

**Middletown Springs Selectboard
Approved Minutes
Regular Meeting • July 27, 2023
Start time 7pm**

BOARD PRESENT: At the town office: Patty Kenyon, Herb Childress, Terry Redfield, Peter Stevenson. Via Zoom: none.

TOWN OFFICERS PRESENT: At the town office: Jenny Talke Munyak – Treasurer, Sally Achey – Lister, Bill Reed - Road Commissioner/Road Foreman at 7:15pm. Via Zoom: Sarah Grimm – Auditor, Kristal Hier – Library, Kimberly Bushnell – Librarian at 7:50pm.

PUBLIC PRESENT: At the town office: None Via Zoom: None.

CALL TO ORDER: Herb called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a) Regular Meeting July 13, 2023

Peter moved to approve the minutes of July 13, 2023, regular meeting as presented, Terry 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS / GUESTS: None.

TOWN OFFICERS REPORTS – Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Task Force | Town Clerk | Treasurer | DTC | Auditors | Listers | EMD | Library | Trustees of Funds | Planning Commission | Other

Treasurer – Review and accept Tax Rate proposal for FY 23/24.

Jenny reviewed the financials for FY22/23. At the end of the year, we had a Highway surplus of \$57,104 and a General Government surplus of \$75,021. By state law the Highway surplus goes into the Highway reserve account and in keeping with the Town Meeting vote, the General Government surplus first adds \$5,000 to the Tax Stabilization fund and the balance of \$70,021 goes into the Municipal Facilities reserve account. This is the largest General Government surplus we've had since Jenny became treasurer. Generally, we had much greater income than anticipated coupled with lower than budgeted expenditures. Board members would have liked to apply some of this General surplus to lower this year's taxes but were not able to. This experience will certainly inform how we approach the coming year's budgeting and financial planning for future years, but it's important to note that a good amount of the increased income came from collection of delinquent taxes, which was an unusually large amount this past year.

Next Jenny reviewed the proposed FY23/24 Tax Rate. According to her calculations the General Government rate should be set at .478 and the Highway rate should be set at .431, a total of .909 for town taxes. Last year's rates were General Government .460 and Highway .426. A small increase over FY22/23.

Terry moved to set the General Government tax rate at .4780 and the Highway tax rate at .431 for a total of .909, Herb 2nd. All in favor, motion carried. The board signed the official copy for the treasurer.

Discuss and approve penalty for late tax declarations. – Sally explained the penalty mechanism. The penalty applies to anyone who files a homestead declaration after the October 15, 2023 deadline. Both the Listers & Treasurer recommend imposing the penalty. There are two penalty options, 3% or 8%. They are recommending the lower amount.

Patty moved to impose a 3% penalty for late filing of 2023 Homestead Declarations as allowed by law, Terry 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Jenny will be working on getting tax bills out the door before the August 15 deadline.

Sally also reported that there are no outstanding grievances from the listers and there were no appeals of grievances already processed.

Library – Kristal gave the board a recap of what's happened over the last month with the Library's expansion projects. Due to time constraints of the architects at NBF architect – for possibilities at the current library site. Ended working relationship with NBF Architects, the Library has ended their relationship with that firm and moved on to a new relationship with Keefe & Wesner Architects (Geoff Metcalfe). Geoff has expressed that he is able to meet the tight time schedule need to undertake preliminary planning and drawings that are needed for potential capital improvements grant opportunity through the Department of Libraries

The library feels that pursuing the Catholic church building as a new library site is the option that fits best with the library board's long term planning goals. They continue to work on putting all the details in place to begin negotiations with the Catholic Diocese to determine if purchase of this building is feasible. The library board requests a joint meeting with the Selectboard to discuss the options available and possible paths forward in greater detail.

The Selectboard agrees that a joint meeting is warranted and will take on the task of setting up and running that meeting. Herb will send out a doodle poll to find a time that works best and ensure the greatest attendance from all parties.

Kristal asked if the Selectboard had any stipulations beyond facilities work to access the Library facilities reserve funds. There are no policies or additional procedures beyond the norm - Library board approves the expenditure on a board order signaling the expenditure is related to facilities work.

Town Clerk – nothing at this time.

EMD – There were no FEMA requests from Middletown Springs through 211 in the recent flooding event which is as expected.

TOWN HIGHWAYS

- **Road Commissioner Report** – Bill reported

- Working on the south side of Coy Hill Road trying to fix where it turns to mud every year. Hoping to finish tomorrow.
- Several open-ended projects that need to be cleaned up – Orchard Road, North Road, Norton Road.
- Dubois & King updated proposal for the preliminary work on Daisy Hollow Road. There are two phases of work outlined in the proposal. Phase 1 includes a topographic survey, initial deed research, field reconnaissance for property corners and a Base map – cost is \$9,500. Phase 2 includes in depth deed research, field reconnaissance for property corners, a boundary plat, and setting ROW corners.

Bill would like to do Phase 1 at minimum. The board would like to do both phases to get the complete package so that we have all the information we need to ensure the project starts off with all the background work done and accurate.

- Peter moved to approve and sign the Dubois and King contract as presented in the amount of \$19,000. Terry 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.
- Terry, Herb and Bill will meet on Monday, July 31 to discuss Road crew future planning.
- Bill got some pricing on trimming bridges and guardrails for the year. Jordan Martell gave him a price of \$1200 others were either not available or priced too high.
 - Herb moved to contract with Jordan Martell and Martell Services for Route 140 trimming at a cost of \$1200, Peter 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.
- Bill talked about the next mowing session in August he would like to make sure people get plenty of notice to mark their flower beds & plants, so crew doesn't mow them. And also get a notice to VTel to mark their pedestals so they don't get hit with the mowing machine, there are a lot that are grown in. Also on Buxton Avenue, old out of use fire hydrants should be removed.
- Monday Bill will pre-mark the grant project on Fitzgerald Road for Dig Safe– that project will start the following week. Should take about a week and half.

- **Other Summer Work** –

- Dudley Road project road rebuild near Dudley's.
- Intersection of Coy Hill & Mountain Road needs some attention – there is some tree work that needs doing, that could happen after the other projects.
- Bill is working to connect with Tom Fuller to give a price on keying in the drainage at the 4 corners, will also ask him to give us a patch down on Rt 140 near the bridge.

- **Possible modification of Road Policy** – tabled again.

- **Other Highway Information and Concerns** – nothing tonight.

TOWN LANDS

Town Office Construction Update: Naylor & Breen Req # 7 – \$141,456.93

Patty moved to approve Naylor & Breen's Requisition 7 in the amount of \$141,456.93 to be sent to National Bank of Middlebury for payment from our building loan, Herb 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Patty will email the invoice to the bank.

Peter reported that the foam insulation is being put in tomorrow and Monday - No entry will be allowed in the building until Tuesday. The painters have put the first coat of paint on the walls. Roof & siding still in progress, both should be done next week. Fabian will be in to set the holding tank in the next week or so.

The updated expected completion date for the building is somewhere between the 1st and the 15th of September. We are a bit ahead of the initially anticipated schedule.

Town Office physical move update: Patty presented the estimates for vault outfitting from Dupont Systems and Easi-File. Dupont Systems designs and builds shelving units for land and vital records books. They've given us an estimate of \$8,225 for two different sets of shelving units which will house our current books with room for expansion. EasiFile offers easily accessible and usable map storage. For one cabinet with all the accessories we need it's \$2,647.57.

Herb moved to authorize Patty to order the shelving and map file storage systems for the new vault as estimated – EasiFile \$2,647.57 and Dupont Systems \$ 8,225.00, Peter 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Peter brought up that the board needs to make a decision on whether or not to pave the parking lot using the money we will have left in the contract contingency. The price for paving by Springfield Paving will be \$22,254.

Terry moved to authorize paving of the new town office parking using \$22,254 of the Naylor & Breen contract contingency. Herb 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

The board, Jenny and Patty reviewed the two options for internet & phone systems for the new office – Comcast and VTel. Jenny feels strongly that we should stay with VTel, If we go with Comcast we will have to also undertake deciding on and switching to a new email provider. Both offer similar systems at similar price points. VTel is a locally owned company and we do not have to add more disruption at this time.

Patty is on the fence, VTel has not been the easiest to work with in this process and she's been advised by a number of IT professionals that the town should move away from VTel email hosting for management and cybersecurity reasons. But agrees that adding that switch while we are moving is not the right time.

Herb moved to engage with VTel for internet and phone services at the new town office, Peter 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Other Town Lands and Facilities: Nothing.

Update on DOT grant support: Herb gave an update on the DOT grant he's been exploring for facilities planning. He is inquiring now whether or not our request for broad facilities planning services is eligible. Beyond that this looks to shape up to be a very competitive grant. Herb will put together a grant nonetheless IF we are eligible.

SOLID WASTE: Nothing tonight.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Thank you letters for Appropriations
 - VT Assoc for the Blind
 - American Red Cross
 - Vermont Family Network

FINANCIAL APPROVALS

a) Board Orders

Terry moved to approve board orders as presented, Peter 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

LEGAL: Further conversation about credit card use/policy – Tabled

OTHER BUSINESS: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION (If necessary): None

ADJOURN: Herb moved to adjourn at 10:08pm, Patty 2nd. The meeting adjourned at 10:08pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Patty Kenyon, Clerk

Next Regular Meeting – 7PM Thursday, August 10, 2023