

1 TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY
2 Infrastructure Committee
3 Town Offices Large Conference Room
4 Thursday, September 14, 2017
5 Meeting Minutes
6

7 Committee Members Present: Susan Shashok, Kirk Fiske, Gary Baker, Don Keeler, Jr., Chris Robbins,
8 Heather Seeley and Luther Tenny. Alternate Judith Wiger-Grohs was absent.
9

10 Town Staff: Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay, Director of Public Works Planning Dan Werner, Director
11 of Public Works Operations Bill Kernan, Treasurer/Accounting Services Manager Jackie Sullivan,
12 Wastewater Chief Bob Wells and Director of Planning and Zoning Jennifer Murray.

13 Others Present: Aaron Guyette of VHB, Scott Corbett of VTrans, Victor Nuovo and Amos Roleau.
14

15 The meeting was called to order by Chair Susan Shashok at 8:15 a.m.
16

17 Approval of Agenda
18

19 The agenda was approved as presented upon motion by Baker, seconded by Seeley. The vote was 7 in
20 favor.
21

22 Approval of Meeting Minutes for July 13, 2017
23

24 The minutes of August 10, 2017 were approved as presented upon motion by Fiske, seconded by
25 Baker. The vote was 7 in favor.
26

27 Citizen Comments
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29 Amos Roleau, a resident of North Pleasant Street, asked about the status of the sidewalk project. He is
30 tired of not being able to get into his driveway and hasn't had any communication about the project
31 since the first letter they received in June. Werner told him that there were some sections that had
32 been installed incorrectly, so the contractor was coming back Saturday to begin work to remove those
33 sections so they could be reinstalled correctly. There was no time frame on when it would be
34 complete, but Werner said the contractor was well aware this project needs to be wrapped up.
35
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38

39 Aaron Guyette, VHB – Water Main Schedule, Curing & Sidewalk Limits and Schedule

40

41 Aaron Guyette, Project Manager of the Main Street/Merchants Row Railroad Bridge Project,
42 introduced himself and Scott Corbett, who is with VTrans and is the Utility Coordinator for the project.
43 Guyette said he was there to discuss the water and sewer lines in the Battell Block/Merchants Row
44 area, and to go over what currently exists, what the construction impacts will be, the proposed water
45 and sewer reconstruction within the project, then Werner will address alternate plans and go over the
46 benefits of the alternate plans to both the project and the Town.

47

48 Guyette said there is around 3,500 feet of railway that has quite a few utility crossings that will need to
49 be moved, but he will be speaking specifically to the area of the Battell Block and Merchants Row. He
50 said there is an existing 8" water line under the railway that goes up the Battell Block driveway and
51 connects to an 8" main in Merchants Row. This 8" line services the pump station behind the Battell
52 Block, the Battell Block and the hydrant and fountain in Triangle Park. He said there is also an existing
53 sewer force main that comes out of the pump station, up the driveway to a manhole in Triangle Park.
54 The construction will impact the railroad and the Battell Block driveway, and they know these two
55 lines will need to be reconstructed.

56

57 Guyette said usually in a project where utilities are impacted, they will reconstruct the utilities in
58 roughly the same location with no improvements, but to return it to a state that allows for consistent
59 service both before and after the project. He described the route the water line would go to reconnect
60 to Merchants Row, and said the sewer force main would need to be replaced, but also needs to be
61 maintained throughout the project.

62

63 He said since this length of waterline doesn't serve that many services, they began to wonder if there
64 were alternatives using existing infrastructure that would reduce the cost. He said if that alternative is
65 found, then VTrans will contribute to the Town what it would have cost them to reconstruct the line,
66 towards the cost of an alternate project.

67

68 Werner described the alternate proposal, which involves running the water line north from Merchants
69 Row under the sidewalk of the Town Green, around the curve by Emma Willard to tie into the main at
70 Seymour Street and tie into the North Pleasant line. It would also go east along the north side of Court
71 Square to tie into Washington Street and Court Street. This would allow them to abandon the 8" water
72 main in Merchants Row.

73

74 Seeley asked if they know yet what it would cost VTrans to replace the existing lines. Guyette said the
75 rough estimate was around \$180,000 minus the cost to replace the section of the line that ran under

76 the railway, which is not eligible for reimbursement. They do not know how much that section would
77 be to replace.

78

79 Tenny said this alternate would eliminate a waterline loop downtown, but it would also eliminate the
80 liability of having the waterline under the railroad. He said he'd be interested to see what the impacts
81 would be without this loop, as well as the planned location of the shutoffs.

82

83 Guyette said this alternate plan would benefit the construction and phasing, as well as the Battell
84 Block. Seeley asked about replacing the domestic water line to the Battell Block, and Guyette said that
85 would be part of the right-of-way process.

86

87 Shashok asked about timing, and asked Guyette that, if the Town went with the alternative waterline,
88 would it would need to be done fairly soon. Guyette said the VTrans team needs to know by
89 December 1, 2017 if the Town is going with the alternative plan. If they do decide to construct the
90 alternate waterline, ideally it would be done in 2018, but the "drop-dead" date to have it completed is
91 October 2019.

92

93 Seeley said she was concerned about how this would impact the other priorities already on the table.
94 She asked Werner if there was any way to scale back the cost of the project to take advantage of this
95 opportunity. Werner said there was. Corbett said if the alternate plan is scaled back, the
96 reimbursement amount stays the same. Seeley felt the reimbursement amount seemed a little low.
97 Shashok asked Guyette and Corbett to work on firming up the reimbursement amount, so the Town
98 can make the decision on whether to proceed with the alternate plan or not.

99

100 Werner asked who paid to replace that section of pipe in place under the railroad, and Corbett said the
101 Town paid for that, so ultimately the State would look to the Town to reimburse them for that portion
102 of construction.

103

104 Sidewalks

105

106 Werner said there are several areas around the downtown where curbs have been replaced with
107 granite, so he had reached out to Guyette to see what the chance was of replacing the curbs in the
108 project area in granite. Guyette said that within the project area, VTrans has agreed to replace the
109 curbs with granite, except over the tunnel. He said the reason they won't place them over the tunnel
110 is because there is a gap behind the granite where saltwater can collect and deteriorate with time, and
111 VTrans does not want to compromise the tunnel structure. Fiske asked the cost, and Werner said
112 while they are more expensive to install, but over the long-term they are cheaper.

113

114 Tenny said he had not had good luck with granite curbs. He said where the concrete sidewalk meets
115 the granite curb, there is a lot of deterioration and Middlebury College has actually replaced the
116 granite curbs with concrete. He said when it comes to plowing and durability on highways, they're
117 fine, but not for sidewalks.

118
119 Victor Nuovo said from an aesthetics standpoint, the concrete chips and cracks and looks badly and
120 cheapens the town, so he's pleased VTrans will be using granite.

121
122 Shashok said she didn't really have a preference, and was most concerned about the longevity of the
123 infrastructure. Robbins said the concrete curbing is always chipping and looks bad, so we're either
124 going to be replacing the curbing or replacing the sidewalk, and the granite curbing looks so much
125 better.

126

127 Water and Wastewater Budgets

128

129 Town Manager Ramsay recapped for the Committee what has happened previously. She said they
130 needed an additional \$30,870 to balance the Water budget, so staff had proposed to reduce the base
131 rate and eliminate the 3,000 gallon minimum usage. The Committee decided to not lower the base
132 rate, but to eliminate the 3,000 gallon minimum, which ended up bringing in an additional \$23,310 in
133 revenue. This amount would be added to the Capital spending to balance the budget.

134

135 She said following this decision, staff tried to see what these changes would mean to the Wastewater
136 revenues, and it turns out it would increase the Wastewater revenues by \$107,000. She said they'd
137 talked about reducing the wastewater base rate, but that seemed inconsistent with where the
138 Committee was heading, and we're going to need an increase in the future, so do we want to reduce
139 the base rate now. She said it is staff's recommendation that the wastewater rates remain untouched,
140 with the 3,000 gallon minimum, and keep the base rate the same for this year, until we have time to
141 look at the overall philosophy. Ramsay said they had looked at keeping the wastewater base rate the
142 same and reducing the usage fees, which resulted in a 12.3% decrease in the user rate, but this
143 impacted the larger users the most, and staff didn't think it was prudent at this time to do a 12.3%
144 decrease.

145

146 Keeler and Tenny both said with all the infrastructure improvements that need to be made we need to
147 be looking at building the revenues, so we aren't always having to bond for these projects.

148

149 Ramsay reminded the Committee that when they looked at the Wastewater Budget, they agreed to
150 the concept that this budget does not require any changes in the wastewater rates.

151

152 Ramsay said they had a very comprehensive memo and analysis from Wastewater Superintendent Bob
153 Wells, who is recommending a 2-cent-per-gallon increase in the septage rates.

154

155 Seeley moved the Committee recommend the proposed Water Fund budget of \$1,233,346 to the
156 Selectboard for adoption. Fiske seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 in favor.

157

158 Seeley moved the Committee recommend to the Selectboard eliminating the minimum usage of 3,000
159 gallons/quarter and maintain the water base rate of \$35.52 and usage rate of \$3.04 per 1,000 gallons,
160 effective at the start of the fourth billing quarter of 2017. Fiske seconded the motion. The motion
161 passed with 7 in favor.

162

163 Seeley moved to recommend the proposed FY18 Wastewater Fund budget of \$2,537,900 to the
164 Selectboard for adoption. Fiske seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 in favor.

165

166 Baker moved that the Committee recommend to the Selectboard that it retain the same wastewater
167 rates as in FY17, with the base rate of \$39.60/quarter, with 3,000 gallons/quarter included in the base
168 rate and the usage rate remaining at \$7.78 per 1,000 gallons, effective at the start of the fourth billing
169 quarter for 2017. Fiske seconded the motion. The motion passed with 7 in favor.

170

171 Baker moved that the Committee recommend to the Selectboard an increase of 2 cents per gallon in
172 the septage disposal rate, from \$.09 to \$.11 per gallon, and an increase in the Field Days septage
173 disposal rate from \$.03 to \$.04, effective January 1, 2018. Fiske seconded the motion. The motion
174 passed with 7 in favor.

175

176 Seeley thanked Bob Wells for his very well thought out budget and analysis, and Ramsay, Werner and
177 Jackie Sullivan for all the work on the water and wastewater rate analysis.

178

179 Due to work on the Capital Budget that will take place in October, the Committee scheduled a meeting
180 on November 30, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. to discuss the Committee's water and wastewater rate setting
181 philosophy.

182

183 Project Updates

184

185 Water Monitoring Project - Werner reported the water monitoring project is set to start next year and
186 it will go out to bid this winter.

187

188

189 Water Planning Loan – System Hydraulic Study – Werner said we would need to look at the hydraulics
190 of the water line around the Merchants Row area, to help make the decision by December 1st. He
191 wasn't sure, however, if this was possible in that time frame. Seeley asked what that study would do
192 to help with their decision, and Werner said it would show what impacts it might make to the west side
193 of town by eliminating the water line under the railroad. Seeley asked if a partial study could be done
194 to help them decide. Shashok said she wasn't sure what a hydraulic study would show that would
195 impact her decision. She feels a study is definitely needed to help with other decisions on major
196 projects they're looking at, she just isn't sure a study is needed for this one.

197

198 There was an extended discussion on the need for the study to see about the impacts to the capacity
199 by removing the line under the railroad. Tenny agreed a full study wasn't needed, but thought for a
200 few thousand dollars you could have some calculations done for the downtown area. He felt the
201 Committee really should see the impact of eliminating that line, and that he would be interested in
202 seeing the impact on the fire flow pressure downtown.

203

204 Seeley said based on her knowledge of the condition of the infrastructure in this area, she agrees this
205 work needs to be done, but there is a long list of other priorities and can we afford to do it. She also
206 agreed a hydraulic study was needed for all the projects they're anticipating, but it wouldn't impact her
207 decision on this one. Tenny felt we should take advantage of this money from VTrans to improve this
208 infrastructure in the heart of our downtown, or otherwise the entire cost will be ours.

209

210 Werner said what he was hearing from the Committee is they want the hydraulic study for the whole
211 system, so he will continue to include it in the planning grant.

212

213 Shashok asked Werner to tell her what he was taking away from this meeting. Werner said that the
214 Committee does not want to replace the line under the railway, but have not made a decision yet on
215 the waterline upgrade, and that the hydraulic study for the water system would be included in the
216 planning grant.

217

218 Municipal Planning Grant

219

220 Director of Planning and Zoning Jennifer Murray joined the Committee and said applications for the
221 next round of Municipal Planning Grants are due October 8th. She said the Planning Commission and
222 herself are interested in submitting an application to hire designers to do a streetscape improvement
223 plan for the area of Seymour Street between Greg's Market and the Congregational Church.

224

225 There was discussion about the observations made in this area during the VIVID Midd Bike-Pedestrian
226 Pop-up Demonstration project recently, and how this streetscape plan might work with some of those

227 results. Murray said the reason they chose this area is because of the improvements being made on
228 Exchange Street and downtown, and how it would be nice to improve this corridor between the two,
229 and to enhance what the railroad will be doing in this area as part of the downtown bridges project.
230

231 There was considerable discussion regarding this proposed study and the sidewalk issues in this area.
232 Murray said the Planning Commission would only take this on if they were in charge of the managing
233 the project and hiring their own consultant and manage the public hearings. She said she would check
234 in once or twice with the Committee during that process, and wants to see if this will work with how
235 the Infrastructure Committee sees their participation in the project.
236

237 Shashok asked about the implementation plan after the study. Ramsay said the idea was we could
238 maximize integration with whatever plans the railroad project was going to do in that area and
239 integrate it into the streetscape improvements. Seeley said she would love to see what someone
240 would propose for that area, but with these studies everyone gets excited and wants to do it, but then
241 there is never the money to do it. Murray said that is a legitimate concern, and if they want the
242 Planning Commission to put this on hold, then they can just do some innocuous planning study,
243 although she would rather have the study on the shelf and ready should funding come along. She felt
244 the timing of this study would fit in perfectly with the Downtown Planning Grant.
245

246 Mill Street Park & Ride – Paving Proposal

247
248 Werner said he doesn't have a proposal from D&F Paving yet, but there is approximately \$15,700
249 remaining in grant funds, and he expects the proposal will fall within the remaining funds. He said if
250 this is alright with the Committee, when he gets the proposal he'll just take it to the Selectboard for
251 approval. The Committee was fine with that.
252

253 Winter Sand Bids

254
255 Keeler wanted to know why they always bid for sand by the ton instead of by the yard. He said if the
256 sand is weighed on a rainy day, then we're paying for wet sand and paying more for it. Tenny said one
257 of the pieces of feedback he's gotten from contractors around the sand bid is the specifications are so
258 strict, it restricts more people from bidding on it. He said we're only getting two bidders and the price
259 difference was considerable, but at least the price is similar to last year. The two bidders this year
260 were Champlain Construction and J.P. Carrara and Sons. Champlain Construction's bid was \$12.75/ton
261 with the sand and gravel testing at 98.7%, bringing actual cost per ton to \$12.92. J.P. Carrara's bid was
262 \$9.25/ton, with sand and gravel tested at 96.2%, bringing the actual cost to \$9.62/ton.
263

264 Baker made the motion to recommend the Selectboard award the Winter Sand bid to J.P. Carrara and
265 Sons for \$9.25/ton. Tenny seconded the motion. The motion was approved with 7 in favor.

266

267 Committee Concerns

268

269 Keeler said he understood that the RT 116 work being done by VTrans will involve changing the
270 intersection at Ossie Road into a T intersection with stop sign instead of the current configuration of a
271 sweeping turn. He said if this happens, the J.P. Carrara trucks hauling 175' I-beams will not be able to
272 make that intersection. Shashok wondered if Carrara was aware of this proposal. Werner said we
273 should try and get a copy of the plans for that intersection.

274

275 Robbins asked Werner if he had tested the stormwater at the Buttolph Drive basin in a rain storm, and
276 he said he had. He said there wasn't enough water at the High St/Seminary St intersection ditch to
277 take a sample. He took one at the Buttolph Drive inlet pipe to the pond and outfall, and there was
278 about an 11% reduction in phosphorous and some reduction in solids. He'll send the results to
279 Robbins.

280

281 Seeley asked about the status of the concrete test results on North Pleasant Street since they were
282 coming back to fix the grade anyway. Werner said so far the testing has been good.

283

284 The October meetings were set for October 12th and October 26th, both at 8:15 a.m.

285

286 The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

287 Respectfully submitted,

288 Beth Dow