



Town of Middlefield Board of Selectmen

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Selectboard Meeting January 24, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:32~~0~~ by Ann Marie Visconti, Chair with Curt Robie and Tamarin Laurel-Paine, members, also present.

Towns people present were Suzanne Lemieux, Doreen Black, Adair Laurel-Cafarella, Ken Murray, Al Sirard, Logan Judge, Jenny Dion, Skip Savery, Carol Waag, Larry Pease, and Ron Radwich. Also present were Sean Curran, Town Administrator and Mark Doane, Town Administrative Assistant.

The Warrants were reviewed and signed.

The mail was reviewed and the minutes of the January 10, 2024 Selectboard meeting were approved and signed off.

Jonathan Finn: Mr. Finn was present to present VFIS insurance plan to the Selectboard. He reported that VFIS supplies fire and police insurance to area towns including Hinsdale, North Adams, and Sandisfield, and covers 135 cities and towns across the state. VFIS only covers injured on duty. They cover up to \$300,000.00 for medical expenses. Coverage does not differ for fulltime fire fighters and volunteer fire fighters and covers junior fire fighters as well. They also supply online as well as in person training utilizing the equipment that is actually used in the various towns. They do not supply training for police departments. They also have a presumption of cancer due to on-the-job hazards, however, is looked at with medical review.

Clark
Carol Waag/Cone Road Culvert: Carol reported that they are halfway thru the design phase on the Cone Road culvert and ~~Clark~~ Wright culvert. Cindy from Westfield Watershed Committee is willing to write the grants. Carol did report that Root Road is a more likely candidate for replacement, and has a grant advantage via the Division of Ecological Impact. It was reported that Fuss and O'Neal has Cone Road on their list. It is also reported to cost 1-1.5 million to replace the Root Road culvert which has been replaced in the past 15-20 years ago. Sean stated we need Angela Panaccione on a call with Carol and then follow up with a meeting with Angela Panaccione. Mark Doane, who lives on Root Road brought up that if the Root Road culvert is done, a good portion of the Town will be cut off from the Center, as that is the only road that connects to the Center of Town, and is maintained year long. It would also impact the response time of emergency vehicles. In his opinion, if the Root Road culvert is replaced, and the State is involved, you could plan on not having access for 2-3 years minimum.

Discussion occurred on wetlands delineation and the transfer station. Ann Marie felt the delineation has to go to the new Town Park, but Carol stated it only needs to go to the Highway Garage. Carol also reported that there is a campaign ongoing with Wildlife and Scenic Agency to promote brine versus salt use during winter months. The Highway Superintendent came in during this discussion and his input was asked for. He stated that the equipment for brine is costly, and can go wrong if not mixed right, and brine can't be used on dirt roads. He did state that some companies lease the equipment if you commit to using their product. The Superintendent was asked which bridge he felt needed replacement. His view is that Cone Road has failed and is a big drop on the road and Root Road hasn't failed. It was also reported that there is approx. \$8,000.00 left in the Town Park account.

Town Administrator Report: The police Department was awarded a grant of \$9,000.00 for tasers. The police will acquire 2 tasers at \$4,000.00 each and the rest will be used for a laptop computer to be mounted in the cruiser. The police will have a policy written for tasers and will also have to go thru training before using. He also reported that Linda Cernik said some kids in North Adams are starting a mattress recycling program. \$45.00 is to be paid when delivered. He also stated that at the MMA meeting was a lot of information about solar panels, and the State is invested in solar energy.

All Boards Meeting: After much discussion, it was decided to not have this meeting in the coming months due to many conflicts in scheduling.

Update on Transfer Station: Fuss and O'Neal hasn't given us an estimate yet, Levesque is ready to proceed, but will cost around \$20,000.00. Huntley ~~hasn't responded yet.~~ *has previously responded.* This is for reconfiguring the transfer station.

Highway Department Vehicle: The vote to purchase a new truck was postponed. The Highway Superintendent reports that most of the equipment they use comes from Chapter 90 funds. After much discussion, it was decided to have the Highway Superintendent come to the Selectboard meeting of February 7, 2024 with more figures as he researches what he needs for vehicle.

Special Town Meeting: After many consultations of calendars, it was agreed to have a Special Town Meeting to address a wing plow and trailer for the highway, and Librarian Salary. The meeting will be held on March 13, 2024 at 7:00 PM.

Meeting with Highway Superintendent: His report was part of other discussions, and will be at the February 7, 2024 Selectboard meeting to discuss more about a new highway vehicle.

Housing for Police Vehicle: Due to extremely cold weather during the weekend of January 20, 2024, one of the Police vehicles took over an hour to start. It was brought up about a possible carport, however, that wouldn't solve the cold problem. Discussion continued on with other questions raised such as where to put the carport if that is an option. It was suggested that the Officers start the cruisers 3-4 times a week during cold weather. It was also reported that any structure would definitely have to wait until spring, so proper preparations can be made for a shelter of some sort. The Highway Superintendent suggested block heaters like the garage uses for their vehicles.

Other areas discussed thru out the meeting:

1. The Presidential Primary is March 5, 2024. The Town Caucus will be March 27, 2024 from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

2. Textile Bin will be delivered January 25, 2024 at the Senior Center.
3. Suzanne reports that she doesn't need an increase in funding for COA.
4. Sean will be holding a meeting with Town residents *Department heads (memo)*
5. David Irwin will be at the February 7, 2024 meeting.
6. The Planning Board Chair and the Town Administrator are working on the By-laws, and the Planning Board did not vote to approve the recommended changes. Doreen stated some needed more clarity.
7. Electric Vehicles are of concern in case of car fires. It was reported that PVPC recommends fire departments get training in how to fight an electric vehicle fire.

Old Business: The Selectboard and Finance Committee will be looking at possible salary increases for the Transfer Station Attendant and the Town Hall Custodian.

New Business: Sean Curran will be working on a Media Policy. William Girard, Building Inspector, will be invited to an upcoming Selectboard meeting

Public Input: Questions were raised by the public in regard to insurance coverage on Town vehicles; Sean Curran reported he is working on it thru the portal of the insurance company. There were also questions about looking at any accounts at 1% interest rate; Sean replied he would meet with the Treasurer, and that he is on top of it.

There being no further business to come before the Selectboard, the meeting was closed at 8:51 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark W. Doane, *Mark W Doane*
Town Administrative Assistant

Ann Marie Visconti, Chair: *Ann Marie Visconti*

Curt Robie, Member: *Curt Robie*

Tamarin Laurel-Paine, Member: *Tamarin Laurel-Paine*