

**Town of Monkton
Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting
March 4, 2014**

The legal voters of the Town of Monkton met at the Monkton Central School on March 4, 2014.

Present: Selectboard (SB) Chair Stephen Pilcher, Vice Chair Anne Layn, SB Members John McNerney, Roger Parker, Jr. and John Phillips, Town and School Clerk Sharon Gomez, Interim Town and School Treasurer William C. Joos

Town and School Moderator Kenneth Wheeling called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

The moderator requested to dispense with the reading of the Annual Town Meeting Warning in its entirety, with consideration to be given to each article individually, as has been customary. No audience member stated any objection. The moderator then proceeded to Article 1.

Article 1: To elect all Town Officers by Australian ballot.

The moderator advised the audience that the polls were open until 7:00 PM today. The moderator referred the audience to page 121 of the 2013 Annual Report (AR) for a listing of candidates. The following were elected as Town Officers:

Town Moderator – 1 Year Term:	Kenneth E. Wheeling – 379
votes	
School Moderator – 1 Year Term:	Kenneth E. Wheeling – 376
votes	
Town & School Clerk – 1 Year Term:	Sharon M. Gomez – 382 votes
Town & School Treasurer – 1 Year Term:	William C. Joos – 369 votes
Selectboard – 3 Year Term:	Anne Layn – 349 votes
Selectboard – 2 Year Term:	Henry A. Boisse – 260 votes
Auditor – 3 Year Term:	Janet Cassarino – 367 votes
Constable – 1 Year Term:	Charles Huizenga, Sr. - 379
votes	
Delinquent Tax Collector – 1 Year Term:	William C. Joos – 361 votes
Lister – 3 Year Term:	John Howard – 356 votes
Monkton Elementary School Board – 3 Years:	Kristin Blanchette – 344 votes
Monkton Elementary School Board – 1 Year:	Marikate Kelley – 231 votes
Monkton Elementary School Board – 1 Year:	Jennifer Stanley – 239 votes
Planning Commission – 3 Year Term:	Wendy Sue Harper – 344 votes
Planning Commission – 1 Year Term:	Ivor Hughes – 343 votes
Russell Memorial Library Trustee – 3 Year Term:	Gretchen Beaupre – 343 votes
Russell Memorial Library Trustee – 3 Year Term:	Suzanne Ledoux – 345 votes

Article 2: To receive and act on the Report of the Auditors as submitted.

Thea Gaudette moved to accept the Report of the Auditors as submitted. Laurie Earle seconded the motion. The moderator solicited discussion from the audience, though none was forthcoming. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 3: To set the date for the payment of Real Estate Taxes to the Town Treasurer.

Henry Boisse moved to establish a Real Estate Taxes payment due date/deadline of 5:00 PM, Monday, November, 17, 2014. Laura Farrell seconded the motion. The moderator solicited discussion from the audience. Thomas Steadman asked about the timely issuance of the annual tax bill, and noted that he has received his bill later and later each year. SB Chair S. Pilcher explained the process and timing of the annual tax rate calculation. In response to a question from S. Pilcher, Monkton Lister Joseph Boisse reported on the listers' actions, and how the Grand List is finalized (following the conclusion of all BCA tax grievance hearings), usually by mid-August. The town treasurer then calculates a tax rate for consideration by the SB. The treasurer mails the bills as soon as possible after the SB declares a tax rate. T. Steadman asked if the SB might consider preparing a notice to advise what the tax rate will be. S. Pilcher referred the audience to page 24 of the AR, where details supporting the projected 2014 Municipal Tax Rate appear. With discussion concluded, the moderator called the question. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 4: Shall the Town empower the Selectboard to set the Tax Rate when the Grand List is finalized?

H. Boisse moved to empower the Selectboard to set the Tax Rate, as noted above. W. Harper seconded the motion. The moderator solicited discussion from the audience, though none was forthcoming. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Recess: **H. Boisse moved to recess at 10:15 AM. Steve Parren seconded the motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

The moderator advised that legislative reports and copies of the annual poll prepared by Senator Bill Doyle are available at the stage.

The moderator introduced Vermont House of Representatives members Michael Fisher and David Sharpe, and State Senator Chris Bray, all of whom represent Monkton.

Walter Wilmerding moved to suspend the recess and return to the business of the Town Meeting at 10:45 AM. Robin Hopps seconded the motion. The motion was voted in affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.

Article 5: Shall the Voters approve the following requests by various Social Service Agencies?

a) Addison County Community Action Group (Hope)	\$ 1,250.00
b) Addison County Diversion & Community Justice	\$ 550.00
c) Addison County Counseling Service, Inc.	\$ 1,500.00
d) Addison County Home, Health & Hospice, Inc.	\$ 1,946.00
e) Addison County Parent/Child Center	\$ 1,600.00
f) Addison County Readers (Imag'nLibraryLiteracy)	\$ 450.00
g) Addison County Transit Resources	\$ 850.00
h) Bristol Family Center	\$ 250.00
i) Bristol Recreation Department	\$ 1,500.00
j) Bristol Rescue Squad	\$ 3,700.00
k) Champlain Valley Agency on Aging	\$ 1,100.00
l) Elderly Services	\$ 800.00
m) Green Up Vermont	\$ 150.00
n) Homeward Bound/Addison County Humane Soc.	\$ 250.00
o) Hospice Volunteer Services	\$ 300.00
p) John W. Graham Emergency Shelter	\$ 1,000.00
q) Lewis Creek Association	\$ 550.00
r) Open Door Clinic	\$ 500.00
s) Otter Creek Natural Resources Conservation District	\$ 198.00
t) Retired & Senior Volunteer Program	\$ 285.00
u) Vergennes Rescue Squad	\$ 600.00
v) Vermont Adult Learning	\$ 700.00
w) Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$ 195.00
x) Women Safe (Women in Crisis)	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>
	\$21,224.00

W. Harper moved that the listed Social Service Agency requests be considered as a group. The motion was seconded by Alan Finkbeiner. There was no discussion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.

Larry Goetschius, the Executive Director of Addison County Home Health & Hospice, addressed the audience and thanked Monkton for its past support of his organization.

A motion was made to vote on the proposed total of \$21,224.00. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.

Article 6: Shall the Voters approve the following sums of money for the listed purposes?

a) Salaries and General Expenses	\$ 357,424.73
b) Highway Expenses *	\$ 733,097.00
c) Monkton Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	\$ 33,000.00
d) Russell Memorial Library	\$ 20,150.00
e) Monkton Museum and Historical Society	\$ 900.00
f) Recreation Fund	<u>\$ 4,500.00</u>
	Total: \$1,149,071.73

* As amended [see 2. Item 6b) below]

The moderator solicited interest in dividing the questions for individual consideration. **S. Pilcher moved to divide the questions and consider each individually. T. Steadman seconded the motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator, who referenced pp. 122-23 in the 2013 AR.**

1. Item 6a) **Terry Cunningham moved to approve the Salaries and General Expenses in the amount of \$357,424.73; H. Boisse seconded the motion.** T. Cunningham asked about the proposed increase in the treasurer's salary. S. Pilcher addressed the issue, and explained the departure of Town and School Treasurer Charles J. Roumas in July. S. Pilcher reported on the candidates who responded to the job advertisement, and the salary negotiation process that followed. K. Wheeling referenced Article 8 as well. R. Hopps spoke in favor of having the Treasurer receive a livable wage. Roger Wallace asked about the reporting of legal expenses. W. Joos responded, and identified where the Addison Natural Gas Project legal expenses appear (AR – p. 50). Sam Burr asked about reappraisal expense, to which S. Pilcher responded. R. Wallace inquired about the allocation of property taxes (AR - p. 43). S. Pilcher explained how outstanding delinquent taxes factored into the amounts appearing. R. Wallace asked follow-up questions and indicated that the listers are preparing for a town-wide reappraisal. W. Joos offered to confer with the town's consulting accountant, and advise R. Wallace directly. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**
2. Item 6b) **T. Gaudette moved to approve the proposed \$754,357.00 in Highway Expenses. The motion was seconded by H. Boisse.** S. Pilcher rose to amend the Article, and provided his rationale, with reference to long-term debt service (AR - p. 32). The sum will be reduced from \$754,357.00 to \$733,097.00. **S. Pilcher moved to amend the amount of requested Highway Expenses appearing in Article 6 to \$733,097.00. J. McNerney seconded the motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.** Mike Hurlburt asked about the status of the guardrail repair on Monkton Road, near to the Huizenga Farm. Road Commissioner Wayne Preston referred the question to the SB. J. Phillips responded, and referenced input by the Town's insurance carrier, VLCT. The Town hopes that insurance will cover the cost of repair, with no out-of-pocket expenses resulting. T. Steadman asked that the SB authorize the repair expense outright, since the amount quoted-to-date (approximately \$9,600) is relatively modest, overall. Barbara Deal asked W. Preston about the town-wide paving plan for 2014. W. Preston advised that only resurfacing is contemplated, with a grant to be pursued. There will be no new pavement added in 2014. With discussion concluded, **the amended motion to approve \$733,097.00 in Highway Expenses was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**
3. Item 6c) **W. Harper moved to approve the proposed total of \$33,000.00 for the Monkton Volunteer Fire Dept. Peter Huber seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**
4. Item 6d) **T. Gaudette moved to approve \$20,150 in Russell Memorial Library funding. The motion was seconded by L. Farrell.** The moderator asked if the audience wished to discuss any aspect of the question. There were no questions or

comments. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

5. Item 6e) **Deb Gaynor made a motion to approve the proposed total of \$900.00 for the Monkton Museum and Historical Society. L. Earle seconded the motion.** The moderator inquired if the audience wished to discuss the question. There was no discussion. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**
6. Item 6f) **Pete Aube moved to approve the proposed total of \$4,500.00 for the Recreation Fund. H. Boisse seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 7: FOR DISCUSSION ONLY – TO BE VOTED ON BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT:
Shall the Town of Monkton vote to adopt the proposed Monkton Town Plan dated January 2014 – 2019 to amend and replace the previous Monkton Town Plan, which expired in September 2012?

The moderator explained that the article was open for discussion only. There was no discussion. Australian ballot voting result: **262 Yea / 131 Nay**

Article 8: Shall the Town compensate the Town Collector of Delinquent Taxes by paying an annual salary of \$3,500.00 in lieu of any statutory fees and commissions allowed under 32 V.S.A § 1674?

H. Boisse moved the question; David Williams seconded the motion. The moderator solicited discussion from the audience, though none was forthcoming. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 9: Shall the voters approve the designation of the Planning Commission position currently held by Sam Burr to be elected for a one year term when the term expires in 2016 and for a three year term in 2017 and thereafter to stagger the Planning Commission terms appropriately?

W. Harper moved the question; Deb Gaynor seconded the motion. The moderator solicited discussion from the audience, an explanation was offered that this is being done to balance the number of terms expiring in any one year. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 10: Shall the voters agree to replace the continuing annual \$0.02 tax rate assessment to fund the Town of Monkton Agricultural and Natural Areas Conservation Fund, authorized by Article 5, approved in March 2006, with an appropriation of \$10,000.000 for 2014?

Rachel Schattman moved the question; H. Boisse seconded the motion. An extended discussion followed. Jennifer Baker asked why the Article was necessary, to which S. Pilcher responded. ANAC Chair L. Farrell provided historical detail, and included specifics related to recent funding initiatives (Orb Weaver Farm, for example).

W. Harper inquired if the proposed funding level of \$10,000 was adequate. Andy Letourneau asked if the \$10,000 appropriation under consideration was for 2014 only ("yes"). Eugenie Doyle-Burr questioned why the ANAC appropriation was being reduced. ANAC member Sam Burr responded, and confirmed that ANAC recommended the \$10,000 amount under consideration. There was considerable discussion about the specific wording of the Article. **J. McNerney moved to amend the Article by removing the word "replace" and adding the word "eliminate."** **S. Pilcher seconded the motion.** Further discussion followed. In response to a D. Williams inquiry, L. Farrell advised that 2014 will be a transition year for ANAC. **D. Gaynor moved to recognize a second amendment to the Article, to read "and request an appropriation of \$10,000.00 for 2014."** **J. Boisse seconded the Gaynor motion to amend.** **Mike Hurlburt moved the question; Bob Radler seconded.** **The motion to approve the Gaynor 2nd amendment was voted in the negative by voice vote, and defeated.** **D. Gaynor then moved to add the following language to the Article, "...and approve an appropriation of \$10,000.00 for 2014?"** **H. Boisse seconded the motion.** **The motion on the second amendment was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.** **The motion on the first amendment was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.** Kristin Farrell commented on the information to be shared annually by ANAC at future Town Meetings. L. Farrell replied that the annual ANAC appropriation, if requested, would likely be moved to Article 6, for consideration along with the other purposes that are listed as part of the Town's annual budget. The moderator asked if the audience was ready to vote on the amended Article. With discussion concluded, **the motion to eliminate the continuing annual \$0.02 tax rate assessment to fund the Town of Monkton Agricultural and Natural Areas Conservation(ANAC) Fund, as authorized by Article 5, approved in March 2006, and approve an appropriation of \$10,000.00 for 2014 was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Note: there was no Article 11 presented.

Article 12: Shall the voters approve a sum not to exceed \$100,000 for the purchase of a new bucket loader?

A. Finkbeiner moved the question; H. Boisse seconded the motion. The moderator asked if the audience wished to comment. R. Wallace questioned if the loader purchase would involve use of the Capital Equipment Fund, which receives an annual appropriation of \$20,000. R. Wallace asked where the SB would find the \$100,000. S. Pilcher addressed the questions. The SB will consider a variety of funding options, including the Capital Equipment Fund and 5 year financing, or some combination of the sources. The moderator asked if the audience was ready to consider the question. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 13: Shall the voters of Monkton denounce the Addison Natural Gas Project (ANGP) through Monkton?

R. McGuinness made a motion to approve the motion. Maren Vasatka seconded the motion. A detailed and lengthy discussion followed. Richard Crampton shared

his disgust with the tactics used by Vermont Gas Systems (VGS) and its right-of-way (ROW) agents, whereby "every decision is made in the name of profit." R. Crampton openly questioned whether the ANGP meets the "for the public good" standard of the Public Service Board, which has approved Phase I through Monkton. A. Finkbeiner asked if there were any implications, legal or otherwise, to voting the Article up or down. T. Steadman inquired if the Article was generated by the SB, or via a petition. S. Pilcher answered that the Article arrived via a petition. R. McGuinness, who authored the Article, and gathered signatures, spoke out against VGS and its "continuing lack of transparency." R. McGuinness commented on the actions of the ROW agents, and noted that none of the agents are bound by any code of ethics. R. McGuinness expressed an ongoing concern that VGS's behavior and decision-making-to-date will have serious negative implications once the construction phase begins. R. McGuinness referred to a mailing by the Town of Cornwall. I. Hughes read from a prepared statement, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. I. Hughes commented that the \$27,000+ spent on attorneys fees by the Town related to the ANGP could have been spent better elsewhere. I. Hughes referenced the delays and challenges experienced in Milton, where a smaller pipeline is under construction by VGS. I. Hughes noted that only a small percentage of Monkton residents will have the opportunity to receive natural gas service (13%, by his calculation). I. Hughes argued that the local energy market for trucked fuels (post pipeline) would be impacted negatively, with increased fuel prices resulting. The Rev. Carole Wageman read from a prepared statement and addressed her profound disappointment with VGS and its ROW agents about their contacts (or lack thereof) with her and her husband. C. Wageman decried the VGS negotiation tactics, which she described as "unethical and bullying." D. Mager Rickner asked for an explanation of what is accomplished by denouncing the ANGP. R. McGuinness responded that by approving the Article, the voters provide support to impacted Monkton landowners, a consensus by Monkton citizens results (not just the impacted landowners), and the message is that the entire town is concerned with the ANGP. Jane Palmer shared voting results from nearby communities about ANGP questions/articles, all of which were decidedly against the ANGP. R. Wallace referenced p. 22 of the AR and asked about the SB response to the Town ROW Permit application submitted by VGS. S. Pilcher provided a timeline of SB action and various details. The SB created a list of concerns to be shared with VGS, from whom a response is pending. S. Pilcher commented that he has no idea about VGS' response if the Town declines to approve the ROW permit. S. Pilcher commented briefly on the Memorandum of Understanding with VGS, and reiterated that eminent domain appears as a last resort consideration. R. Wallace asked follow-up questions: if voters approve Article 13, what does it mean? What is the SB thinking on the matter? S. Pilcher replied that there is no SB consensus on the issue. J. Palmer asked about Article 10 from the 2013 Annual Town Meeting Warning. Are the Town and its residents satisfied? T. Gaudette commented that the Addison County Regional Planning Commission vote was in consideration of Phase 2 of the project. R. Crampton wants VGS to be required to prove that the ANGP is in the public good. M. Hurlburt urged support of Article 13, and noted that VGS is not trustworthy. E. Doyle also urged voters to approve Article 13, and expressed her view that an obligation exists for all Monkton residents to support those landowners most directly impacted by the project. B. Deal lamented that the project as presented to date has been very difficult. B. Deal cited the proposed compensation by VGS to landowners losing significant trees from their property as lacking. B. Deal believes that supporting Article 13 "is the least we can do for our neighbors." The moderator asked if the audience

was ready to consider the question. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 14: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow money from time to time and pledge the credit of the Town from the past and present indebtedness as may be necessary for them?

P. Huber moved to approve the motion; H. Boisse seconded the motion. The moderator solicited discussion from the audience, though none was forthcoming. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 15: To transact any other business proper to come before this meeting.

The moderator reminded the audience that any items discussed under Article 15 were advisory only. Road Commissioner W. Preston rose to recognize Marcel Cousino, who recently retired from the Monkton Highway Department after 31 years of service. A round of applause followed. S. Pilcher expressed appreciation for the service and commitment shown by John Phillips, whose tenure on the SB totaled 14 years, including the last six years consecutively. J. Phillips did not seek reelection this year. The audience applauded J. Phillips. Patti Padua recognized departing Russell Memorial Library Trustee Kathy Malzac for her service to the community. More applause followed. M. Cousino honored his spouse, Zandra, for her many contributions to the community. Z. Cousino retired from Monkton Central School after a long and distinguished career. More applause followed. J. McNerney reminded the audience that lunch prepared by the Monkton Maples 4-H group was available.

T. Gaudette moved to adjourn at 12:29 PM. D. Williams seconded the motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.

Minutes submitted by
Bill Joos

Monkton Town Clerk
Received and Recorded
on February 4, 2015 at 3:30 AM/PM



Stephen Pilcher, Selectboard

Anne Layn, Selectboard



Henry Boisse, Selectboard



John McNerney, Selectboard



Roger Parker, Jr., Selectboard

Attest: 
Sharon Gomez, Town Clerk
Monkton Town Clerk received