

Monkton Select Board Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2013 (approved 11/25/13)
Monkton Town Hall

1. Call to Order: Chair J. Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.
2. Select Board (SB) Members Present: Anne Layn, John McNerney, John Phillips, Stephen Pilcher
Select Board (SB) Member Absent: Roger Parker, Jr.

Others Present: Representative Dave Sharpe, Jay Frater, Wendy Sue Harper, Renee McGuinness, and Bill Joos

3. Announcements: D. Sharpe appeared to answer questions and provide a status update on various matters; J. Phillips commented on the increasing cost of education. D. Sharpe referenced local control of budgets. A. Layn commented on federal education requirements. The SB and Rep. Sharpe had a back and forth discussion on education during which D. Sharpe cited various statistics. J. Phillips asked about future issues for the next legislative session. D. Sharpe commented on need to focus on health care, given that systems to support the change have not been working well. D. Sharpe expressed his frustration about the recurrent technological challenges with Vermont Health Connect. D. Sharpe praised VLCT's support of towns as they navigate through the process. D. Sharpe mentioned school budgets and the general fund, and cautioned that increased taxes may result. D. Sharpe talked about the Affordable Care Act. S. Pilcher shared residents' concerns about the Public Service Board (PSB) process, and the considerable expense resulting.
4. Regular Business:
 - a. **Approve Minutes** of Previous Meetings: The SB reviewed the regular meeting minutes of September 23rd. There were no requests for edits or additions. **A. Layn moved to approve the September 23th regular meeting minutes as written; motion seconded by J. McNerney. Voted and approved.**
 - b. The SB reviewed and approved the following **check warrant**:
 - P/R# 31007, 10/07/13, \$10,126.46
 - c. There were no **overweight permits** to review.
 - d. **Public Comment**: None
5. Old Business:
 - a. PACE Program Update: Wendy Sue Harper and Jay Frater presented information related to the next step of the PACE program. Efficiency Vermont would administer the program, which is residential only. J. Frater noted that up to \$30,000 or 15% of a home's assessed value is available in loans. An energy analysis is performed by Efficiency Vermont. There is a \$300 fee for an individual to sign up for the program. Per J. Frater, the SB needs to sign off on 4 documents to get the

program moving, including documents involving the lending institution (The National Bank of Middlebury). The program is so new that no “user feedback” is available today. Current interest rates are 7.25%. J. Frater confirmed that there is no liability to the town. J. McNerney asked what might happen if an individual default occurs. J. Frater suggested that the town attorney review the program documents. J. Frater reiterated that if the SB elects to proceed, the 4 documents need to be signed. S. Pilcher and J. Phillips indicated that a need exists to review the agreements in detail. J. Frater referred the SB to N. Ferrisburgh, where the program is taking shape as well. S. Pilcher solicited SB volunteers to review the program details. Also, the SB advised that Monkton residents Rebecca Gould and Nate Palmer wish to join the Energy Committee. **S. Pilcher moved to appoint Rebecca Gould to the Energy Committee for a position/term ending in March 2016; A. Layn seconded the motion. Voted and approved.** N. Palmer had submitted a letter of interest; Nate will attend a forthcoming Energy Committee meeting, and decide whether he will pursue a place on the committee. W.S. Harper asked whether any work will be performed following last year’s energy audit of the town garage. No action has resulted to date. Jared Moats has been contacted. S. Pilcher asked if the Energy Committee can pursue a quote to install some of the suggested improvements to the town garage. W.S. Harper offered to resend the information that the committee has received.

- b. Nature Conservancy (NC) Curb Cut Application: The SB reviewed the new application. J. Phillips confirmed the sight distances have been measured and exceed the required minimums. **S. Pilcher moved to approve the curb cut application for Rotax Rd submitted by the NC to allow access to the Raven Ridge Conservation Area; A. Layn seconded the motion. Voted and approved.**
- c. Ratify Norris Settlement Agreement: The SB reviewed and briefly discussed the content of the settlement agreement for docket nos. 208-9-12 Ancv (Peter and Dolores Norris’s appeal) and 209-9-12 Ancv (Michael Norris’s appeal). **S. Pilcher made a motion to accept the terms of the referenced settlement agreement; J. McNerney seconded the motion. Voted and approved.**
- d. Animal Control Policy: The SB discussed briefly the need to start drafting an animal control policy; J. Phillips will work on this subject.
- e. Parking Ordinance: J. Phillips referred to several dated editions of a draft policy, and mentioned his contact with town attorney David Rath. J. Phillips asked that the SB compare the existing policy to the proposed new policy. At issue is whether the recreation area on Pond Rd is covered by the policy. A. Layn offered to review the existing policy language and make recommendations on how to include the various recreation areas. J. Phillips asked about the parking spots adjacent to town hall. The SB discussed briefly again the differences between a policy and an ordinance.
- f. Vermont Gas Systems, Inc. (VGS)/Addison Natural Gas Project (ANGP) Update: Briefs were received this morning. S. Pilcher advised that Rotax Rd. remains a

subject of discussion. S. Pilcher referenced page 15 of the brief. The Department of Public Service (DPS) believes that the existing route is not inconsistent with the orderly development of the region. Alternative routes were mentioned. S. Pilcher read directly from the DPS brief. The town relayed the objections expressed by Jane and Nate Palmer. S. Pilcher complimented the quality of the Palmer's brief. R. McGuinness offered comments.

- g. Budget Letter: S. Pilcher commented on the 'real' 2013 tax rate of .56 prior to any adjustments, which is unsustainable in his view. S. Pilcher is seeking a sustainable rate ("perhaps .50") going forward - looking to create an applicable rate for the next 5 years. A discussion of the tax rate declaration followed. S. Pilcher asked if committees should be advised of the need to reduce budgets. The deadline to receive back proposed budgets will be 12/1. J. Phillips expressed concern that some departments may be unable to cut their budget. The SB mentioned the use of the stabilization fund. J. McNerney wants to consider adding money back to the stabilization fund. The SB considered language to appear in the town meeting warning. J. Phillips will alter the budget request letter. S. Pilcher believes the SB needs to look long and hard at next year's budget.

New Business:

- a. Health Plan: S. Pilcher presented the proposed health plan. Members of the SB attended a presentation on Vermont Health Connect. The employer sets up a Vermont Health Care Account, which includes a roster, SSN, and email addresses. A choice model exists whereby the provider can be selected, but the employee chooses the specific plan. The town decides how much money to contribute; 4 different plan levels exist (bronze, silver [70%], gold [80%], and platinum [90%]). The SB wants to understand the new plans and determine how they compare to existing coverage. S. Pilcher advised that the BCBS Gold Plan is most comparable to the status quo health plan, but more out-of-pocket maximums may result. As an alternative, the town could provide a flat dollar amount, and the employee then purchases his own coverage. The SB reviewed various coverage options. S. Pilcher mentioned funding 100% of the premium. A. Layn wants to offer a new plan that costs near to the existing health care budget. The SB considered specific aspects of the various coverage options. **S. Pilcher moved to fund 100% of the BCBS Gold "Blue for You" 1250/2500 plan, with HRA contributions of \$1,500 per employee; seconded by A. Layn. Voted and approved.**
6. Other Business: a) J. Phillips posted an ad for a road crew member; the Road Commissioner ideally wishes to hire a replacement 30 days prior, so the new employee can learn the roads, and assist with snow plowing coverage. One application has been submitted to date. The purported gravel pit operation on Jockey Lane was mentioned.
 7. Adjournment: **S. Pilcher moved to adjourn at 9:08 PM; seconded by A. Layn. Voted and approved.**