



Town of Middlefield
Board of Selectmen
P.O. Box 238
Middlefield, MA 012423
Tel: 413-623-2079
Fax: 413-623-6108
Middlefield.assistant@gmail.com

Selectboard Minutes **September 11, 2024**

The meeting was opened at 6:30 PM, at the Senior Center, by Ann Marie Visconti, Chair, with Curt Robie and Tamarin Laurel-Paine, members also present. Sean Curran, Town Administrator and Mark Doane, Administrative Assistant were also in attendance.

Multiple Town residents were also present: Adair Laurel-Cafarella, Kenneth Murray, Maureen Longobardi, Susan Schneller, Doreen Black, Marge Pierre, Judy Hoag, David DiNicola, and Noel Keeney from Huntington.

The warrants were signed, the minutes of the August 28, 2024 minutes were signed off on, and no mail was necessary to review.

Under public input, Kenneth Murray voiced concerns about needing to get back on track with accounting practices, and need to begin looking for a new accountant as Beverly Cooper gave her notice, as she is retiring.

Maureen Longobardi is requesting a refund of \$90.00 from her FOIA request as she was citing Chapter 121 of Mass General Law that she is entitled to 4 hours free, and that she also was given more than she requested. She is also requesting the Hazard Mitigation Plan be put on the website, would like a copy of the Cone Road Culvert Report that was prepared by Costa Consulting Engineers. She was given the copy this evening. She also is asking to see the grant application that was submitted for the possible new playground.

Public input, which was slated for 10 minutes, intensified as to the matter of getting a new accountant. Sean Curran reported that a chart of Accounts has been supplied by Vadar, Beverly is retiring effective October 15, and she is working on closing out the Fiscal Year 2024. Sean reported he has advertised for an accountant consultant to finish setting up VADAR for the Town as well as to process warrants until a new Accountant is hired. Multiple people in the audience felt that a search for a new accountant should be taking place now, and not just advertising for a consultant. The discussion further went into what would be the skill set

necessary for an accountant. Sean is requesting the Selectboard take a vote to hire a consultant. Curt made a motion which was seconded and carried to hire a consultant accountant and that plans for hiring a permanent accountant be available. It was also recommended that a complete audit be done once a new accountant is hired. Reimbursement to the consultant will be from the cybersecurity grant and the accounting salary. Pay will be at the level of \$50.00 per hour.

Tamarin requested of Sean when a Chart of Accounts from VADAR will be available, and when live read only access will be given to VADAR. Sean explained that the Chart of Accounts is available, and that as of now, no access is being granted for live read only in the VADAR system. This intense discussion continued between the two with no agreed upon conclusion.

Sean explained the Investment strategy, and that the Town is following 3 steps in investing: 1: Invest safely, 2: Make sure you have funds available for liquidation and 3: make sure you have high yield. He also reported that the Town had to approve the investment policy prior to doing investment. It was also explained that investments are only in FDIC insured banks, however, anything over \$250,000.00 is not covered under FDIC per account.

Ann Marie reported that:

1. Over the Labor Day Weekend, Ann Marie, Sean Curran, Ken Murray, Curt & Patti Robie, and Skip Savery helped paint the Town Hall.
2. A flu and Covid vaccine clinic will be held at the Senior Center on October 16, 2024 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Pre-Registration is required; flyers are at the post office and information is available on the Website.
3. An inspection of the Transfer Station will be held on September 28, 2024.

Tamarin reported that:

1. From constituent feedback about the dump being closed on the Sunday of the Labor Day weekend, and the State Primary being at the Senior Center: it was that insufficient posting was not given to town residents. It was felt insufficient notification was given despite the sign at the dump the week prior and it being posted on the Town Website. It was also posted at the Town Hall and the Post Office. The State Primary was posted on the website, the Town Sign at the Town Hall, the Post Office, as well as signs at the Senior Center. Tamarin felt a Code Red for both events should have been sent.
2. Wondering when ZOOM meetings would be available. Sean reported when meetings are back at the Town Hall
3. A timelier response from the Town Administrator when asked questions is necessary.
4. That Kirsten thought it was a good idea to have payroll services uploaded into VADAR.
5. That the Town Clerk has been asked to update town names/offices for the State.

Curt reported that:

1. A Second Phase Engineering Study grant has been approved for Cone Road. It is in the amount of \$78,000.00. Sean stated that this grant will keep us on track to keep applying for more money for Cone Road.
2. The Town should hear about the One Stop Grant for the Senior Center within the next 3 to 4 weeks.

3. Flooring in the Classrooms is completed, the movers are coming on September 17 to move everything out of the Auditorium. Curt thinks we may be able to have the flooring project closed out by September 30.
4. The Air Quality Tests that have occurred are currently posted at the Town Hall. All the tests are in acceptable ranges of DEP.
5. New shelving for the janitor's closet will be obtained as well as new shelving for the Town Clerk's Office.
6. Cintas has been contacted about possibly supplying mats for the Town Hall and Senior Center. He then made a motion, which was seconded and carried, to try Cintas Services for one year at a cost of \$970.00. Cintas will be replacing the mats every 2 weeks. This is in an effort to provide as much protection to the new floors as possible.
7. The Town will need to look into possibly holding a "Shredder Day".

Judy Hoag then spoke about needing an account opened for money that has been pledged for the playground equipment/supplies. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to establish a "Playground Gift Account. Once established, Judy will be able to contact the people who made pledges to have those pledges honored. She reported that the swings they are investigating are a little under \$800.00 dollars.

Susan Schneller and Marge Pierre then brought up the possibility of having a Holiday Tree Lighting at the new Town Park. Much discussion occurred about the event, which will be a Town Sponsored event. They are hoping to run power cords from the Highway Garage to light the tree and will place on a timer for on/off times. Questions were raised about music for the gala, and Curt will look into possibly the Eagle Brass Band. As it is firmed up, and the event gets closer, details will be posted on the Website.

Old Business had already been discussed.

Under new business, Noel Kenney of Huntington is interested in purchasing 266 Skyline Trail, however, needs the Town to state whether they want the property or release it under Chapter 61B. Once it was determined what piece of property it is, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to waive the Town rights to the property and to allow Noel Kenney to proceed with his plan of purchase.

It was also reported that the Middlefield Days Committee has money in the Cultural Council grant can be used in partnership with the Town Tree Lighting event.

Following all discussion, an attempt at closing the meeting was made, however, Maureen Longobardi had questions about a Special Town Meeting for the Veteran's work off program and if she could have a copy of the paperwork regarding the lawsuit against the estate of Gordon Miller and David DiNicola had a question regarding the rental cost for grinding the millings, and the estimate for the rolling of said millings. Sean requested Maureen to meet with him on Friday, September 13th to discuss her concerns.

The next Selectboard meeting is to be held at the Senior Center on September 25, 2024.

No further business to come before the Selectboard, the meeting was closed at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark W. Doane,
Administrative Assistant

Ann Marie Visconti, Chair

Curt Robie, Member

Tamarin Laurel-Paine, Member