

Monkton Select Board Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2013

Approved 3/25/13

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: Peter Norris, Sr., John Phillips, Stephen Pilcher

SB Member Absent: Anne Layn and John McNerney

Others Present: Town Treasurer Charles J. Roumas, Jane Lazorchak, Pat Mainer, Ray Mainer, Jane Palmer, Nathan Palmer, and Bill Joos
3. Announcements: None
4. Regular Business:
 - a. **Approve minutes** of Previous Meeting: The SB reviewed the minutes of February 11, 2013. There were no requests for edits or additions. **S. Pilcher moved to approve the 2/11/13 meeting minutes as written; motion seconded by P. Norris. Voted and approved.**
 - b. The SB reviewed and approved the following **check warrants**:
 - A/P# 30225, 02/25/13, \$ 26,899.35
 - P/R# 30225, 02/25/13, \$ 11,940.84
 - c. There were no **overweight permits** reviewed.
5. Old Business:
 - a. Fish and Wildlife (F&W) Department Proposal – Jane Lazorchak: J. Lazorchak provided the rationale for her appearance; P. and R. Mainer own lowland property along Lewis Creek. F&W reached out to the Mainers in an effort to protect the wetlands and a significant portion of forest. S. Pilcher asked what types of public access would be available. J. Lazorchak responded that F&W wishes to protect public access to these lands for fishing, hunting, bird watching, etc... No motorized vehicles would be allowed, however. A protected bat species nests in trees on the property, which totals 66 acres. P. Norris expressed support for the acquisition by the state. J. Lazorchak discussed how the state would pay for the parcel. **S. Pilcher moved that the SB provide a letter supporting the purchase of property owned by the Mainers by the State of Vermont; P. Norris seconded the motion. Voted and approved.**
 - b. Town Meeting Review: C. Roumas appeared and reviewed a list of potential issues for presentation/discussion at the town meeting. C. Roumas commented that overall spending was tight in both the general (overspent by \$14,000) and education funds. C. Roumas advised that the primary driver of excess cost in the general fund was unanticipated legal expenses. C. Roumas advised that delinquent taxes were again

significant, with \$129,280 outstanding as of the 11/15/12 due date. Last year, less delinquent payments were received by 12/31/12. A \$98,500 delinquent tax balance remains. C. Roumas explained the delinquent tax collector's choice of format for the listing that appears in the town's 2012 annual report (p. 50). C. Roumas confirmed that the town holds approximately \$230,000 in cash at present, and anticipates the need for a tax anticipation note (TAN), perhaps by May, 2013. The amount to be requested could approach \$400,000. C. Roumas also confirmed an error occurred in the calculation of the tax rate for 2012, with a deficit resulting; taxpayers were under taxed last year by .08 to .09 cents. C. Roumas explained in detail how the calculation error occurred and the resulting impact on the town's finances. Additionally, C. Roumas confirmed that the town and public auditors have signed off on the accuracy of the town's receipts and payments. C. Roumas commented that a tax increase is a definite for Monkton taxpayers, and provided numerical examples.

- c. VLCT Seminar Update: S. Pilcher discussed training opportunities/needs for the SB and other town personnel. S. Pilcher advised of an available seminar to be conducted in Monkton by Abigail Freeman and Hank Lambert; the cost is \$400. "Professionalism" will be a primary topic, among others to be considered. The SB hopes that every committee Chair, at a minimum, will attend. S. Pilcher will confer with H. Lambert to schedule the seminar. The SB supports this initiative.
- d. Vermont Gas Systems, Inc (VGS) Update: J. Phillips reported on a 2/25 meeting with lawyer Josh Diamond, who represents the town; everyone understands that VGS will file a new route plan, but details still need to be confirmed. S. Pilcher mentioned his communication(s) with VT Gas (for which no acknowledgement or reply was ever received), and noted that the SB should likely be involved with future communications, consistent with the town attorney's advice. The SB reviewed the content of questions to be submitted to VGS. The SB discussed in detail the new schedule as accepted by the PSB. S. Pilcher mentioned that certain impacted landowners have claimed that no contact has been made by VGS. The SB discussed a number of meaningful questions that are still in need of answers (many of which the SB believes should have been answered months ago). The SB mentioned asking the Monkton Planning Commission to provide insight about possible gas service, in connection with future development objectives. J. Palmer expressed serious reservations about the content of negotiations with VGS. J. and N. Palmer expressed frustration with the vague terms used by VGS to explain the pipeline route. The Palmers feel as if their home's location is not being properly considered, given that the proposed pipeline will pass within 150'. The SB has agreed to push the 300' setback as a safety issue. The Palmers also stated that they don't understand why the proposed pipeline has to leave the VELCO corridor and enter their property at all. **S. Pilcher made a motion to accept the letter and the amended list of questions for submission to VGS under the authorship of the SB. P. Norris seconded the motion. Voted and approved.**

6. New Business:

- a. Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom Right-of-Way (ROW) Permit: The telephone company wishes to bury a line in a town ROW on Mountain Rd. **S. Pilcher moved to**

allow Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom to access the ROW to bury a communications line in the vicinity of 2387 Mountain Rd.; P. Norris, Sr. seconded the motion. Voted and approved.

- b. Kyle Nolin Curb Cut Permit: It was noted that the location on Boro Hill Rd. is challenging – quite steep. J. Phillips expressed concern with the distances indicated in the Nolin application, all of which are less than the minimum allowed (300'). J. Phillips will contact Mr. Nolin to address this aspect and other concerns. Further consideration of the application will follow at a forthcoming SB meeting.
 - c. List of Appointments to be made: J. Phillips will create list of open appointed positions for circulation at town meeting. P. Norris commented on the existing policy to fill vacancies. The SB reviewed briefly a list of open positions.
7. Other Business: a) Five-Town Health Alliance/Dr. Patrick Rowe (new dentist) emailed the SB to request letters of support; the Five-Town Health Alliance dba Mountain Health Center is now located at Bristol Works! on Munsill Avenue in Bristol. **S. Pilcher moved that the SB prepare letters supporting the Five-Town Health Alliance, as requested; seconded by P. Norris. Voted and approved.** J. Phillips will confer with Dr. Rowe to refine the content of each letter.
8. Adjournment:
Motion made by S. Pilcher to adjourn at 8:58 PM; seconded by P. Norris, Sr. Voted and approved.