

Middletown Springs Selectboard • Approved Minutes Regular Meeting • May 13, 2021

BOARD PRESENT: via Zoom; Patty Kenyon, Heather Grier, Robin Chesnut-Tangerman. At the town office; Terry Redfield, Neil Russell, and Buddy (SB therapy dog).

TOWN OFFICERS PRESENT: via Zoom: Clare Heitkamp - Library Trustee, Herb Childress -Emergency Management Director, Sarah Grimm - Auditor, Jenny Talke Munyaik - Treasurer, Deb House - Delinquent Tax Collector. At the town office: Bill Reed - Road Commissioner at 7:50pm.

PUBLIC PRESENT: via Zoom: Peter & Aileen Stevenson, Art Castle - Fire Department. Kimberly Bushnell - Librarian, George Gonda - Fire Department. At the town office: no public present.

CALL TO ORDER: Terry called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 4/8/2021 & 4/22/2021 Regular Meeting.

Robin moved to approve the minutes of 4/8/2021 & 4/22/2021 regular meetings as presented, Terry 2nd. Motion initially carried with a vote of 3 to 2 but was later rescinded by Robin as discussion revealed that the minutes of 4/22/2021 had no opposition.

Robin moved to approve minutes of 4/8/2021 Regular Meeting as presented, Terry 2nd. Aye - Terry, Robin, Patty. Nay - Heather, Neil. Motion carried.

A discussion about the opposition to these minutes ensued. There was discussion about the detail in the minutes and the need for such detail, as well as the list of people the unapproved minutes were disseminated to. There were no requests to correct or amend language.

Robin moved to approve the minutes of 4/22/2021 Regular Meeting as presented. Heather 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE: Herb Childress - EMD - Herb reported that he has been in communication with the director of the Rutland Free Clinic as they are offering local vaccine clinics upon request. Scheduling of such a clinic takes is about 3 weeks out. Right now, he has no idea if there is any demand for our area but was informed that Pawlet is considering scheduling something in their town. He asked if the board is interested in pursuing this as a possibility.

The board asked whether we thought doing some local outreach might help us gauge interest. There was discussion on the normal methods of outreach and whether or not those methods would reach the intended audience. Herb will stay plugged in with what's going to happen in Pawlet and any other information about the success of more locally targeted opportunities and update us again in two weeks.

In other news, the Rutland Holiday Inn clinics are going to start taking walk-ins next week. He plans to post that information on Front Porch Forum.

He also reminded the board that VLCT is hosting a webinar next Tuesday on the criteria and guidelines for municipalities for using ARA money. Herb will send the info out in case people want to sign up. Patty has signed up already.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & GUESTS: Kristal Hier (MSPL) - Kimberly Bushnell & Clare Heitkamp were here to represent the Library. Kristal sent a letter to Terry & Patty earlier in the week (attached as an addendum to the minutes). Kimberly explained the need for the library to get the building up to ADA standards. That they had worked closely with the former Building Committee hoping to move to a new building and that when that didn't happen, they were not added to the overall town facilities plans. They are requesting to be added to the planning process and to be given their own reserve fund with dollars added in each year. They also asked if the board would be willing to fund an engineering study which would determine the scope of any possible additions to their building on their current lot.

Board members asked some questions and made some suggestions regarding alternative ways to determine what could be done and the cost to do it - specifically if they could go to a contractor and ask them to review the building and come up with a design. Kimberly will take those suggestions and questions back to the library board and the Selectboard will review the request in more detail and revisit it at our next meeting.

Terry reported that we had an email from Cheryl Mahoney asking if the town was willing to continue supporting swimming lessons for town residents at Crystal Beach in Castleton and whether or not we would continue to allow out of town kids and friends to sign up and pay us directly for their lessons.

There was discussion about the procedures for accounting for the out of towners and the administrative work that adds to our plate. The board fully supports paying for Middletown kids to have swimming lessons, but because the out of towners and friends can sign up with Castleton directly, that we should not take on the extra work for that group.

Neil moved to continue to pay for swimming lessons at Crystal Beach in Castleton for Middletown Springs residents only, Robin 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Patty will connect with Cheryl and share the decision.

George Gonda read a statement on behalf of the Fire Department (attached as an addendum to the minutes). The statement included an update on the Fire Associations progress on the comparative building estimate and their concerns about being able to move forward once they have their ducks in a row. The concerns include getting funding from grants without having ownership of the land surrounding the building, the status of the town office project and whether or not that should be put on the back burner and the town garage project be moved up, as well as concerns about the town office project

being viable and the potential to sell the corner property for a business venture.

George did not expect the board to answer any of these questions tonight but wanted their statement as part of the current discussion on facilities as we move ahead.

Board members stated that the town office as designed is in the hands of an estimator right now and we expect to hear back with a price as early as early next week.

Additionally, board members questioned the reasons for the immediate need for a new fire facility, pointing out that the current lease agreement with the town states that repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of the fire association and it's clear that has not been an ongoing priority, resulting in the current state of disrepair. Also stating that there have been suggestions made for stop gap fixes that could be done now to alleviate some of the immediate need for action. The current prohibitive cost of building materials and construction was also touched on.

The board will continue to review the concerns and will be better prepared to answer questions at a future meeting.

TOWN OFFICERS:

Town Clerk / Treasurer / Delinquent Tax Collector / Auditors / Listers - Jenny reported that delinquent taxes have continued to come in and thanked Deb for pushing this forward for the town.

Deb updated us on her progress and plans for next steps to address those people not yet in an installment agreement.

Heather thanked the town clerk for the work she's done so far in the town office. Patty thanked Heather for her help in making the progress she's made possible.

Fraud Prevention Policy – Update & Discussion - Patty reported the policy is ready to be reviewed and adopted at the next meeting. The auditors were fine with the minor changes suggested after the last meeting.

Social Service Agency request policy revision - Patty reported that this policy needs some more consideration and work to get to meld in the new language and square it with the language and intent of the current policy.

Language revisions to Personnel Policy – Comp Time - Robin suggested a change in language so that it offers some more flexibility. Robin will incorporate the new language into the current policy and email it to the board for consideration at the next meeting.

TOWN HIGHWAY:

Road Commissioner Report –

- Bill and Brent are scheduled to meet with Stephanie Bourque on Monday at 1pm regarding grants and aid and the proposed project.
- Bill is out of culverts and has ordered new but doesn't expect them for a

- month.
- Has a lot of ditching to do, but needs it to dry out a bit before that can happen.

Other Town Highway - nothing else.

TOWN LANDS - Terry received an email from Geoff Metcalfe regarding the building estimate. Geoff expects to get something back from the estimator late this week or early next week.

SOLID WASTE: Big Dump Day recap & results - we took in \$865 in receipts on the day. Wasn't as busy as in the past, but the \$10 per vehicle helped.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Duquette Forestry Overweight Permit – w/ ck & COI -
- UNFI Overweight permit – w/ ck – no COI – Patty called and left them a message on 5/13/2021
- VLCT BC/BS Dental rates
- BC/BS Vermont Blue RX Info
- VLCT PACIF Loss Control Recap

Patty moved to approve the overweight permit for Duquette Forestry, Robin 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Robin received an email today from the property owners on Schoolhouse Road giving the board permission to post no trespassing signs on their property until further notice.

BOARD ORDERS:

Terry moved to approve board orders as presented, Neil 2nd. All in favor, motion carried. (Electronic approval per COVID 19 protocols since there were only two members at the office.) Board members will stop in and sign if they have a minute.

LEGAL: None.

OTHER BUSINESS: ATV issues or concerns short discussion – tabled, no discussion.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

Next Regular Meeting - Thursday, May 27 at 7pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (if necessary) – Discuss Personnel Issues

Terry moved to enter Executive Session at 9:45pm to discuss personnel with board members only, Patty 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Terry moved to exit Executive Session at 10:04pm, Neil 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

No action taken.

ADJOURN: Terry moved to adjourn at 10:05, Heather 2nd. Meeting adjourned at 10:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Patty Kenyon, Clerk

Meeting addendums:

Library Board Letter of 5/11/2021

To: Terry Redfield, Board Chair May 11, 2021
Middletown Springs Selectboard

Dear Terry,

The Library board continues to explore options for how to resolve our space issues and meet ADA accessibility requirements. Being removed from the Town Building project did not remove the very real issues we face. The next step is to clarify whether it is even possible to do those things at this location. There are several fundamental questions which need to be answered:

1. In the space available between the rear of the building and the septic set-back, what are options for renovation/addition which would allow for ADA access without negatively impacting the historic nature of the building and without reducing (or ideally, while increasing) the amount of usable space?
2. If the septic needs to be moved or if it were to fail in the future, where and how could a new septic be installed?

We recently had an informative conversation with Frank Parent of Long Trail Engineering. He can help us assess much of this in concert with an architectural design study. A reasonable cost estimate for the combined services is \$16,000-\$22,000 (depending on whether there will be need for a Transient Non-Community water system design & permit, because of our proximity to the school).

The Library was part of the Town Building Project for more than five years during which time the taxpayers passed numerous budgets, or independently warned articles, which set aside to be used to address the spaces and access issues facing the town office AND the library building.

We ask that the Selectboard allocate the funds needed for these design studies. We cannot move forward without knowing whether it is possible to continue in this location. There have been cursory studies which suggest that it might be possible, but it will only be known with more specific and technical studies.

To this end, we also respectfully request that a reserve municipal facility fund be set up for the library, as has been done for every other aspect of the town's facility needs: Town Office/Corner Property, Highway Building, Transfer Station, and Firehouse.

Thank you for your consideration. Kimberly Bushnell, Library Director and a member of the Board of Trustees will attend the next Selectboard meeting in order to provide further explanation or to answer any questions.

Kristal Haynes Hier, Board Chair
Middletown Springs Public Library

Fire Association Statement

Fire Association President Input to M.S. Select Board at regular meeting, 5/13/21.

Public Comment:

Thank you for your time this evening. I wish to give you an update on M.S. Fire Association actions and put forth some areas of concern concerning the Facilities Committee's progress.

1. Update: We have proceeded in setting up a study of putting a replacement structure on the current leased site, for a side by side comparison (as requested by the Select Board) of current building upgrade versus replacement. The first draft of the agreement with Centerline Associates was sent back by the Fire Association Trustees for revision and the modified agreement has just been received and is under review. Once this is completed the Fire Association Trustees will update the Select Board.
2. Concerns:
 - a. **Funds** for the upgrade or replacement of the Fire Station can only be applied for by the owners of the property. The Select Board has stated they are not interested in pursuing these funding options and have left this to the Association to pursue. This would require turning over ownership of the property and building to the Association.
 - i. Would the Select Board consider acting on this request if satisfied that the completed studies indicated upgrading or replacement is required?
 - ii. Would the Select Board consider turning over additional property if the Maintenance and Transfer Stations are moved?
 - b. **Town Hall status:** This project has been prioritized over all other Facility needs for the town.
 - i. Would the Select Board consider diverting funds to complete the Town Garage project on West Street?
 - ii. Would the Select Board consider diverting funds for the other projects needed by Middletown Springs?
 - iii. Would the Select Board consider selling the corner property to a business that would be tax paying and attract visitors to Middletown Springs?