

**Middletown Springs Selectboard
Approved Minutes
Regular Meeting • January 11, 2024
Start time 6pm**

BOARD PRESENT: At the town office: Patty Kenyon, Herb Childress, Peter Stevenson, Terry Redfield at 6:52pm. Via Zoom: Robin Chesnut-Tangerman.

TOWN OFFICERS PRESENT: At the town office: Jenny Talke Munyak – Treasurer, Bill Reed – Road Commissioner/Road Foreman. Via Zoom: Sarah Grimm – Auditor, Kristal Hier – Library Board

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

CALL TO ORDER: Herb called the meeting to order at 6:05pm (Special Budget Meeting)

BUDGET:

Revised Library Request: Kristal confirmed the new library budget number proposed at the last meeting. The new number is \$31,950. Folding in the numbers for lawn care and snow plowing.

Review all other line items - The board reviewed the budget overall confirming all numbers appear to be as intended and reviewing the calculations to determine the amounts to be raised by taxes.

Set Ballot Articles, including total and taxpayer requests for General and Highway budgets

The board reviewed the new law regarding Highway Budget surplus fund and after discussion determined that adding an article to the town warning would continue to ensure that any highway surplus funds should be carried over to be used for highway expenditures.

Additionally, the board reviewed the other proposed new articles. One to establish a Memorial Day Parade Reserve fund to enable the treasurer to move the current funds allocated for that event and currently being held in the general pass-thru account into its own dedicated account.

Another, as an advisory article only, to seek the approval from townspeople to include all requested appropriations in the general budget going forward if the request has not changed since being previously approved in an article at town meeting. The intent is to significantly reduce the number of ballot articles voted at town meeting, thereby saving time and money on administration, supplies, postage, and tabulator programming fees. Any new or existing organization request will be brought before the voters as a separate article in the future. As an advisory article the board hopes to get a sense from the voters if having the ability to vote on each of the requests separately is important to them.

Lastly, the board reviewed the article authorizing the selectboard to allocate a general fund surplus to the Municipal Facilities Reserve fund. Given the significant surplus the town had at

the end of FY2023, the board thought it prudent to set a limit on this allocation and use the remainder to reduce taxes. The cap was set at \$50,000. Language for that article was adjusted to reflect that change.

Herb moved to set a special meeting for January 18, 2024 at 7pm to review any petitioned articles that may come in and approve the final warning, Peter 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

Adjourn: Herb moved to adjourn the budget meeting at 7:12pm, Peter 2nd. Budget meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm.

REGULAR MEETING SESSION

BOARD PRESENT: At the town office: Patty Kenyon, Terry Redfield, Herb Childress, Peter Stevenson. Via Zoom: Robin Chesnut-Tangerman.

TOWN OFFICERS PRESENT: At the town office: Bill Reed - Road Commissioner/Road Foreman, Jenny Talke Munyak - Treasurer. Via Zoom: Sarah Grimm – Auditor, Kristal Hier-Library Board.

PUBLIC PRESENT: At the town office: Jeremy Gildrien from RRPC. Via Zoom: None

Regular Meeting Call to Order: Herb called the meeting to order at 7:13pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a) Regular Meeting December 28, 2023, Special Budget Meeting January 3, 2024

Peter moved to approve the minutes of December 28, 2023 regular meeting and January 3, 2024 special meeting as presented, Terry 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

TOWN OFFICERS REPORTS –Treasurer | DTC | Town Clerk | Listers | EMD | Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Task Force| Auditors | Library (see also Town Lands) | Planning Commission – Town Energy Plan | Trustees of Funds | Health Office | Other

Planning Commission - Jeremy from RRPC came in to talk about the proposal from RRPC to help the Planning Commission complete an enhanced energy plan for inclusion in the town's updated town plan. Jeremy reviewed the benefits for the town in having an Enhanced Energy Plan as opposed to a generic energy section in the town plan. Having the document allows the town more say and control over any potential large scale energy project proposed in the future. The cost to create this plan would be completely covered by the MERP grant the town received to use on energy resiliency earlier in the year.

There was an in-depth discussion about this type of plan with lots of questions asked and answered. Our new Town Plan needs to be completed in 2025, so the timing to take on this project is right.

Robin moved to accept the proposal from RRPC in the amount of \$4000 to develop an Enhanced Energy Plan for inclusion in the 2025 Town Plan update, Terry 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

There was a brief discussion with Jeremy about current incentives available for towns as part of the Inflation Reduction Act that the town could look into regarding a possible solar installation. Towns can be eligible to get either 30% or 40% rebates on a completed system.

Treasurer – Jenny advised the board that she has included an order to transfer funds from six reserve accounts out of the general fund umbrella into a dedicated reserve bank account. In general, having restricted funds in a dedicated account is preferred practice and makes record keeping easier and clearer.

Town Clerk – Nothing of importance to report.

TOWN HIGHWAYS

Road Commissioner Report – Bill reported:

- Dedicated Highway meeting was productive in Bill's view. Would like to see more meetings like this in the future.
- New sand is working well, we're using a lot less of it in general. Last storm turned to ice and still used less, aggregate is staying on the road.
- Email from Denise Rhodes – had two flat tires, one in the past, one recently. Intersection of Norton and 140. There was some driveway material that had been pushed out into the roads, Richie went and pushed that material off the road. Bill reached out and talked to the resident and they agreed that it was probably the driveway material. Don't expect to get an official service request from the resident.
- Bill would like to see a notice put out that people pay attention to putting material onto the highways, plowing snow onto the highways, etc.
- Were able to catch up on some work that needed doing.

Advertising for Highway positions – Nothing.

Discussion of Road Commissioner description for Town Meeting election – Herb began a discussion about how to set up procedures/protocols for Road Commissioner moving forward as Bill is not running and we will have a new person in that position after Town Meeting. Herb has done some research on how other towns manage these duties. Would the board like Herb to put together a position description for the board to review at the next meeting? Yes. Herb will bring a document to the next meeting for review and comment.

Other Highway Information and Concerns – Nothing.

TOWN LANDS – Recap of Town Office walkthrough Monday 1/8 – The building walkthrough went well last week and seemed like a valuable use of time. After the meeting Herb put together a two-page Building Operations sheet that was shared with current building users and will be shared with all future keyholders and regular users.

Peter reported that Frank Parent is working on some of the last paperwork to get us to final completion. The HRV system is now hooked up, they need to come replace one non-working part and then they will be done. After that the heating system can be balanced. Balancing of the heating system is scheduled for Monday, January 22 at 7am – Peter will oversee that work.

Herb revisited the building recap proposal for the town report. The consensus was that Patty's financial recap should stand on its own as written. Herb will work on the narrative piece to recap the process based on suggestions from board members.

Peter requested the board send formal thank you letters to Naylor & Breen and Geoff Metcalfe at Keefe & Wesner Architects.

Update on Library planning: Nothing tonight.

Other Town Lands and Facilities: Bill reminded the board about setting up a meeting with Dot Reed LLC – Grieg Costantino regarding the rented town lot.

SOLID WASTE: Terry thanked Peter who worked most of the day last Saturday helping, which was greatly appreciated. It was a busy day after the two holidays. Terry was able to show him how things work so Peter can fill in if needed as well. Terry also thanked Bill for shoveling out the transfer station prior to opening after the storm, it was much appreciated.

As an aside, a general recommendation for the future at the transfer station, workers should wear gloves while working. There are sometimes hazardous materials lurking inside bags or boxes that need to be sorted through.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Appropriation Requests
 - RC Humane Society - \$125 – same as last year
 - VT Center for Independent Living - \$100 – same as last year
- VT Dept of Taxes – 2023 Equalization Study Results – CLA 82.88% COD 17.21%
Trigger for a mandatory reappraisal is a CLA below 85% or above 115% - looks like we will need to do a reappraisal barring an appeal. Will need to consult with the listers.
- Certificate of Highway Mileage for 2024 – Needs to be signed and sent back to state. No changes to road mileage. –

Herb moved to approve the Certificate of Highway Mileage for year ending February 2024, Terry 2nd. All in favor, motion carried.

FINANCIAL APPROVALS

a) Board Orders

Terry moved to approved board orders as presented, Peter 2nd. Ayes- Patty, Peter, Herb, Terry. Abstain – Robin.

LEGAL: none

OTHER BUSINESS: Patty reported a request from Middletown Springs University group to use the town office building as an option for these events. Patty is willing to be the opener and closer of the building. Herb is also able and willing if need be. Board by consensus is fine with this use of the facility.

Patty brought up the need to decide on the Town Report cover. After some discussion the cover will feature the new town office. Inside we will include memorials for Rodney Tarbell, Dot Reed, Ed Ray, and Shirley Moyer. Board members will assemble information from the respective families.

ADJOURN: Herb moved to adjourn at 9:18pm, Peter 2nd. The meeting adjourned at 9:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Patty Kenyon, Clerk

Next Special Meeting - 7PM Thursday, January 19, 2024.

Next Regular Meeting - 7PM Thursday, January 25, 2024