

1 TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY
2 Infrastructure Committee
3 Town Offices Large Conference Room
4 Thursday, December 15, 2017
5 DRAFT Meeting Minutes
6

7 Committee Members Present: Susan Shashok, Kirk Fiske, Gary Baker, Don Keeler, Jr., Chris
8 Robbins, Heather Seeley and Alternate Judith Wiger-Grohs. Luther Tenny was absent, so
9 Wiger-Grohs will be participating in voting at this meeting.
10

11 Town Staff: Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay, Director of Public Works Planning Dan Werner,
12 Director of Public Works Operations Bill Kernan, Treasurer/Accounting Services Manager Jackie
13 Sullivan, Wastewater Superintendent Bob Wells, Water Division Chief Willie Glenn and Matt
14 Cram, Israel Dwire from the Highway Department, and Town Mechanic Eric Steele.
15

16 Ross Conrad was there for the Citizen Comments portion of the meeting.
17

18 The meeting was called to order by Chair Susan Shashok at 8:15 a.m.
19

20 Approval of Agenda
21

22 Shashok said she would like to add a discussion regarding potential uses for the Cross Street
23 Bridge surplus funds before Committee Members Concerns. Werner also wanted to add the
24 Public Works boiler to the Public Works building discussion. The agenda was approved with
25 the additions upon motion by Baker, seconded by Seeley. The vote was 7 in favor.
26

27 Approval of Meeting Minutes for October 26, 2017
28

29 The minutes of October 26, 2017 were approved 7-0 upon motion by Baker, seconded by
30 Robbins, with the following changes:
31

32 Line 54 – Change to read “between the concrete and granite into the bridge”

33 Line 241 – Change “has looked” to “will look”
34

35 Approval of Meeting Minutes of November 9, 2017
36

37 The minutes of November 9, 2017 were approved 7-0 upon motion by Baker, seconded by
38 Seeley, with the correction of the spelling of Shashok in line 321.

39 Approval of Meeting Minutes of November 30, 2017

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41 The minutes of November 30, 2017 were approved as presented with 5 in favor, 2 abstaining
42 (Keeler and Wiger-Grohs).

43

44 Citizen Comments

45

46 Ross Conrad wanted the Infrastructure Committee to be aware of an opportunity from Green
47 Lantern Group who is looking for energy off-takers from their 5 solar projects. He said they
48 work with towns and schools to offer electricity savings and he thought the wastewater
49 treatment plant might be a good option for taking advantage of this.

50

51 Shashok said Conrad had brought this to the Selectboard at their meeting on December 12th,
52 and she suggested he take this to the Energy Committee for their consideration and then the
53 Committee can make a recommendation that can be acted on.

54

55 Equipment Fund

56

57 Werner gave the Committee a quick review of how the Equipment Fund works. He said it's
58 broken into two categories; operations and maintenance of equipment, and the purchasing of
59 equipment. He said the department tracks expenses of the equipment for each department
60 and then they calculate what percentage of that is from the total budget and then these
61 expenses are charged back to the various departments. He said the requests to purchase
62 equipment are made to the Board and if approved, they then go to the voters at Town Meeting
63 for their approval. He said those purchases are made and expensed in the next Fiscal Year. He
64 said the equipment is paid for either by cash-in-hand, or charged back to the various
65 departments.

66

67 Shashok said each department pays towards the equipment they actually use, so the cost
68 actually reflects what their department is paying for.

69

70 He explained how the budget reflects these cost and how they're broken up. He said some of
71 the highway equipment costs come out of the water and wastewater funds, because they share
72 some of the equipment and the Water Department also contributes \$10,000/year towards the
73 Public Works building maintenance because the Water Department is housed there.

74

75 Ramsay said that the debt service in FY19 for the Highway Department was decreased by
76 \$93,000, but rather than show it as a reduction in the budget, they are recommending holding

77 it in reserve. She said this would be similar to how they are rethinking the Capital
78 Improvements budgeting process. She said this excess is due in part to keeping the equipment
79 longer and rehabbing the equipment.

80

81 Kernan said one problem with keeping the equipment longer, is there are more frequent
82 breakdowns. Eric Steele said his concern is by extending the life of the equipment by
83 refurbishing it, you are doubling the life of the truck, so the repairs for the second half of the
84 truck's life are all on the Town because any warranty is gone. He said engines and exhaust
85 systems are very expensive to replace. Ramsay said any unforeseen repairs would be paid for
86 from the reserve fund.

87

88 Shashok suggested that staff discuss this and come back with a recommendation on equipment
89 replacement and refurbishing.

90

91 Bandit 12XP Brush Chipper

92

93 Kernan said he had sought bids from five companies and 3 came in with proposals. He said the
94 highway crew saw a VTrans demonstration of the Bandit chipper, and also a factory
95 demonstration by the Bandit company at Champlain Equipment. This is the chipper they are
96 recommending at a cost not to exceed \$40,000.

97

98 Seeley made the motion to recommend the Selectboard accept the recommendation to
99 purchase the Bandit 12XP Gas brush chipper at a cost not to exceed \$40,000. Fiske seconded
100 the motion.

101

102 Wiger-Grohs asked what size chips the machine produced, and Kernan said 5/8". Wiger-Grohs
103 was concerned since the recommended size for chipping any trees damaged by the Emerald-
104 Ash Borer (EAB) is 1/2". There was discussion over the size of the chips, and Wiger-Grohs will
105 look into the recommended chipping process for EAB diseased trees.

106

107 The vote was 7-0 in favor for recommending the chipper to the Selectboard.

108

109 New Equipment

110

- 111 • Sweeper – Kernan said our current sweeper is a 1999 mechanical sweeper, and they are
112 proposing to purchase a vacuum sweeper. They were pleased with the Johnson VT651
113 demonstration and Viking Cives is the only supplier in the State. Werner said there is a
114 grant available in August to purchase this sweeper, but the Town needs to budget for

115 the 25% matching funds required, which is \$56,000. He said the chances of receiving
116 this grant are quite high.

117

118 Baker moved to recommend to the Selectboard budgeting the \$56,000 for matching funds
119 for purchase of the Johnson VT651 sweeper. Seeley seconded the motion. The motion was
120 approved 7-0.

121

- 122 • Skid Steerer – Kernan said the Wastewater Department has an old John Deere
123 tractor/loader that is in need of replacing. He said purchasing a skid steerer could be
124 paid for over several budgets, since it could be shared with other departments, and his
125 proposal is 50% wastewater, 30% highway, 10% water and 10% recreation. The cost of
126 the skid steerer is estimated at \$50-60,000, but this recommendation would be for the
127 highway and recreation portion of the cost, or \$24,000.

128

129 Seeley made the motion to recommend the skid steerer proposal to the Selectboard. Fiske
130 seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.

131

132 Keeler didn't really like the percentage breakdown and questions the Recreation
133 Department use at 10%. He also suggested using some of the Cross Street Bridge surplus
134 funds to purchase equipment to help clean snow off the bridge. He also hopes they buy
135 local.

136

- 137 • Asphalt Hot Box – Kernan said this piece of equipment would allow more productive
138 winter work by permanently repairing potholes and water main breaks in the with hot
139 patch and eliminating the need to return to the site in the spring. This Hot Box would
140 also allow the road crew to transport hot mix from the batch plant and any remaining
141 asphalt could be reheated and used again and not wasted, and reclaimed material can
142 also be reheated and used again.

143

144 Matt Cram said they are also recommending the \$3,000 dump feature on the hot box for a
145 total of \$24,000.

146

147 Keeler asked if this was being used for water and sewer repairs, then the cost should be
148 shared. Shashok asked for the breakdown of the cost by department by the next meeting.
149 Werner said that at Town Meeting it would need to be made clear at Town Meeting that
150 the amount they would be voting on would be only the Highway Department portion of the
151 cost.

152

153 Fiske made the motion to recommend to the Selectboard to budget \$24,000 for an Asphalt
154 Hot Box with dump. Seeley seconded the motion. The motion was approved with 7-0.

155

156 Repairs to Public Works

157

158 Werner said Raymond Remodeling and Construction had submitted a proposal to do some
159 repair work on the Public Works building. He said the work included some fascia and window
160 trim replacement above the brick work of the building, replacing the entry way roof near the
161 pumps and some window trim on the south side of the building, and replacing 2 door frames
162 and doors that were deteriorating and separating from the building.

163

164 Keeler said he believes in the bid policy and he wants to see more bids before he acts on this.
165 Werner said he has had a problem getting contractors to talk to him, because they're all so
166 busy. Shashok said they'd hold off until there are some more bids on this work.

167

168 Werner said the boiler at Public Works has developed a leak. The first price he got was from
169 Plouffe Plumbing and Heating for \$8,000, and Ryan has looked at it and will be sending a price.
170 He said both vendors recommend eliminating the diesel unit and going with propane and then
171 switch to natural gas in the spring. Shashok said the Committee would be looking for more
172 information on cost estimates. She also suggested checking with programs from Efficiency
173 Vermont.

174

175 Capital Building and Storage Planning

176

177 Shashok said staff has recommended the Forest Service Property is not suitable for our needs
178 and are recommending we go back to Judy Harris's project planning that she recommended.
179 She said the Facilities Planning budget has \$32,686 available, so there is money for this.
180 Harris's estimate is \$5,000 for each project, which included the storage building and Public
181 Works. Keeler asked about the availability of any decommissioning money, and Ramsay said
182 that was part of the Wastewater Treatment Facility settlement and would need to be discussed
183 as a potential source. Shashok said the time to discuss it has come and having Harris take a
184 look at it is a good idea, and the money is set aside to do this.

185

186 Baker moved to proceed with Harris & Harris's recommendation to double-track two projects;
187 the storage building site at the old Wastewater Treatment Plant and a future Public Works site.
188 Seeley seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.

189

190 There was further discussion around what had been talked about previously about removing
191 and replacing buildings. Werner said the proposal is for developing a new storage building.

192

193 Cross Street Bridge Surplus Money

194

195 Ramsay explained that the Selectboard had wanted to look at the Cross Street Bridge fund
196 balance, which is a result of the Local Option Tax revenues being higher than anticipated, by
197 about \$200,000 per year, and the dropping debt service on the bridge. She said the Board had
198 also requested an estimate of maintenance costs, so VHB came up with projected maintenance
199 costs. She said looking at those, along with the debt service costs and the estimated local
200 option tax revenue, it is estimated that the \$1.3 million surplus figure will be growing by about
201 \$280,000 per year. One thing to note, she said, is the maintenance estimates are in 2017
202 dollars, so those costs will grow over time due to inflation, but she has made several
203 conservative estimates when looking at these, the main one being the used a 5% average of
204 the Local Option Tax receipts of \$844,000 vs. the actual FY16 receipts of \$944,000. So these are
205 conservative estimates of what we might see for a surplus over the next few years.

206

207 Shashok said there was a Board discussion over what we wanted to spend these funds on, and
208 some liked the idea of spending the bridge infrastructure money on other infrastructure. She
209 said the Board had asked the Infrastructure Committee for some suggestions on how to use the
210 money. She said because we are further along in the budgeting process this year, it's difficult
211 to assign it to a specific project. She said she was thinking about recommending using some of
212 this money to go towards the Capital Improvements Budget this year, and then for next year
213 come up with a project the Board can support.

214

215 There was discussion on taking it to the voters, and the need to have something very specific to
216 ask the voters for. Ramsay said one proposal is to use some of these funds to pay the \$57,000
217 difference between the FY18 and the FY19 Capital Improvements Budget. She said \$57,000 is
218 less than 1-cent on the tax rate, so if the voters said "no" at Town Meeting, it would come out
219 of tax dollars and the budget wouldn't be broken.

220

221 Keeler asked about using the money to loan to the Town for purchases. Seeley said it had been
222 mentioned in the Selectboard meeting about using the money to stabilize property taxes, but
223 the majority seemed to feel it should be used for infrastructure. She said by putting some of
224 this money towards the Capital Improvements budget, it's both helping with taxes and helping
225 with infrastructure. She didn't know if using the money for a loan that had to be paid back was
226 going to help stabilize taxes. Ramsay said if you look at just the \$1.3 million surplus, it has the

227 potential to be used for loans. Seeley said she'd like it go towards projects that the whole
228 community benefits from, and infrastructure is something everyone benefits from.
229
230 Seeley moved to recommend the Selectboard ask the voters at Town Meeting to use the Cross
231 Street Bridge surplus funds to pay the \$57,000 difference between the FY18 and FY19 Capital
232 Improvement Budgets. Baker seconded the motion. The motion was approved with 7 in favor.
233
234 Shashok said the Committee should also let the Board know they are willing to take a look at
235 this again next year during the Capital Improvement budgeting process. Seeley said they'd
236 need to ask staff for recommendations.
237
238 Committee Members Concerns
239
240 Fiske wanted to compliment Kernan and Matt Cram and the road crew for the great job of
241 clearing the roads and sidewalks in this last storm.
242
243 Seeley wanted to thank Kernan also for his helpful memo and for allowing some of the DPW
244 staff present at the meeting today for their input.
245
246 Robbins was concerned about the removal of the stormwater grant match money from the
247 Capital Improvements budget. She said all the other items that were removed this year were
248 moved to other years, except the stormwater grant money which was just removed. Ramsay
249 said there was some stormwater work being done as part of other projects.
250
251 Wiger-Grohs asked if solar panels could be used to replace the Public Works boiler. Shashok
252 said there are difficulties with the building structure to allow panels on the roof, and Werner
253 said they're also about a new location in the future.
254
255 The next Infrastructure Committee meeting will be Thursday, January 11, 2018 at 8:15 a.m.
256
257 The meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m. upon motion by Seeley, seconded by Fiske.
258
259 Respectfully submitted,
260 Beth Dow