

Monkton Select Board Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2012

Approved 1/14/13

Monkton Town Hall

1. Call to Order: Chair J. Phillips called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.
2. Select Board (SB) Members Present: Anne Layn, John McNerney (7:15 PM arrival), Peter Norris, Sr., John Phillips, Stephen Pilcher

Others Present: George Bailey, Jennifer Baker, Thea Gaudette, Stacy Putnam, Rodney Putnam, Lorne Thibault, and Bill Joos

3. Announcements: None

4. Regular Business:

- a. **Approve minutes** of Previous Meeting: The SB reviewed the draft minutes of November 26, 2012. There were no requests for edits or additions. **S. Pilcher moved to approve the 11/26/12 meeting minutes as written; motion seconded by A. Layn. Voted and approved.**

- b. The SB reviewed and approved the following **check warrants**:

- A/P# 21204, 12/04/12, \$ 23,916.45
- A/P# 21205, 12/05/12, \$ 2,291,118.56
- A/P# 21210, 12/10/12, \$ 12,939.64
- P/R# 21203, 12/03/12, \$ 7,772.54

- c. There were no **overweight permits** to review.

5. Old Business:

- a. Vermont Gas Systems' (VGS) Transmission Line: J. Baker presented to the SB a petition signed by 121 residents (copy attached) against the proposed pipeline route. The Monkton Recreation Committee also wrote a letter dated 12/8/12 (copy attached) in opposition to the proposed pipeline right-of-way (RoW), which would cross the Morse Park recreation field(s). J. Baker appealed to the SB to oppose the VGS plan as it is presently designed. J. Baker asked about insurance concerns for homeowners living within the proposed RoW. L. Thibault expressed his opposition to the pipeline route as proposed, and wondered why anyone would purchase a home in the RoW. P. Norris inquired about industry best practices for locating pipelines in proximity to residences. J. Baker referenced her research materials, and quoted a minimum 200-330 feet (@ 600 psi). J. Phillips asked J. Baker what she was hoping to receive from the SB. J. Baker's reply: a letter from the SB denouncing the VGS plan in its entirety, at least as the plan is proposed today. S. Pilcher mentioned the need for a reasonable approach by VGS as it relates to various minimum safety and industry standards. As a general statement, S. Pilcher believes a transmission line is possible through Monkton, perhaps on the existing VELCO corridor. R. Putnam and G. Bailey, both of whom own land along the proposed route, mentioned briefly that inconsequential offers have been

presented to them by VGS. G. Bailey mentioned his confusion about the accelerated timing of this substantial pipeline project, as compared to the time and hearings involved to construct a residence in town, by comparison. G. Bailey inquired if there is any benefit coming to the town if the pipeline is approved. S. Pilcher replied that a gate station is a possibility. P. Norris commented on VGS's likely goal to join/tie in to a larger pipeline near to Whitehall, NY, from which, presumably, cheaper costs will be realized by VGS. P. Norris recommended that VGS route its line via the VELCO corridor (and/or no closer than 400' to a residence). S. Pilcher shared draft language of a letter that the SB is preparing for delivery to the Vermont Public Service Board (PSB). G. Bailey asked if an outright "no" to the project is an option. S. Putnam shared her concern that many residents will remain uninformed and sign away land rights without meaningful compensation. J. Baker reiterated that the SB has bargaining power with VGS. **S. Pilcher read the draft, accepted edits, and made a motion to send the PSB a letter on 12/11/12 (a copy of which is attached) with language opposing the proposed pipeline RoW, among other details. J. McNerney seconded the motion. Voted and approved.** J. Baker applauded the letter's content. S. Pilcher thanked J. Baker for her work on behalf of the community. A lengthy discussion followed, with many questions and comments about the VGS project as proposed. R. Putnam asked about the existence of any project timeline. S. Pilcher responded that VGS will submit its draft proposal to the PSB on 12/20/12. T. Gaudette asked if she should present relevant information at the forthcoming Addison County Regional Planning Commission. T. Gaudette agreed to read the SB letter to the PSB dated 12/11/12. T. Gaudette also mentioned Front Porch Forum as a useful tool.

- b. Willowell Foundation Appeal: J. Phillips advised of the receipt of a letter from the Superior Court. J. Phillips asked if the SB wishes to be a party to the court appeal, for which a pre-trial conference is scheduled on Monday, 12/17. Additionally, resident Sam Burr is appealing the court's decision. For continued discussion.
- c. Post Office (PO) Status: J. Phillips reported that a PO survey has been circulated. S. Pilcher mentioned that PO employee hours and wages may be impacted, with PO hours of business likely to be reduced, perhaps to 4 open hours daily. S. Pilcher read various options related to PO hours/services to be provided. **S. Pilcher moved that the Town accept the reduced hours option as preferable; the motion was seconded by P. Norris, Sr. Voted and approved.**
- d. Donald Gould Letter & Public Records Request: S. Pilcher mentioned his letter to the SB regarding the public records request by D. Gould. The majority of the communications records reproduced had to do with new Unified Planning Document. S. Pilcher reported that some emails involved various legal matters/appeals. S. Pilcher identified which documents were treated as protected under the attorney-client privilege. P. Norris expressed an opinion that certain documents should be exempted, in accordance with the advice of attorney Jim Carroll. S. Pilcher will communicate with D. Gould, and likewise forward documents and electronic data to him. The SB thanked S. Pilcher for his due diligence and follow through with the records request. S. Pilcher

believes that future public records requests of this scope will need to involve monetary charges, in recognition of the time and materials involved to satisfy the request.

6. New Business:

- a. U.S. Department of Commerce Census Form: A. Layn agreed to complete the form, the submission of which is on a voluntary basis.
- b. 2013 Budget Review: J. Phillips asked that no budget review occur tonight, for lack of enough specific information to consider from various town departments. Budget review for 2013 will be added to the next SB agenda (12/27).

7. Other Business: a) J. Phillips circulated quarterly time sheets to SB members for their review and signature; b) the SB elected not to engage Mr. Diamond for legal advice; c) **the SB agreed to reschedule its next meeting from Monday, 12/24 to Thursday, 12/27 at 7:00 PM at Town Hall** (due to Christmas holiday); 4) A. Layn referenced a letter from D. Gould. J. Phillips has spoken to the Zoning Administrator and the Listers, and will draft a reply.

8. Adjournment:

Motion made by A. Layn to adjourn at 8:51PM; seconded by S. Pilcher. Voted and approved.