

Middletown Springs Selectboard • Approved Minutes Regular Meeting • October 28, 2021

BOARD PRESENT: At the town office: Terry Redfield, Patty Kenyon, Robin Chesnut-Tangerman. Via Zoom: Heather Grier, Neil Russell at 7:20pm.

TOWN OFFICERS PRESENT: At the town office: Herb Childress – EMD at 7:10pm. Via Zoom: Sarah Grimm – Auditor, Jenny Talke Munyak – Treasurer, Bill Reed – Road Foreman/Commissioner at 7:55pm.

PUBLIC PRESENT: At the town office: Ron Masleh, Joe Gunter. via Zoom: Peter & Aileen Stevenson, Art Castle at 7:20pm, Kathye Reed at 7:35pm.

CALL TO ORDER: Terry called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 14, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Robin moved to approve the minutes of 10/14/2021 Regular Meeting as presented, Heather 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Emergency Management Update moved further down the agenda to await EMD's arrival.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & GUESTS: Joe Gunter came to ask us about our planning process for ARPA funds and to share the information he has been provided as town manager in Fair Haven. There was a brief discussion about our current thinking as possible uses for these funds. On the list are the proposed new town office building, land record digitization, a new highway garage. To date, we haven't had more than cursory discussions. The board was very appreciative that Joe came to share his information with us and will continue to share information he thinks we might benefit from in the future.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE: Herb Childress – Terry asked Herb for any advice regarding holding the informational meeting on November 8 in the small dining room space. Herb advised us of the current guidelines and reminded us that social distancing is still a thing, so we will need to be cognizant of room capacity. Currently the standard for social distancing at schools is 3 feet, we should be able to have enough room using that standard. The meeting will also be open to the public via Zoom to open the discussion up to more people. There was some talk about masks and set up that are further disseminated under the Town Officers bullet item.

TOWN OFFICERS: Town Clerk / Treasurer / Delinquent Tax Collector / Auditors / Listers – Patty asked the board to weigh in on our protocols for masks at the Informational Meeting and during Voting. The board agreed that we should continue requiring masks for both these events. Patty will create a FPF post to that effect also noting that Zoom will also be an option, so that those who don't want to come in person can still take part.

Terry asked board members to arrive at the Historical Society dining room by 6pm to

help set up the room for the meeting which starts at 6:30pm.

Patty also reported that the BCA Tax appeal being taken to the next level. Appellant choosing Superior Court option.

Terry had a question for Jenny regarding a small correction on a payroll sheet for Richie Miller. His rate of pay for road work needs to be adjusted to reflect our standard pay for casual road workers. Jenny will make the correction and cut a check to Richie for the underpayment.

Sarah wanted the board to weigh in on the Auditors wish to attend an auditors training webinar through VLCT/PACIF - the cost is \$48. The board encourages attendance at education events and thanks the auditors for taking the time to attend this training session.

Special Election Preparations- Talked about above under Town Clerk.

Social Service Agency request policy revision; Language revisions to Personnel Policy re: Comp Time – Tabled until Additional Analysis

TOWN HIGHWAY: Road Commissioner Report – Dudley Hill Grant Project, etc.

Written report from Bill

- Dudley Road grant project near complete (GIAFY21)
- We need to ready equipment for winter maintenance
- Some gravel has been added to class III roads
- Some grading and ditching have been done
- Leaf blowing ditches and culverts to prevent clogging
- Will complete graveling and grading of Dudley project 10/29 – 11/5
- Reimbursement forms will be submitted week of 10/29
- Contract with Cargill for salt need to be signed – in correspondence folder
- Grant Reimbursement needs to be signed or signature authorization
 - Board agrees that Patty can sign the grant paperwork for Dudley Rd
- Next mediation session – board will discuss later in Executive Session
- Bill would like the board to set a pay rate for part time CDL help. After a detailed discussion,
 - Terry moved to adopt the following pay rates for highway casual labor; for Highway Casual Labor base pay \$14 per hour, for Highway Casual Labor with a CDL base pay \$15 per hour, for experienced Labor with CDL rate based on experience. Heather 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Other Town Highway - Winter Salt Status – New contract from Cargill is in the correspondence folder

TOWN LANDS - New Building Informational Mailer & Informational Site Visit Recap – Terry thanked Patty and Robin for getting the layout started last Saturday – when he arrived most of it had been completed. In general, the board thought the layout

was really helpful for the folks who came. We feel we had a good turn out during the day and overall the project and information was pretty well received.

There was some discussion about one objection heard – that being – why do we need more space when we are digitizing our records?

Discussion centered on the basic misunderstanding that digitizing records eliminates the need for paper, which in fact it does not. Digitizing records is an extra safeguard for being able to reproduce lost, stolen or damaged records, it does not take the place of the actual records. Beyond that digitization can provide efficiencies for searchers if records are available online but not all digitized land records are available online.

Also, there are many other permanent records stored in the Town Office that are not part of the process of Land Record digitization. All these records, dating back to the beginning of the town, need to be preserved and available – they include births, deaths, and marriages, grand lists, board meetings and town proceedings records, property transfer tax forms, election records, school records, survey maps, etc.

To repeat, digitization does not eliminate the need to keep paper records, it is an additional safeguard against unforeseen disasters. Currently digitization is focused only on Land Record books and not the myriad of other items trusted for safekeeping in a town office.

Other Building Projects: MSVFD, MTS Library, 577 West Street site – Herb shared with the board the work he's done so far exploring a Transportation Alternatives grant opportunity at the request of the Road Commissioner. This program has money set aside to fund salt sheds as a way to improve water quality. Herb will need the board's permission to apply for the grant. There was a lengthy discussion about the previous study at the West Street property, where the salt shed would be located, what the town's obligations would be, whether we could wait for next year to apply, and so on. Generally, the board is interested, but we need to have a few more details in order to be completely comfortable signing on.

Herb agreed to do a bit more work, fleshing out any more details that he can and to come back to us in two weeks with a more complete picture so that we can make the final determination as to whether we are ready to make this commitment at this time or not. The board thanked Herb and Bill for getting this to a point that we could move it forward with an opportunity for 80% funding.

Terry reported that he and Neil went to the Fire Department meeting on Tuesday night. They were there to touch base about the roof repair which was finished last week. In addition, the Selectboard and Fire Association need to get back to a more amicable place and work toward better communication for the benefit of the town.

SOLID WASTE: Patty reported that we received \$112.20 for electronics recycling today. Terry reported that he completed the quarterly report for ANR today.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Email from K Hier Library Board appointed Alida Tarbell to fill Clare

- Heitkamp's seat - Term can be appointed until Town Meeting 2022.
- Robin moved to appoint Alida Tarbell to serve on the Library board filling Clare Heitkamp's term through town meeting 2022. Heather 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.
 - VLCT/PACIF quarterly loss report for board review
 - Cargill Salt Contract - \$72.31 per ton – estimated 275 ton – needs approval –
 - Robin moved to approve salt contract with Cargill for \$72.31 per ton, Heather 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.
 - VLCT VT Municipal Compensation Benefits Report 2021 – On binder shelf in the town clerk's office.
 - Letter from Efficiency VT announcing replacement lightbulb program
 - VT Dept of Health Letter to Board Chair – re survey

BOARD ORDERS:

Terry moved to approve board orders as presented, Robin 2nd. Ayes – Robin, Patty, Terry. Abstain - Heather, Neil. Motion carried.

LEGAL: None

OTHER LAWFUL BUSINESS: Robin – talked about redistricting proposal that came out last week. He doesn't think we need to do anything about the suggestions they made. We stay basically the same – gaining an area in Tinmouth and losing an area in Wells. Don't see any negative affects to the community. But wanted to at least touch on the changes so that everyone was aware. There are many towns that are not happy with their new districts so we will see how that all shakes out down the road.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

Special Election Informational Meeting – Monday, November 8 at 6:30pm
Regular Meeting - Thursday, November 11 at 7pm

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (if necessary)

Terry moved to enter Executive Session for personnel issues at 9:45pm, Patty 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Terry moved to exit Executive Session at 10:03pm, Robin 2nd. All in favor Motion carried.

No action taken.

ADJOURN: Terry moved to adjourn at 10:04pm, Heather 2nd. Meeting adjourned at 10:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Patty Kenyon, Clerk

