

1 **Town of Middlebury**  
2 **Infrastructure Committee**  
3 **Thursday, October 27, 2022**  
4 **Meeting Minutes**  
5

6 Members Present: Heather Seeley, Gary Baker, Judy Wiger-Grohs, Luther Tenny, Erik  
7 Remsen and Alternate Jef Bratspis. Candy McLaughlin was absent.

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9 Staff Present: Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay, Director of Public Works Planning  
10 Dan Werner, Co-Director of Public Works Planning Emmalee Cherington, Fire Chief  
11 David Shaw and Director of Public Works Operations Bill Kernan.

12  
13 **Call to Order**

14  
15 The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Heather Seeley.

16  
17 **Approval of Agenda**

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19 Baker moved to approve the agenda and Wiger-Grohs seconded the motion.  
20 Werner said The Seymour Street engineering proposal would be postponed until the  
21 next meeting. The agenda was approved as amended with 6 in favor, 1 absent.

22 **MOTION PASSED**

23 **Approval of October 13, 2022 Minutes**

24  
25 Wiger-Grohs moved to approve the minutes of October 13, 2022 and Remsen  
26 seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented with 6 in favor, 1  
27 absent. **MOTION PASSED.**

28  
29 **Project Updates**

30  
31 Werner said the reclamation of the pavement on Colonial Drive had begun and paving  
32 would happen next week.

33  
34 Werner said they had begun the Request for Qualification (RFQ) process a couple of  
35 months ago, and the first one they wanted to select was the engineering firm for the  
36 upgrade of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He said they have reviewed and ranked  
37 the 7 RFQs that were submitted for engineering services and want to have 3  
38 consultants considered by the Infrastructure Committee for the Wastewater Plant  
39 upgrade. He said they would like to have the consultants give presentations to the  
40 Committee on November 17th, and they were looking to have a recommendation to the  
41 Selectboard for the December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

42

43 Seeley asked about the engineering firm that did the report on the WWTP and Werner  
44 said Tata and Howard were a possibility, but they wouldn't necessarily be the one to do  
45 the design. He said it's always good to look at other firms, since people and skills within  
46 firms can change from year to year.

47

48

### **Fire Department – Proposal to Replace the Repeater**

49

50 Chief Shaw said the current radio repeater is 25 years old and they have a life-  
51 expectancy of 20 years, so they'd like to replace it before there are issues. He said  
52 they've been setting aside funds for this for several years so there are ample funds  
53 available to cover the cost.

54

55 Wiger-Grohs moved to recommend the Selectboard approve the quote from Radio  
56 North Group, Inc. for \$19,993.00 to replace the Fire Department radio repeater on  
57 Chipman Hill. Bratspis seconded the motion. The motion carried with 6 in favor, 1  
58 absent. **MOTION PASSED.**

59

60

### **Capital Improvements Budget – FY2024**

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62 Ramsay pointed out that \$102,000 for the Foote Street project came out the Capital  
63 budget, along with \$2,500 for carpet cleaning at the library which will be moved to their  
64 operating budget, bringing the total Capital Improvements Budget to \$1,728,455.

65

66 Tenny said given the known increases in wages and water and sewer rates as noted by  
67 the Town Manager, he's concerned about overly increasing the budget this year. He  
68 suggested deferring the \$60,000 designated to remove the Maverick Gas Station at the  
69 Court Street/Monroe Street intersection, and perhaps use the building for storage.

70

71 He said we continue to fund for the Creek Road Alignment, and he isn't sure what the  
72 status of that project is at the moment, and he also wondered what becomes of the  
73 funds that are allocated for projects that aren't pursued.

74

75 Ramsay said the Creek Road Alignment Project had a project manager who was  
76 helping coordinate our efforts, but he has stepped back from that position, so that  
77 project is stalled at the moment, so it is possible we could cut back for a year on that  
78 project. Tenny asked if there were sufficient funds at this time to make any repairs in a  
79 particular area if needed, and Ramsay said it would depend on the damage, but there  
80 was around \$100,000 in reserve. Seeley said the property owners on that road need to  
81 have access to their properties should there be so much damage to Creek Road that it

82 fails. Ramsay said they were looking at a price of \$250,000 to \$300,000 for the access  
83 for the property owners.

84

85 Ramsay said funds are held on reserve for projects, but if it is determined the project is  
86 not going to happen, then the Selectboard can reallocate those funds to a project that is  
87 moving forward. She said reviewing projects is an ongoing process.

88

89 Tenny also asked about the \$40,000 for matching funds for the Downtown  
90 Transportation Grant. Ramsay said last year and the years before there were  
91 outstanding grants those funds were used for. She said the \$40,000 proposed in the  
92 FY24 budget was for future grants, and not for any specific project now. She said the  
93 deadline for that grant is March and they like to have a short timeline for shovel ready  
94 projects and there are several projects in the Downtown Master Plan that could be  
95 funded with that program.

96

97 Seeley asked for an update for the Exchange Street Project since there is \$1 million for  
98 next year. Ramsay said that money is for the 2<sup>nd</sup> portion of the sidewalk, but there has  
99 been some difficulty getting easements from landowners. Seeley also wondered about  
100 calling the money budgeted for the Ilsley 100 Project Team something else to include  
101 the building, so if there was an emergency repair at the library those funds could be  
102 used. Ramsay said if there is some catastrophic failure, we'll have to come up with the  
103 funds regardless, because the Project Team will need the \$163,000, but she could edit  
104 the label for those funds.

105

106 Seeley also wondered about the funds for traffic calming since there are already funds  
107 in the Police budget for radar feedback signs. Bratspis said he believed the traffic  
108 calming funds were added because of the work done by the Planning Commission, and  
109 he was thinking we should double and re-double our commitment knowing the Planning  
110 Commission is looking into this. He said he'd like to see some more money set aside  
111 so funds are available for the Planning Commission when they complete their work.  
112 Ramsay suggested we'd be in a better position next year when the Bike-Ped Study is  
113 complete and there are some specific projects identified, since it would be more  
114 defensible to the voters. Following further discussion, the \$7,500 for traffic calming  
115 remained in the budget.

116

117 Tenny suggested looking at the larger items and take 5-10% off each item so everything  
118 still gets something, but it gets the budget reasonably reduced. He thought it might be a  
119 more reasonable approach without cutting any one thing out of the budget.

120

121 Ramsay said since the Downtown Transportation Grant application timeline is such that  
122 we could budget for a project for those funds in FY25. She said the \$60,000 to remove  
123 the gas station was just a guess, but there needs to be some funding to address it since  
124 the building is a real eyesore. She said we've also had robust funds from the Local  
125 Option Tax, and we have used some of those funds in the past for capital  
126 improvements. She said she didn't want to count on those funds in the future, since we  
127 may be going into a recession, but the increase from 2019 to today is about 30%.

128  
129 Wiger-Grohs likes Tenny's idea of taking 5 to 10% off the larger items. She asked what  
130 would happen to the Court St intersection project if we removed the funds to take down  
131 the gas station. Ramsay said that project is at least 3 to 5 years out and would require  
132 a bond, so the expense to remove the station could be rolled into the bond. Werner  
133 said the \$60,000 was just a guess to remove that building, and he can try to find a  
134 better price, but once we own it, we're going to start being questioned about when we're  
135 going to do something with it, and it doesn't have much value for storage or rehab.  
136 Cherington pointed out it would become a liability to the Town. Tenny said we have to  
137 be mindful that these are challenging times and may be more challenging in the years to  
138 come, and he doesn't disagree on the gas station, but keeping the lawn cut and keeping  
139 the building tidy would help and thinks there's an economy of scale if it's rolled into the  
140 bond project. He thinks it would be a "nice" not a "necessary" expense this coming fiscal  
141 year.

142  
143 Remsen said the first draft of the Capital Budget was \$1,822,955, and the second draft  
144 is \$1,728,455, so he's wondering what figure people are targeting for. Tenny said he  
145 was thinking around \$1.65 million, and that wasn't for any reason other than looking  
146 back at the past few years, incrementally that was where he felt we should be this year.

147  
148 Seeley suggested reductions in sidewalks and stormwater, but Cherington said she'd  
149 rather see a cut from gravel roads or some other category than stormwater, since we  
150 have several permits that we need to deal with starting this year. Tenny agreed. They  
151 then discussed reductions in gravel roads and gravel roads paving.

152  
153 Bill Kernan said you're talking about cutting funds for important infrastructure that  
154 benefits everyone, but you aren't looking at Parks and Recreation. He said it's  
155 important, but not as important as our infrastructure. He said the salt storage shed  
156 could be pushed back a year, so that's \$15,000 that could be cut this year, and in Parks  
157 and Rec there was \$25,000 put in to start saving for replacement of the Sports Center  
158 Roof, but there are no plans in the works for this or any hard date to replace it, so that  
159 could be looked at, along with \$4,000 for Jack Brown Park that could be put off.

160

161 They also discussed the \$10,000 for the Pump Park and \$5,000 for the Skate Park at  
162 the Recreation Park. Seeley thought those funds were the Town's contribution to the  
163 funding. Remsen said the grant matching is coming from the fund raising, not from the  
164 Town. Bratspis said both are in the planning phase it's going to take a lot of fund-  
165 raising to make both viable, but they have the blessing of the Parks and Recreation  
166 Committee and the Selectboard. He thinks the Town is showing a level of support and  
167 isn't in favor of pushing back on the Recreation Budget since it isn't that large to begin  
168 with.

169  
170 Following further discussion, the following changes were made to the budget:

171  
172 Court Street & Monroe Street Intersection Improvements reduced \$10,000 to \$50,000  
173 Downtown Transportation Grant was eliminated for a reduction of \$40,000  
174 Salt Storage Building was eliminated for a reduction of \$15,000  
175 Memorial Sports Center Roof was reduced \$10,000 to \$15,000

176  
177 This was a total reduction of \$75,000, bringing the total Capital Improvements Budget to  
178 \$1,653,455.

179  
180 Baker moved to recommend the Capital Improvements Budget for FY24 totaling  
181 \$1,653,455 to the Selectboard. Wiger-Grohs seconded the motion. The motion carried  
182 with 6 in favor, 1 absent. **MOTION PASSED.**

183  
184 **Committee Member Concerns**

185  
186 Bratspis asked about what people do with leaves, and Ramsay said they could be taken  
187 to the transfer station.

188  
189 Tenny thanked the Fire Department for taking time to assist out the College with a  
190 sprinkler problem this past weekend.

191  
192 **Next Meeting**

193  
194 There was discussion on how to disperse the information on the consultants that the  
195 Committee will need to look at prior to their meeting with them, and further discussion  
196 on when to schedule the meeting.

197  
198 The meeting to hear the consultant presentations will be Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at  
199 8:30 a.m.

200

**201** The meeting to discuss the presentation and make a recommendation to the  
**202** Selectboard will be Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, at 9:00 a.m.

**203**

**204** The meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m. upon motion by Wiger-Grohs, seconded by Baker.

**205**

**206** Respectfully submitted,

**207** Beth Dow