regular session re-entered at 11:36 pm.

Adjourn: H. Childress moved to adjourn; P. Kenyon 2nd; [*all in favor, motion carried*]. Meeting adjourned at 11:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Herb Childress, Selectboard Clerk