

# Town Hall Study

## Background Information

### WHAT

In **January 2023**, Middlesex began a process to decide whether the existing Town Hall can continue to serve as a building for our Town Office and other smaller public meeting and voting functions, or if Middlesex would be better served by either replacing the building at its present location or building a new Town Office at another location. The Town Hall building has offices downstairs and a meeting room upstairs that is also used for voting and is partially used as office space.

### WHY

The current Town Hall has severe deficiencies:

- Limited septic capacity;
- Poor quality drinking water;
- Poor air quality, including elevated levels of radon;
- Lack of accessibility for people with physical disabilities;
- Old furnace for which parts are no longer made;
- No insulation;
- Vault space is near capacity.

Moreover,

- Storage, meeting, and public spaces interfere with work areas and with each other.
- Building design never accounted for now-commonplace computer presentations, Zoom meetings and audio/visual needs.
- Due to flooding, fire, etc. Middlesex has very limited indoor common spaces where community members can gather.

### EVALUATE OPTIONS

The Select Board wants to provide an affordable, inviting, accessible, safe, and efficient facility that meets current and future needs for the Middlesex community.

We are looking at three options: 1) Renovating the existing Town Hall; 2) Renovating the existing Town Hall with an addition; and 3) Building a new Town Office at another location.

### **PROFESSIONAL REVIEW**

As a first step, the Town has dedicated some of the Federal ARPA (America Recovery Act) funds to hire [Vermont Integrated Architecture \(VIA\)](#). Additionally, the town has applied for a Municipal Planning Grant for this study, and if approved will use those funds in lieu of ARPA funds.

This architectural firm will present the Town with an evaluation and preliminary cost estimates of the three options to meet present and future needs. This information will inform any recommendation for the best path forward.

You can see our [request for proposals](#), [VIA's proposal](#), and the [VIA workplan with dates and costs](#).

Our first steps are getting an evaluation and preliminary cost estimates for each option.

### **COST CONTROL**

As the community researches options, every effort will be made to keep the project affordable to taxpayers through a combination of a) limiting the project to the town's top priorities, and b) seeking additional non-tax dollars (grants, private donations) to meet the project goals.

### **TIMELINE SUMMARY**

The preliminary evaluation was completed in April with a public meeting planned for April 14 at 4pm by Zoom and a final presentation at the April 18 Selectboard meeting. A progress update was provided in March 2023 at Town Meeting.