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**Town of Middlebury
Infrastructure Committee
Thursday, May 13, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

NOTE: Due to the need for separation to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus, the meeting was held remotely via video conferencing with participants.

Members Present: Heather Seeley, Esther Thomas, Gary Baker, Candy McLaughlin, Matt DeBisschop and Judy Wiger-Grohs. Luther Tenny and Alternate Erik Remsen. were absent.

Staff Present: Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay, Director of Public Works Planning Dan Werner, Director of Public Work Operations Bill Kernan, Wastewater Superintendent Bob Wells and Accounting Services Manager Jackie Sullivan,

Also Present: Energy Committee members Howard WidELITZ and Ross Conrad, Suzanne Loker, Thomas Colliander, Fran Drexler and Jeff Olson.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Chair Heather Seeley.

2. Approval of Agenda

McLaughlin moved to approve the agenda and Wiger-Grohs seconded the motion. Seeley said she would like to add to the agenda the election of a Chair and take a few minutes to do introductions for Esther Thomas, the new Selectboard member who is replacing Selectboard member Lindsey Fuentes-George. The agenda was approved with the additions with 6 in favor, 1 absent. **MOTION PASSED.**

3. Approval of February 8, 2021 and April 22, 2021 Minutes

Baker moved and McLaughlin seconded the motion to approve the minutes of February 8, 2021. There were no changes to the minutes and they were approved with 5 in favor, 1 absent, 1 abstention (Thomas). **MOTION PASSED.**

Baker moved to approve the minutes of April 22, 2021 and DiBisschop seconded the motion. McLaughlin had two changes:

Line 114: change "on" to "one"

42 Line 175: the word “not” was missing and it should read “...the Dodge body was “not”
43 aluminum...”

44

45 The approval of the minutes were postponed when it was determined there was not a
46 quorum of Committee members present who attended that meeting.

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4. Election of Committee Chair

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50 Baker nominated Seeley to Chair the Committee, and Wiger-Grohs seconded the
51 motion. The motion carried with 6 in favor, 1 absent. **MOTION PASSED.**

52

53 Seeley introduced Esther Thomas, the new Selectboard member to the Committee and
54 staff.

55

4. Citizen Comments

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57 There were no citizen comments.

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5. Project Updates

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61 Werner reported that, according to the contractor, the Court Street water line is two
62 weeks ahead of schedule, so it is anticipated the project should be done earlier than
63 planned.

64

65 Werner said the engineers from Tata & Howard who are doing the evaluation on the
66 Wastewater Plant have submitted a tentative agreement on phasing work for the plant
67 upgrades. He said they’ve sorted through some of the options listed in the evaluation
68 and have established some phasing suggestions to help the Town with the financial
69 burden of this project.

70

71 Werner said he has submitted this to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)
72 to look at and see if it will be eligible to add this to the loan we already have. He said no
73 action is needed at this time.

74

75

6. Tap-on Request in Weybridge: Tucker Development

76

77 Werner gave a background on the Tucker Development water line that is located in the
78 Town of Weybridge. He said there was an agreement for a certain number of tap-ons
79 for the development of F.W. Tucker, but not all the tap-ons were used and the
80 agreement disappeared. He said over the years there have been requests for a tap-on
81 here and there on this line, and it is a nightmare to track them. He said there is now a

82 request for one more tap-on for Lot #4 in the Tucker Development and that pretty much
83 completes that subdivision. He said from his perspective and others at Public Works,
84 they recommend approving this tap-on and then not allow any more tap-ons.

85
86 Seeley said she thought she'd read there were two more lots, so asked if this was the
87 last lot or is there a possibility for future development. She said her concern is if we say
88 no more tap-ons and there are more that might be developed, maybe we could word it
89 to say no more other than within that development. Werner said the wording could be
90 adjusted to accommodate for that.

91
92 Jeff Olsen, the agent for the sellers of Lot #4, said there is one more lot left across the
93 road from this lot, but he's 99% sure that is the only lot left in the development.
94 Suzanne Loker, who is purchasing Lot #4, spoke about how special this lot is to her and
95 how she will be constructing an environmentally friendly house that will use all the new
96 energy efficient strategies available in construction.

97
98 DeBisschop moved and McLaughlin seconded, to recommend the Selectboard approve
99 the water tap-on in Weybridge for Lot #4 in the Tucker Development. The motion
100 carried with 6 in favor, 1 absent. **MOTION PASSED.**

101 102 **7. Bid Consideration – Reclamation and Paving Project**

103
104 Werner said we had 3 bidders (Pike Industries, Champlain Construction and Kubricky
105 Construction) and Pike was the low bidder at \$235,462. He said this project includes
106 Rogers Road, Fairview Circle, Foster Circle, a portion of Monroe Street and Thomas
107 Street. He said the majority of Monroe Street will be reclaimed and paved – along with
108 Rogers Road, Fairview Circle, Foster Circle and Thomas Street – but a portion of it will
109 get a shim coat just to buy us some time until we can do the Monroe Street/Court
110 Street/Charles Street intersection. He said the bids were about as anticipated and there
111 are adequate funds in our Capital Improvement budget to cover the cost of this paving.

112
113 McLaughlin moved to recommend the Selectboard award the bid to Pike Industries for
114 \$235,462. DiBisschop seconded the motion. The motion carried with 6 in favor, 1
115 absent. **MOTION PASSED.**

116 117 **8. Digester Evaluation for future addition to the Wastewater Treatment Plant**

118
119 Energy Committee members Howard WidELITZ and Ross Conrad joined the Committee.
120 WidELITZ said when the engineering firm Tata & Howard did the evaluation of the
121 Wastewater Plant; they recommended an anaerobic digester be included in the

122 upgrade, which was seen to be a financial benefit. He said even though this is some
123 years out, this has factored into some of the work the Energy Committee has been
124 doing in terms of net metering recommendations the Selectboard asked the Energy
125 Committee to provide. He said as a result, the Energy Committee wanted to
126 understand the amount of power that could be generated from the plant, so they met
127 with Tom Murray of Vermont Gas Systems (VGS). In that meeting they discussed the
128 methane production of the digester, which could be used for electrical or thermal energy
129 that could either power the plant, heat the plant, or some combination of the two, or
130 there is also the possibility of piping it to VGS to increase their renewable gas that they
131 are looking to boost. He said net metering for the Town is capped at 700 kilowatts (that
132 is the most we could claim), so we would need to calculate the amount of methane that
133 could be produced.

134

135 Widelitz said VGS is offering up to \$20,000 to fund this analysis, which Tata & Howard
136 estimate would cost around \$25,000 to perform. He said the Energy Committee is
137 asking the Infrastructure Committee to recommend the Selectboard accept this proposal
138 by VGS. He said this analysis wouldn't cost the Town anything other than some staff
139 time to provide information for the analysis.

140

141 Seeley asked if VGS was doing the work or were we supposed to hire a consultant, and
142 Widelitz said that is something the Town could work out with VGS.

143

144 Ross Conrad said he thought less town staff time would be needed if VGS was allowed
145 to hire the engineering firm to do most of the work, and he felt this information could
146 help in designing the Plant upgrade and the financing, since this will estimate the output
147 it could provide. Widelitz said methane has a significant impact on reducing
148 greenhouse gas. Bob Wells said he didn't anticipate this would take a lot of staff time,
149 since they have the numbers already that they would need for the analysis.

150

151 Werner asked about the possibility of VGS hiring the engineer for the analysis and
152 designing the report to benefit VGS, and shouldn't this be more independent. Widelitz
153 said if we were just coming up with numbers about how much methane is generated
154 there isn't a problem, it's only when you get into how that methane is used that there
155 might be a bias, but it would be the Energy Committee/Selectboard deciding how it
156 would be used, so he didn't see it as a problem.

157

158 Werner asked if it was better to use it at the plant or to put it in a pipeline for others to
159 use. Widelitz said the most efficient use would be to heat the plant with it, but at this
160 point we don't really know how the plant will be designed in the upgrade. Conrad said
161 once we know the amount of methane, then the Town can decide the best way to use it.

162 He said we all know the Wastewater Plant uses a great deal of electricity, so even
163 though it's not the best use of the methane, it may be beneficial to offset some of the
164 electrical costs.

165
166 McLaughlin asked what the incentive is for VGS to give us this \$20,000. Conrad said
167 one of the things they're looking at is a greener way to produce biogas, and they see
168 this as a potential to increase their biogas production. He said natural gas is a fossil
169 fuel and they don't have a big future if they stay on that road, so the more renewable
170 gas they can bring in the better chance they'll stay sustainable in the future.

171
172 Wiger-Grohs said this is the direction we need to go in all aspects of our continued
173 existence as a community, so moved to recommend the Selectboard approve the offer
174 of VGS for \$20,000 to fund this study. Thomas seconded the motion. The motion
175 carried with 6 in favor, absent. **MOTION PASSED.**

176
177 **9. Proposed Water and Wastewater Budgets for FY22**

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179 **Wastewater Budget**

180
181 Wells went over the revenues for FY21 and said it looks like we're on track this year on
182 sewer and sewer surcharges, and also septic dumping fees are on track. He went over
183 the expenditures and said everything is also pretty much in line with what has been
184 budgeted. He went over the equipment replacements they've had over the last year,
185 and how they are hard to predict from year to year.

186
187 Wiger-Grohs asked Wells if they test for glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup,
188 since there is concern that it's getting into the water supply, but how do we know if we
189 don't test. Wells said they don't test for that. She said she is concerned about the use
190 of herbicides near waterways. Seeley reminded Wiger-Grohs that Wells would be
191 testing wastewater, not drinking water. Wiger-Grohs said yes, but the wastewater
192 would show if it was present.

193
194 Werner pointed out the \$100,000 for Note Anticipation in Line 144, and said this is to
195 start planning for the plant upgrades. He said the engineers predicted we should be
196 putting approximately \$500,000 away each year to pay for the upgrade note, so he
197 started with \$100,000 and since this is the last year of the 1999 bond payment of
198 \$409,000, next year that will bring us to the \$500,000 they thought we should be putting
199 away. He said we'll be looking at rates over the next couple of weeks, so depending on
200 what we anticipate, that \$100,000 might stay in the budget, or might be cut.

201

202 Seeley asked about rates, and Werner said once expenses are identified, the
203 anticipated revenues are subtracted and rates are calculated based on the difference.
204 He said the rates will be the topic at the next meeting. Seeley said she'd like to keep
205 rates as flat as we could this year to give people time to recover from the impact of
206 COVID. Seeley said we will need to approve the budgets and rates in June so it can go
207 to the Selectboard by July 1st.

208

209 **Water Budget**

210

211 Kernan said that revenue-wise we're doing okay this year. He said on the expense side
212 there are four drivers: administration and overtime; an increase in electricity for Well #3;
213 and the two main drivers, water main repairs and water meters.

214

215 He said this year the repair of mains is nearly double what was budgeted for due to
216 more breaks, some that were major, and the need to hire contractors when the highway
217 crew wasn't available.

218

219 He said there's \$100,000 in the budget in FY22 for new meters. He said in 2014 we
220 replaced our meters with end point meters with a 10-year life, but with the changes in
221 the cellular industry we may lose support for some of the earlier meters we installed, so
222 Badger, who supplies our meters, is offering a 50% discount if we replace these meters
223 early. He said the cellular changes are happening in January of 2022, so they've
224 included money in the budget to replace all the Generation 1 end point meters, and the
225 new ones have a 20-year life.

226

227 Seeley asked if we should be setting aside money each year for replacement of the
228 meters so it isn't such a big swing. She asked what we'd be looking at to replace the
229 2nd or 3rd generation meters, and Kernan said he wasn't sure and he'd have to
230 investigate that. Kernan said the fortunate thing is these meters would need to be
231 replaced in 2 or 3 years anyway, so we're saving money by doing it now with a 50%
232 discount from Badger. Seeley said that's why she thought it would be a good idea to
233 set aside a certain amount each year so the funds would be available when there is the
234 need to upgrade the meters.

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236 Seeley thanked them for the presentation and said the Committee would finalize the
237 budgets in June.

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10. Wastewater Department Class IV Truck Purchase

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Kernan reminded the Committee that at the last meeting they'd looked at the bids received from the two local vendors for 3 trucks. He said the bids had come in late, so based on that, and that there wasn't a broader response, he was asked to go back out and explore other options. He said he went to individual dealers and he found out that the prices we had received from the local vendors are competitive with other dealers.

He reviewed the various vehicles and the fact that some of them will need to be ordered, so there is a wait time before we would receive the vehicle. He said Goss Dodge has a truck on their lot, but it is quite a lot more than the original bids. He said since the original bids were competitive, he is looking to see what the Committee would like him to do.

Kernan reminded them that there are delays in the auto industry, so we if we order a vehicle, we don't know how long it will take until we actually receive it. Kernan said the truck we're replacing is almost on its last legs, and he asked Wells his opinion on the condition of the truck. Wells agreed the truck is in rough shape at 20 years old. Wells said if he had his choice of the vehicles from the original bid, he'd choose the Ram 4500. Seeley asked Wells if he was willing to wait for that truck, considering their truck is in such bad shape. Wells said they could use the water truck with the crane if they needed to pull a pump, or they could go with a contractor. Seeley said she just wondered if it was worth the extra money to get the truck that's on the lot, rather than order it and maybe spend more money having to hire a contractor. Wells said he thought it would be best to go with the Ram 4500, which was also the lowest bid.

Seeley asked about the budget for this. Kernan said the cost is about \$20,000 above his estimate, but there are sufficient funds in the Equipment Fund to cover the truck cost.

Baker moved to recommend the Board award the bid to Stone CDJR for the Ram 4500. Wiger-Grohs seconded the motion. The motion carried with 4 in favor, 3 absent (DiBisschop and McLaughlin had left the meeting). **MOTION PASSED.**

11. Committee Member Concerns

There were no concerns. Thomas thanked everyone for the warm welcome, and Wiger-Grohs said she'd mentioned her concern about the herbicide spraying at the airport earlier in the meeting.

282 Kernan mentioned that at the meeting at the airport, the State said they are going to
283 look at alternatives for killing weeds, and the Dept. of Agriculture is going to take soil
284 and water samples in both the East Middlebury and Middlebury water systems and test
285 for specific ingredients of what they currently use for a herbicide.

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12. Adjournment

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289 The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. upon motion by Wiger-Grohs, seconded by Baker.

290

291 The next Infrastructure Committee will be Thursday, June 10th at 9:00 a.m.

292

293 Respectfully submitted,

294 Beth Dow