

Middletown Springs Selectboard • Approved Minutes Special Meeting • July 29, 2021

BOARD PRESENT: At the town office: Terry Redfield, Patty Kenyon, Robin Chesnut-Tangerman. Via Zoom: Neil Russell

TOWN OFFICERS PRESENT: At the town office: Jenny Talke Munyak - Treasurer, Hilary Solomon - Planning Commission. via Zoom: Sarah Grimm - Auditor

PUBLIC PRESENT: At the town office: Ron Masleh. via Zoom: Peter & Aileen Stevenson, Art Castle - MSVFD

CALL TO ORDER: Terry called the meeting to order at 7:07pm.

TAX RATE CALCULATIONS/DELIBERATIONS: Jenny explained the tax rate calculations for FY21/22 and answered questions about the calculations and the breakdown. Tax rate is .440 for General Town Government and .356 for Highway expenditures. Total tax rate is .796 which is down a bit from last year at .807 (2020/2021)

Education rates are - Homestead residential 1.5822 (LY 1.6326) Non-residential 1.6324 (LY 1.6355) so in all categories we are slightly lower than last year.

Patty moved to accept the tax rate for 2021/2022 as presented; .440 for General Town and .356 for Highway, Neil 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Jenny presented the second item on her agenda - the Selectboard needs to decide whether or not to impose a late filing penalty on Homestead declarations. There was some discussion about the ramifications, the continued upheaval of the pandemic and so on. Neil recused himself from the discussion and vote because he forgot to file his declaration on time. The rest of the board was sympathetic to the stress of the pandemic, but also saw a value in imposing a penalty as an added incentive to remind folks that filing on time is important. Late filings add a lot of extra work for the listers and the treasurer.

Robin moved to set the penalty for late filing of the Homestead declaration, that was due on 5/17/2021, at 1.5%, Terry 2nd. Ayes - Terry, Patty, Robin. Abstain - Neil. Motion carried.

TOWN LANDS:

A. Fire Department status: Nothing new from the Fire Department

B. New Town Office: Relevant Next Steps - There was discussion on the best first steps to get the word out about the current proposed building design and how to set a schedule that we can stick to. Suggestions included sending out a survey with the basic building information, skipping the survey piece and just sending out information with dates for meetings and proposed vote.

Most folks felt that a survey wasn't going to be helpful at this point. The current design is based off of information gleaned from the survey following the failed vote in November 2019, so the general consensus was to opt for information sent via mail to townspeople.

Discussion then turned to the content of the mailer. Those present agreed that it should include the following information.

- Where we are and how we got here.
- Current Plans & Estimate
- When we will vote on the \$
- Timeline to begin building and to build
- Layout a financial picture - what we have in the bank, what the anticipated design and engineering will cost, how much we anticipate borrowing, the impact of borrowing on taxes.

Ron offered to connect with his neighbor (Geoff McGuire) for help in putting the narrative together. Robin offered to review and consult on the results. Progress will be shared with the board and building group as it happens so that we are all on the same page as work is done.

One of the extras we will need for the site is a stormwater design. To that end Hilary as the director of the Poultney Mettewee Natural Resources Conservation District (PMNRCD) is working with a specialist under a grant and can obtain a consultation for us. This will get us a starting point and some basic information to move us forward. She will connect with her contractor and set up a time for him to visit the site. She will let us know when that is scheduled so interested parties can be there.

Develop Informational Materials - As to the plan above we will review at the next regular Selectboard meeting. We hope to be able to set a plan in place for the mailer at that point. We will also schedule another dedicated facilities meeting to nail down the next details.

Schedule Informational Meetings - To be determined.

Next Regular Board Meeting - Thursday, August 12
Next Special Facilities Meeting - tentative August 19

OTHER LAWFUL BUSINESS: none

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (Personnel Issues if necessary)

ADJOURN: Terry moved to adjourn at 8:47pm, 2nd Patty. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted
Patty Kenyon, Clerk