



Town of Middlefield Board of Selectmen

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SELECTBOARD MINUTES

May 15, 2024

The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Ann Marie Visconti, Chair, with Curt Robie and Tamarin Laurel-Paine, members, present as well. Sean Curran, Town Administrator, and Mark W. Doane, Town Administrative Assistant were present as well. Town residents present were: Kenneth Murray, Doreen Black, Alfonso Longobardi, Maureen Longobardi, Adair Laurel-Cafarella, and David DiNicola.

The warrants and minutes of the May 1, 2024 meeting were signed. Beverly Cooper, Accountant wasn't able to be in attendance due to a finance meeting in North Adams. Sean Curran, TA was running late. Mail addressed was to determine locking in, or not, of fuel bids. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to have Curt take care of, as he has done so in the past.

Ann Marie Visconti: Questioned if to vote for Selectboard Chair this evening, or postpone until after July 1, 2024. Tamarin questioned if a rotation for the Chairperson of the board should be considered. Tamarin stated that is what they do in Worthington. After discussion, Curt made a motion for Ann Marie Visconti to remain as Chair of the Selectboard. A vote was taken with 2 yes and 1 no. Ann Marie then reported that Michael Schafer from Huntley Associates will have the final permit pulled on the Skyline Trail Dump. The Town will, however, have to incur a yearly water test at that site for the foreseeable future. Ann Marie reported that Loren Davine from Hampshire County Public Health will be at the All-Board Meeting on May 22, 2024. Loren will be discussing the services they offer, including inspection services, and issuance of permits. Ann Marie has informed Ed Fahey that his services, after July 1, 2024 will no longer be necessary, due to cost. Ed will send an email of current projects, and that all the information is in the filing cabinet that Ed uses. She also reported that John Les, the IT consultant, will be at the All-Board meeting to give an update on IT issues. An OWL 3 for video conferencing/meeting use has been ordered and awaiting delivery.

Tamarin Laurel-Paine: Tamarin reported that the Board of Health agent inspected the kitchen at Azure Green, but was also told that the grant doesn't cover all inspections. This is a question for Loren Davine when the Selectboard meets with Loren. Tamarin also reported that on May 24, 2024, at meeting is to be held with Ira Brezinsky and Eric Weiss on assisting with developing a capital plan for the Town. This will be posted and start at 10:00 AM.

Curt Robie: Curt reported that the grader is back in town and working well, and was used on Reservoir Road. Curt also reported that the light for the flag in the center of the Town has been installed and a new flag has been raised. Curt reported that the next Dirt Road Grant meeting will occur on May 23, 2024 in Blandford. Angela Paniccione will be in attendance for the meeting. Curt reported that he and Sean are continuing to work on the One Stop Grant, as it has to be submitted soon. Bid specifications are also being worked on for the Town Hall floors that will include moving office equipment, tile abatement, and the laying down of new floor. Curt further mentioned that all grant applications and bids would be available for whoever wants to read the 100 pages, and would be available before being put out to bid. Curt also brought up the discussion of a Veteran's Work-Off program for taxes. Curt isn't sure if this would be a Special Town Meeting or would happen at an Annual Town Meeting. Curt did report that an individual gets minimum wage and the maximum deduction from taxes is \$1500.00, but can be voted lower.

Mark presented a revised Town Hall Policy, and is awaiting approval before posting on Town Website.

The agenda was set for the All-Boards Meeting scheduled for May 22, 2024. Agenda: Loren Davine from Hampshire County Public Health, John Les, IT consultant, Town Office Moving, Job Descriptions, Brief Question and Answer Period.

Annual Town Appointments were discussed. The Administrative Assistant will send a letter to all those whose term is expiring as of June 30, 2024, to see if they are interested in continuing in the post they hold. They will have until June 5, 2024 to respond, and if no response or declines the position, it will be posted as an opening. Tamarin stated she would like to see the positions that are open and those coming up for renewal to be posted so that all residents have the opportunity to send in a letter requesting to be appointed to a board. She feels this would encourage wider civic engagement. Curt stated that he thinks we need an employment policy handbook so residents know what these positions entail. Ann Marie thinks the policies should also include training/going to classes for the various appointments. Sean stated that the MMA has a large package on a policy handbook and will look at after the grants are done being written.

Sean reported area towns are seeing theft of sewer caps. Sean has alerted Skip and Jenny. Sean also reported that the "OWL" is coming and the Town will be able to hold virtual meetings with those residents who can't attend. We will need signs that let people know they are being broadcast.

It was reported that One-Stop grants are due in early June. The COA is preferred project. The bids for the Town Hall floors are being finalized and will be sent to the Assessors, Finance Board, and any others who would like to review. Questions were raised when it could be reviewed and multiple dates were put mentioned with no consensus reached. The Senate budget process is coming up, and the Town currently has no active earmarks, but it was suggested to put in for \$100,000.00 for a playground. Ann Marie thinks we need a meeting to decide on where to put a playground. Sean reported the tasers were in, and would recommend a press conference with Sen. Paul Mark be held.

A lengthy discussion was then held on the switch over to the VADAR system for accounting. The Finance Committee feels this would be a good time to look at the flow of the invoices for the warrants. It was recommended that all invoices, after processed by respective departments, go to the administrative assistant to double check to assure correct accounts are being used. The administrative assistant would then forward to the Town Account for developing of the Warrant. The warrant would then be ready for the Selectboard to sign. This procedure will occur in stages, so that there isn't a rush on a Wednesday evening. This procedure is to begin July 1, 2024. The administrative assistant will let all departments know about this change.

The Planning Board will be sending the proposed By-laws back to Town Counsel for further clarification on changes they made. The By-laws need to be back into the Town by Friday, May 17, 2024 in order that the Special Town Meeting Warrant can be posted timely.

Under old business, the Veteran's Work-off will continue to be discussed, David DiNicola has concerns about the follow thru/timely inspections when the Town switches to Hampshire Regional Public Health for these services. Alfonso and Maureen Longobardi brought up the floor tiles they could have donated for use in the Town Hall. Extensive discussion was held; Maureen stated she had a petition to use the donated gift. Ann Marie stated this was brought to the Selectboards attention after the Special own Meeting for the flooring. Sean stated that to accept a gift a motion needs to be put on the floor. A motion was made, seconded, and voted 2 to 1 to not accept the gift.

There was no new business, or public input. The minutes from the Selectboard meeting of May 1, 2024 were read and approved, the warrants were signed, and mail reviewed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark W. Doane, Administrative Assistant.

Ann Marie Visconti, Chair

Curt Robie, Member

Tamarin Laurel-Paine, Member