



Town of Middlefield Board of Selectmen

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Selectboard Meeting February 21, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 by Ann Marie Visconti, Chair with Curt Robie and Tamarin Laurel-Paine, members, also present. Also present were Sean Curran, Town Administrator, Mark Doane, Administrative Assistant, Adair Laurel-Cafarella, Logan Judge, Al Sirard, Doreen Black, Skip Savery, and Judy Hoag.

The Warrants were reviewed and signed, mail was reviewed, and Minutes of January 17, 2024, January 31, 2024, and February 7, 2024 were signed.

Superintendent of Gateway Regional School District: Kirsten Smidy, superintendent of the Gateway School District was present to ^{discuss} projects in the district. She thanked Skip Savery for having such a great working relationship with him. The district is half way thru working on the BARR grant program, and when completed, and if approved, BARR will partner with school for ten to 20 years. This grant is for innovative school programming, and some staff from Gateway have been to other schools across the nation to see their innovative programs. The Visually Impaired Program currently has 6 students using the services. Vocational Education budget went up 8-9% last year. Middlefield had one Vocational student graduate, 2 are enrolling, and possibly another 1-2 applying. State Funding for Student Opportunity Act is at 75% going to those schools in Category 12; those in categories 1-9 get 1%. Gateway went up to a Level 10, and got a 4% increase on last year. No migrants are currently in the School District. When School resumes the week of 2/26/2024, the Superintendent will be having team meetings to address bullying. This is in light to a recent incident in the Southwick-Tolland School District.

Town Administrator Report: Internet issues are plaguing the Town Hall this date, and John Les, IT Consultant, will be here tomorrow the 22nd to look at and fix. Tamarin, Curt, and Sean met with PVPC and the State Coordinator for the MVP grant. It was hoped that some of this money could be used for tree mitigation, but the monies can't be used for that. It can be used for culverts. Skip, Curt and Angela Panaccione were on a ZOOM call to discuss the Dirt Road Study. Sean has a ZOOM meeting with Westfield Scenic and Wild Life ^{Committee} for assistance on culverts. Sean plans a 1-Stop Grant application this year. The letter of interest isn't due yet. Sean has been meeting with the Finance ~~Board~~ and are working on a sensible budget. On April 10, 2024, MIIA will be holding a presentation in Northampton concerning fire department personnel who are "aging out" in coverage. On April 6, 2024, Sen. Paul Mark will be holding a regional meeting in Lenox. The Selectboard and Sean will be signed up to attend. Sen. Mark will be in the middle of budget talks and working on ear-marks. It is reported that Ear-marks for grants will be down this year due to decreased state revenue.

Warrants for Special Town Meeting: Discussion on the Warrants for the Special Town Meeting on March 13, 2024 were discussed. From Free Cash: A trailer for the Highway Department at \$20,000.00; \$1,800.00 for librarian salary; \$140.00 for librarian expenses to meet State requirements; increase budget for street lights another \$400.00; and \$49,000.00 that was to be used with a grant for the Town Hall Floors. The grant was denied.

Discuss/Vote on VADAR Software Program: A lengthy discussion was held on the software program that the accountant uses. The pros and cons were discussed of the Softright program and the proposed VADAR program. Softright is a large company, difficult to reach, and costs more than VADAR. VADAR is a Massachusetts based program, offers customer support that is easier to access, is of less cost than Softright, uses the recommended UMAS accounting system, and overall is more user friendly. After the discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and vote unanimously to begin using the VADAR software program. Ann Marie to contact the VADAR representative to inform them of the Town decision.

Discuss Transfer Station Plans: Four engineering firms supplied quotes, with 3 more complete than the 4th. That one was from Levesque, but it was felt the firm didn't give a comprehensive quote. The other three firms were: Fuss & O'Neal, Huntley, and Foresight. Part of the work would require delineation of the wetlands down to the Town Garage. Sean will contact Foresight to see when they could meet with the Selectboard and Ann Marie will contact Huntley for the same reason. Fuss & O'Neal were too expensive to pursue further. Discussion was also held on a paper compactor and whether to pursue a used one or a new one. Ann Marie stated we have \$21,000.00 we need to spend to keep receiving the funds. No definitive answer or decision was made on a paper compactor.

Dedication for Annual Town Report: Discussion was held, and the Selectboard Chair decided to dedicate the Annual Town Report to those who volunteer their time and effort to the Town.

Finalize Selectboard/Town Administrator Budget with Finance Committee: This is slated to occur on Friday, March 8, 2024 at a Selectboard meeting at 10 AM.

Old Business: Skip needs another letter for the Certified Beaver Trapper that includes the private property by the Baylis homestead. Skip is also awaiting a quote on a new freightliner. Curt reported the Skyline dump is almost complete, the lawyers just need 3 more family members to sign off.

New Business: Judy Hoag reported that Huntington has put us on their FRTA contract so we have no need to sign a contract. Judy questioned if we needed a line item on the budget for FRTA for trips. Judy will further investigate this with FRTA.

There being no public input, the Selectboard closed the meeting at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark W. Doane, Administrative assistant

Ann Marie Visconti, Chair:



Curt Robie, Member:



Tamarin Laurel-Paine, Member:

