



Town of Middlefield Board of Selectmen

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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES November 29, 2023

The meeting was opened at 6:32 PM by Ann Marie Visconti, Chairperson, Curt Robie , member, and Tamarin Laurel-Paine, member. Also present for the meeting were Sean Curran, Town Administrator, Mark W. Doane, Administrative Assistant, and Adair Laurel-Cafarella.

The warrants were signed, the minutes reviewed and signed from 10/19/2023, 11/03/2023, and 11/15/2023. The mail was reviewed.

Town Administrator Update: It was reported that the article in the Country Journal referencing Ann Gobi being in Middlefield was a good shout out for the Town. The carpenter hired for the steps at the Transfer Station has received the check for materials, and anticipates a speedy turn around on construction. The Town Administrator attended a regional conference with Linda Cernik, who is favor of a “pay as you throw” system at the Transfer Station. The Town Administrator didn’t feel it was a good fit for Middlefield. Civil Engineers have been approached about submitting plans for improving the Transfer Station. Discussion around investing from the stabilization account occurred, and a motion was made, seconded, and carried to invest \$300,000.00 in MMDT.

Update and Discussion on One Stop Grant: Curt Robie reported that his follow up conversation on the One Stop Grant he applied for, that was denied, was because it didn’t tie into economic development. The grant was for replacing a beam in the Senior Center. General consensus was that the State doesn’t realize the needs of small towns. Anne Gobi was on the call with Curt, and she stated that new guidelines are being developed. Angela Pannicione from the PVPC was also here this AM, and took a tour of the beaver dams. It was reported that beaver deceivers cost \$3500.00 each, and once in place, become the responsibility of the home owner to maintain. It was reported that that the beaver dam by the Baylis/Kearns property is in the worst condition. The MVP is requesting expression of interest letters by December 15, 2023 for a planning grant of \$50,000.00. If the expression of interest letter is done, it becomes a little easier on the next phase.

Discuss Tax Payments for FY '25: It was discussed that the tax rate increase of 2.5% be spread over the 4 quarterly tax bills. It was also expected that the school budget will increase by \$85,000.00, depending on the number of school age children Middlefield has. It was recommended that further discussion take place after the annual town meeting in May of 2024.

Discussion of Goals for FY '25: it was recommended that each Selectboard member come to the next meeting with 4-5 goals they think the Town should address. It can then be discussed and whittled down to 4-5 projects for a Master Plan. Updating ADA data should be part of that plan.

STM/State Grant/Town Park: Melissa Cryan, has approved the Town Park Grant of \$10,000.00 contingent on more specific language added and that the language be part of the deed. It was felt that Town Counsel would come close to \$2,500.00 for this to occur, and that bills already submitted and waiting on payment would be waiting longer. The Town Administrator will call Melissa Cryan, and see if the bills can be paid without effecting the grant value. If a negative response comes out of that call, the next step will be to possibly call the Lieutenant Governor's liaison for assistance. It was also reported that the Open Space Committee was having a difficult time working with Melissa. KP Law has stated that Melissa is known state wide as being difficult to work with. Overall, the feeling is to just let the Town Park grant go, due to the increased cost to the Town as well as holding up the vendor payments longer. If everything comes back positive from the call with Melissa, a Special Town Meeting would need to be held on Saturday, December 16, 2023. Doreen Black from the Planning Board, is having a meeting on December 16, 2023 at 10:00 AM to discuss wording on proposed By-law changes. The Selectboard did review the proposed by-laws from the planning board, and did find them confusing. It was questioned why the wording can't be discussed with Ken Comia from PVPC versus KP Law at this time. Ann Marie Visconti stated we could ask Kim Robinson, also from PVPC, if we can use his services.

Turkey Dinner December 16, 2023: The Town Administrator is organizing a Roast Chicken Dinner for 12:30 PM on December 16. He has Carm's Restaurant on file to provide Roast Chicken, Stuffing and Mashed Potatoes; enough to feed 50 people. It would cost \$12.00 per person. The Town would be responsible for supplying another vegetable dish, desserts, coffee, and drinks. They would also have to do set up, breakdown and serve the meal. It was expressed that this is a great undertaking with such a short time frame. The Town Administrator reported he has put the dinner and the Special Town Meeting in the Country Journal.

Discussion on Media Communication: A rather lengthy discussion occurred about selectboard media communication. It was felt that it is a good idea if the selectboard works together for positive press releases, however, individual members do have a right to freedom of the press; however, it was recommended not to throw people under the bus. Part of this discussion surrounded joint meetings, especially with the Finance Board. After much discussion, Ann Marie felt we should have a joint meeting between the Selectboard and the Finance Committee. One is scheduled for January 17, 2024.

Old Business: It was reported that we have a temporary Post Office Employee, who apparently would like to work full time (4 hours) at this post office. It was reported that the post office is in rough shape, however, the Postal Service owns the trailer, not the Town.

New Business: Eric Weiss will be called to assist with a Capital Plan for the Town. Covid and Flu shots are going to be given at the Senior Center on December 6, 2023 at 11:30 AM. The next Selectboard meetings forthcoming are on December 13, 2023, January 10, 2024, January 17, 2024 (with the Finance Committee), and January 24, 2024. Senator Paul Mark will be holding a Town Hall Meeting in January. Todd from MEMA will be contacted by Ann Marie Visconti about the use of \$2500.00 from MEMA for telephone upgrade.

Public Input: None

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark W. Doane, Administrative Assistant

Mark W. Doane

Ann Marie Visconti, Chairperson:

Ann Marie Visconti

Curt Robie, Member:

Curt D. Robie

Tamarin Laurel-Paine, Member:

Tamarin Laurel-Paine