

**TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY**  
**Public Health & Safety Committee**  
**Middlebury Police Dept Community Room**  
**Monday, Jan 28, 2019\* Final Meeting Minutes**

Attending the meeting: Committee members Selectboard Member Laura Asermily, Police Chief Thomas Hanley, Fire Chief Dave Shaw, MREMS Dir Teena Betourney, Addison County Sheriff Peter Newton, Gary Baker, Porter EM Dir Mike Leyden, Midd College Public Safety Lisa Burchard, Health Officer Tom Scanlon, Ira Schiffer, Absent: MUHS student Kyle Mitchell. Guests: Parks & Rec/Asst Health Officer Dustin Hunt, Rail Bridge Jim Gish, ACTR Bill Cunningham, Charter House Dir Doug Sinclair, Peg Goldman.

**Call to Order.** Chair Laura Asermily called the meeting to order at 4 pm.

**Approval of Agenda.** Dave Shaw moved that the Committee approve the Agenda as presented. Tom Hanley seconded the motion, which was approved by the Committee.

**Approval of Dec 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes:** Tom Scanlon moved and Dave Shaw seconded without any changes. Passed unanimously.

**Citizens Comments.** None.

**Emergency Management Planning & Response (updates):** MPD Chief Tom Hanley offered a brief report on the MUMS attempted shooter event, which was debriefed in depth earlier with ACSD and others. MPD response and investigation process was good. Important media management lessons were learned, especially for ACSD. Different world with social media where info is distributed rapidly and can be distorted quickly. Laura noted the number of harsh responses on MPD facebook page related to the decision to claim guns and effort of community members to counter this with positive statements. There seemed to be a similar explosion of social media responses to ACSD email communication to parents regarding placing Addison County Sheriff officers on school buses to catch motorists passing school buses illegally where some parents objected to armed officers being on buses. Addison County Sheriff Peter Newton said this was being worked on with ACSD. Tom shared that it is best not to feed “trolls” and nasty responses with more responses and just take them down. He notices responses die down of their own accord in due time. MPD will manage its Facebook page differently going forward and only use it to post “outflow” info, e.g, winter ban in effect. No more pics of dogs or officers in beards, that sort of thing. Laura expressed surprise, thinking these were neutral and MPD was more likely to get negative responses to other things. Tom said they were surprised at the nasty things people could say even about things like toy collection. They will do just straightforward messages that provide needed public info only and use their website page to post any human interest things.

In other business,

--Mike Leyden reported that there would be another emergency response tabletop exercise on or about Feb 13. It would likely involve a missing person scenario from Helen Porter and be another opportunity for multiple agencies to coordinate response and communication.

--Tom Hanley reported that it's time to start annual updating of the Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) which will be in a new format this year. He hopes everyone can start to think about it now to ensure enough time for Selectboard approval to meet the deadline at end of April.

**Downtown Parking and Sidewalk Use Signage and Policy**(cars, delivery and emergency vehicles, buses, bikes and other rideable devices/EVs) General discussion ensued on a number of topics. Laura refreshed the committee on discussion from last meeting, particularly about the potential arrival of dockless electric assist scooters and bikes, potentially to relieve downtown access during the rail bridge construction shutdown in summer 2020. Tom Hanley noted that he had met with Fred Dunnington to review the ordinance for bikes and other rideable devices and they realized that this had become involved and would require looping in others who participated in the previous round of the ordinance. Laura thanked the efforts thus far. Meanwhile, we needed to think about our signage and education to direct where scooters, bikes and cars go downtown this spring. Laura mentioned the ongoing efforts to train school children. The committee felt this was good but much more needs to be done to train adult and young adult cyclists and pedestrians in safe behavior, especially on the college campus and Main St where several close calls continue because they are darting, unpredictable, not making eye contact, traveling in the wrong direction and wearing dark clothing. Bill Cunningham said you wouldn't believe the number of times ACTR drivers have witnessed this behavior on campus. Lisa Burchard said Midd College Public Safety reminds students with email safety messages but the dangerous behavior continues. Laura wondered if a concerted period of time monitoring and catching offenses and correcting behavior would help, such the beginning of the academic year. Tom Hanley said offenses are random and hard to monitor. When they do catch someone riding at night without a light, they have offered a free one.

In other business.

--Jim Gish reported that **rail bridge construction** was wrapping up for winter and would resume in March. He continued to work with emergency providers to ensure emergency access for their vehicles, including the MFD ladder truck into Battell which is possible but challenging.

--Tom Hanley noted the challenge of **delivery vehicles** parking during storm events and heavy snow, especially at Two Brothers where traffic has been stopped. There isn't much to do except wait.

--Peg Goldman said she was glad to learn about **free access to sand/salt** at DPW building on RT 7 for managing ice at her residence. She wondered if people could take sand/salt for their personal use with the blue buckets at Middlebury intersections and was told they were not for that use but for managing the intersections at which they were stationed—not that people didn't take from these anyway. Laura noted and thanked the effort of Lions Club to provide free sand buckets. Bill Cunningham said the Lions have been doing this for past 3 years and distribute them at HOPE, Home Health and ACTR, where staff will try to offer them to those they see as vulnerable. Perhaps more could be done to promote this service.

--Laura mentioned that she was working on the **Middlebury Town Poll** and wondered about asking how people felt about **designating 1 or 2 parking spaces** on Main St or Merchants Row **for electric cars along with a charger**. Mike Leyden, who has an electric car now, felt it made more sense to locate the space off Main St/Merchants—perhaps another quick charging Level 3 one behind the offices. There is a Level 3 charger in Mill St lot that is valuable because of its charging speed even though it's more expensive than Level 2 charger which is also down there. Tom Hanley thought one of the handicapped spots behind the library could be repurposed for this,

that there were more than enough handicapped spots back there. Power to install a charger would be easy there. We could ask about this. Mike noted you don't want to tie up prime parking for longer term charging of EVs which would happen with Level 2 charger. This type of charger would be good at Midd Rec Park. Right now there is someone who plays pickleball charging their electric car using the building's outside plug.

**Public Space Use Behavior Contract:** Bill Cunningham reiterated the issue of bus riders being put off by offensive behaviors such as extreme body odor and their need to develop acceptable behavior guidelines. ACTR is working with HOPE on developing an info card that tells you where you can take a shower and do laundry. Problem is that this is limited, especially laundry. Charter House's Doug Sinclair said anyone could take a shower at Charter House between 1 and 5 pm and they do have ability to do some laundry. Laura asked if people were using the showers at Midd Rec Building and Dustin said their policy is that the showers are for users of rec programs and they have sometimes found creative ways for people to qualify for use if someone is really in need. People are really feeling the loss of the downtown laundry mat next to Green Peppers. The only one is out on Exchange St and if you don't have a car access is very limited. There is no bus service on Sunday which is a prime laundry day. It may not be people's fault that their clothes smell. ACTR is working on Code of Conduct Sheet. Mike noted that CSAC likely has a Code of Conduct sheet it uses with clients that may be useful reference. Bill said he would ask about it and share it as well as their code of conduct with Charter House so they could establish some common language. Laura asked if codes of conduct guidelines existed at Ilsley and Midd Parks & Rec. Dustin said, to an extent. (Note: Ilsley's Dana Hart provided links to the libraries public use guidelines after the meeting. See below notes.) Mike noted that public space use guidelines will be different for social service agencies than for public entities and that town lawyer should be consulted to avoid discrimination allegations.

### **Other Business:**

--**Town Meeting:** Laura invited anyone to consider info it may want to display for Town Meeting in the MUHS cafeteria. She offered to coordinate this and put out the MFD "we want you" recruitment flyer again. She pointed to winter emergency preparedness materials made available by On Call Vermont at last year's Winter Fest and said she would reach out to them to see if they had materials to pass out as they had at the Memorial Day MFD open house.

--**Cell Tower:** MREMS still doesn't have good reception even with the second tower down. In fact, it's worse than what they had when there was just the old tower. They are adding antennas to their building to see if that helps.

--**Future PHS membership and meeting time:** Laura explained that she will be rotating off selectboard when her term is up in a year and will not seek leadership positions next year. She had spoken to a few members about assuming PHS leadership, including Nick Artim who said he would do it and Ira Schiffer who said to consider him as a back up if needed. Others are invited to consider it. Laura asked about meeting time policy of meeting monthly with ability to cancel if no business which they have done regularly this year. It spares having to figure out people's schedules. The committee could revert back to meeting on an as-needed basis or in task forces when the Selectboard assigns a task or others feel it is needed. Tom Hanley asked if the Selectboard needed anything of PHS and Laura said maybe it would want the committee or a task force of the committee to help with the **plastic bag ban** if it is approved by voters at Town Meeting. She said more information could be provided on this at a future meeting, including information she gathered

on Brattleboro's experience. The committee determined not to meet in Feb and wait until after Town Meeting to discuss matters again.

**Next Meeting.** Monday, March 18, 4 pm at MPD.

**Adjourn.** At 5:15 pm, Ira Schiffer moved that the Committee adjourn. Lisa Burchard seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Asermily  
Public Health and Safety Committee Chair

Ilsley has several policies that would apply to public space use, especially our Rules of Conduct, Animals in the Library, and Meeting Room Use Policy.

<http://www.ilsleypubliclibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Rules-of-Conduct-Policy-12.10.2018.pdf>

<http://www.ilsleypubliclibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Animals-in-the-Library-Policy-1.14.2019.pdf>

<http://www.ilsleypubliclibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Meeting-Room-Use-Policy.pdf>