

**Town of Monkton
Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting
March 3, 2015**

The legal voters of the Town of Monkton met at the Monkton Central School on March 3, 2015.

Present: Selectboard (SB) Chair Stephen Pilcher, Vice Chair Anne Layn, SB Members Henry Boisse, John McNerney, and Roger Parker, Jr., Town and School Clerk Sharon Gomez, 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 following were elected as Town Officers:

Town Moderator – 1 Year Term:	Kenneth E. Wheeling – 384 votes
School Moderator – 1 Year Term:	Kenneth E. Wheeling – 384 votes
Town & School Clerk – 1 Year Term:	Sharon M. Gomez – 383 votes
Town & School Treasurer – 1 Year Term:	William C. Joos – 367 votes
Selectboard – 3 Year Term:	Stephen Pilcher – 350 votes
Selectboard – 2 Year Term:	John McNerney – 353 votes
Auditor – 3 Year Term:	Mary Jane Huizenga – 360 votes
Constable – 1 Year Term:	Charles Huizenga, Sr. – 364 votes
Delinquent Tax Collector – 1 Year Term:	William C. Joos – 358 votes
Lister – 3 Year Term:	Samuel H. Burr – 360 votes
Monkton Elementary School Board – 3 Years:	Jennifer Stanley – 348 votes
Monkton Elementary School Board – 1 Year:	Marikate Kelley – 325 votes
Monkton Elementary School Board – 1 Year:	Sarah Rougier – 317 votes
Mount Abraham UHS Board – 3 Years:	Shawna Sherwin – 300 votes
Planning Commission – 3 Year Term:	Ivor Hughes – 338 votes
Russell Memorial Library Trustee – 1 Year Term:	Jane Low – 368 votes

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

David Williams moved to accept the Report of the Auditors as submitted. Al Finkbeiner seconded the motion. S. Pilcher rose to amend content in the annual report (AR). S. Pilcher shared corrected numbers line-by-line as a point of information. These corrected amounts included: 1) General Fund – Revenues - Property Tax and Total Revenues (p. 45): \$102,278.25 and \$409,874.16, respectively; 2) Total General Fund Expenses under Budget, Total General Fund Expenses under Revenue, Jan 1 2014 Fund Balance and Dec 31, 2014 General Fund Balance (p. 49): \$37,466.04, \$11,641.47, (\$160,804.57) and (\$149,163.10), respectively; 3) General Highway Expenses – Road Maintenance – Highway Upgrade/Paving, Total Road Maintenance, Total Highway

Expenses, Highway Expenses Over Budget, Highway Expenses Under Revenue and December 31 ,14 Balance (p. 51): \$0.00, \$423,415.04, \$845,544.33, (\$101,087.33), \$7,782.47 and \$37,095.15, respectively. J. McNerney distributed some AR replacement pages (p. 26 & p. 45-51). S. Pilcher confirmed the projected amount of taxes to be raised (see revised p. 26 > \$900,919.51). **John McNerney seconded the motion to amend. The motion to amend was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.** Deborah Gaynor advised of a description error on p. 55 of the AR: we should strike the text “ongoing-two cents added to the town tax” from the ANAC description.**The motion as amended 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.

Suzanne Ledoux moved to establish a Real Estate Taxes payment due date/deadline of 5:00 PM, Monday, November, 16, 2015. D. Gaynor seconded the motion. The moderator solicited discussion from the audience, but no discussion followed. **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?

Thea Gaudette moved to empower the Selectboard to set the Tax Rate, as noted above. D. Gaynor 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 **Walter Wilmerding moved to recess at 10:19 AM. A. Finkbeiner 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 were available at the stage.

Representatives Fred Baser and David Sharpe presented legislative updates and answered questions. D. Sharpe encouraged Monkton residents to visit the statehouse, and also shared the Legislature’s online address (see www.leg.state.vt.us). The moderator advised that the representatives would be available in the hallway for additional questions. The moderator also commented on the recent town meeting held in Starksboro, where a floor amendment to the school budget was offered. A floor amendment is not possible in Monkton, since our school budget is voted by Australian Ballot.

Ed Bown moved to suspend the recess at 10:45 AM and return to the business of the Town Meeting. T. Gaudette 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	\$ 2,000.00
j) Bristol Rescue Squad	\$ 4,000.00
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) Rural Fire Protection Program	\$ 100.00
v) Vergennes Rescue Squad	\$ 600.00
w) Vermont Adult Learning	\$ 700.00
x) Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$ 195.00
y) Women Safe (Women in Crisis)	\$ 1,000.00
	<u>\$22,124.00</u>

William Martin moved that the listed Social Service Agency requests be considered as a group. A. Finkbeiner seconded the motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator. Frank Stanley asked if any requests increased from 2014. S. Pilcher confirmed increases (as noted in parentheses) to the Bristol Recreation Department (\$500), Bristol Rescue Squad (\$300), and the addition of the Rural Fire Protection Program (\$100), respectively. The question was called. **The motion to approve the proposed total of \$22,124.00 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	\$ 335,475.44
b) Highway Expenses	\$ 755,894.07
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	\$ 4,500.00
g) Agricultural and Natural Areas Fund	\$ 10,000.00
h) Highway Capital Equipment Fund	\$ 30,000.00
	<u>Total: \$1,189,919.51 *</u>

* Item 6b) was amended and the total adjusted as noted below

T. Gaudette moved to consider the Article in its entirety as presented (i.e., to not divide the questions and consider each individually). Robin Hopps seconded the motion. The moderator solicited discussion, and explained how motions and amendments may be offered. Buzz Kuhns commented on the means to amend dollar amounts. **Gabrielle Jensen moved to**

reduce item 6c) from \$33,000 to \$25,000. S. Pilcher seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Eugenie Doyle-Burr commented. MVFD 2nd Assistant Chief Robert Howard explained the budget request, and referenced p. 63 of the AR. John Phillips asked about monies remaining from 2014. MVFD Treasurer Bill Joos responded, and noted that the excess funds reported will be used to offset the additional building expenses to be realized (that will exceed the requested \$78,000, if Article 9 passes). Roger Wallace commented on available reserves and spending by the department. The question was called. **The motion to reduce the funding to the fire department by \$8,000 was voted in the negative by voice vote, and the motion failed, as declared by the moderator. S. Pilcher moved to amend item 6b to \$735,894.07, a reduction of \$20,000, and to adjust all totals accordingly. J. McNerney seconded the motion.** S. Pilcher explained that a general expense long term debt payment was also included in error as a general highway expense LTD principal payment. **The motion to amend was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.** Brett Griswold asked about item 6h, and its relationship to Article 8, to which S. Pilcher responded. The question was called.

The motion, as amended:

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

a) Salaries and General Expenses	\$ 335,475.44
b) Highway Expenses *	\$ 735,894.07 *
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	\$ 4,500.00
g) Agricultural and Natural Areas Fund	\$ 10,000.00
h) Highway Capital Equipment Fund	\$ 30,000.00
Total:	\$1,169,919.51 *

was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.

Article 7: Shall the Town of Monkton schedule its annual Town Meeting on the Monday immediately preceding the first Tuesday in March at 7:00 PM, in accordance with 17 V.S.A § 2640(b).**

** this article was amended to a different day and time as noted below

R. Wallace moved to approve the article as written. Wendy Sue Harper seconded the motion. R. Wallace asked for clarification of the statute, to which S. Pilcher responded. Kristen Farrell spoke about the history of town meeting. **Jeff Fortin offered an amendment to schedule town meeting on the Saturday preceding the first Tuesday in March, starting at 10:00 AM. The motion was seconded by a member of the audience.** E. Doyle-Burr commented on the availability of legislators. J. Schlesinger commented. R. Wallace observed that very few people attend the MCS annual meeting, and wondered if the attendance could be improved. J. Phillips commented, and noted that his brief research suggested that Saturday meetings resulted in decreased attendance over time. E. Doyle-Burr compared the annual town meeting to the annual school meeting. S. Pilcher offered a point of clarification: Election Day is fixed as the first Tuesday in March; any of the 5 days preceding Tuesday are available options to hold Town Meeting. Steve Parren spoke in favor of the 'Fortin' amendment (to Saturday). Laura Farrell asked if the school budget meeting could be moved to Saturday as well. S. Pilcher noted that more space and improved parking would result if the meeting date is moved to Saturday. Robin Hopps asked if keeping the meeting on Tuesday was an option. J. McNerney commented that

Monkton remains the only nearby town to convene a Tuesday meeting. **The motion to amend to Saturday at 10:00 AM was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.** J. Fortin supports having children attend town meeting, if the meeting can be moved to Saturday. The question was called. **A voice vote on the amended article: Shall the Town of Monkton schedule its annual Town Meeting on the Saturday immediately preceding the first Tuesday in March at 10:00 AM, in accordance with 17 V.S.A § 2640(b) was inconclusive.** A hand count resulted. The Selectboard divided the audience into sections, and counted, with a written total provided to the moderator. The resulting tally: **Aye: 92, Nay: 61. Article 7, as amended, was voted in the affirmative by a show of hands, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 8: Shall the voters approve a sum not to exceed \$80,000.00 for the purchase of a Ford F550 truck for the Highway Department?

C. Huizenga moved the question; D. Gaynor seconded. The moderator solicited feedback, and a lengthy discussion followed. Peter Norris, Sr. asked if \$80,000 was the total purchase price. Michael Hurlburt asked about truck specifications, about which Road Commissioner Wayne Preston responded. J. Fortin inquired about the parameters for equipment replacement, and W. Preston replied. P. Norris asked about the balance and use of the Highway Capital Equipment Fund. After some confusion (and acknowledgement of an error in a fund title appearing on p. 42 of the AR), Treasurer W. Joos confirmed a \$40,100 balance as of 12/31/14. **P. Norris moved to amend the Article, to read, "Shall the voters approve a sum not to exceed \$80,000, but spend \$60,000 for the purchase of a Ford F550 truck for the Highway Department." J. Fortin seconded the motion to amend.** Several audience members, including Melanie Peyser and R. Wallace, commented on the language of the proposed amendment. P. Norris moved to amend further his amendment, to read as follows: **"Shall the voters approve \$80,000 to purchase a Ford F550 truck, \$60,000 of which is to be raised by taxes?" M. Peyser seconded the motion to amend the proposed 'Norris' amendment. The amendment to the amendment ("...to be raised by taxes") was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.** R. Wallace spoke about allowing the SB to exercise its discretion in determining how to best finance the truck purchase, which Jane Palmer also supports. An audience member called the question on the modified Norris amendment. **The 'Norris' motion to amend Article 8 was voted in the negative by voice vote, defeated, and so declared by the moderator.** An audience member called the question. **The motion (as originally worded) to approve a sum not to exceed \$80,000.00 for the purchase of a Ford F550 truck for the Highway Department was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Recess George Parker moved to recess for lunch at 12:13 PM. Scott Gordon seconded the motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator, who noted that Town Meeting would continue at 1:00 PM.

Marikate Kelley moved to suspend the recess at 1:01 PM and return to the business of the Town Meeting. John Linn seconded the motion. The motion was voted in affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.

Article 9: Shall the voters approve a sum not to exceed \$78,000.00 for the addition to the Monkton Volunteer Fire Department Fire Station?

Marcel Cousino moved the question; Ralph Fitzgerald seconded the motion. S. Pilcher asked if a member of the MVFD could address the question. Robert Howard, 2nd Assistant Chief, shared cost details (which are estimated at \$125,000 for the entire project) and responded to various questions. J. McNerney voiced support for the article. G. Parker asked if the MVFD will have more equipment needs related to the Addison Natural Gas Pipeline – an unknown at this time, per R. Howard. Bailee Layn-Gordon, the Town Service Officer, supports the article. A. Finkbeiner asked about the drinking water supply. P. Norris spoke in favor of the appropriation. F. Stanley applauded Roger Parker's \$7,000 donation for site work. G. Jensen expressed concern again about MVFD financials, and believes the project is too expensive. David Layn, MVFD Chief, confirmed that the station is equipped to be an emergency shelter, and that more storage space is necessary for that equipment/resources. D. Layn also noted that Monkton First Response has expanded equipment storage needs. With discussion concluded, the question was considered. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 10: Shall the Town of Monkton adopt its budget article or articles by Australian ballot?

M. Cousino moved the question; R. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. S. Parren asked about who supported the article. J. Fortin commented. M. Peyser asked if there are costs involved. S. Pilcher responded. K. Wheeling offered a point of information, and talked about recounts. K. Farrell spoke against the article and referenced her students and 'the power of the voice' at Town Meeting. E. Doyle-Burr spoke against the article. D. Rickner confirmed that no content changes could occur if an Australian ballot is used. M. Hurlburt noted that the Town of New Haven uses Australian ballot to decide its financial questions. Jim Schlesinger favors the article, and referenced the inability of his children to attend Town Meeting. S. Pilcher spoke against article 10, and expressed concern that Town Meeting would disappear. L. Farrell spoke in favor of town meeting, as a means of building community, and noted the errors corrected today, for example, which would not be possible with use of the Australian ballot. Izzy Moody called the question. **The question was voted in the negative by voice vote. The motion failed, and the moderator so declared.**

Article 11: Shall the Town of Monkton vote on all public questions by Australian ballot?

Deb Mager-Rickner moved the question; C. Huizenga seconded the motion. D. Mager-Rickner asked if anyone in the audience could explain the rationale for this article. There was no reply. It was mentioned that many of the same points and concerns made when Article 10 was just discussed apply to Article 11 as well. S. Pilcher spoke about the impact of the article, if passed. M. Peyser expressed concern about future questions being subject to Australian ballot limitations. With discussion concluded, the audience considered the question. **The question was voted in the negative by voice vote. The motion failed, and the moderator so declared.**

Article 12: Shall the voters of the Town of Monkton vote to advise the Select Board to use the Town land adjacent to the Monkton Friends Methodist Church as a site of a new Town Hall only and not for a Municipal Park and Ride Lot? ***

*** Prior to approval, this article was amended as noted below.

P. Norris moved the question; Tim Earle seconded the motion. A lengthy and detailed discussion followed. T. Gaudette spoke against the Article, as it would restrict use to a town hall only. S. Pilcher shared a brief history of the land purchase and the three prior failed votes to construct a new town hall. S. Pilcher spoke in favor of the MP&R, which he views as compatible with building a new town hall at some future date. S. Pilcher also confirmed the \$56,000 grant award. J. Fortin spoke about building expenses applicable to the existing town hall and the need for a new building. A. Finkbeiner asked if the MP&R could be incorporated into the town hall parking lot. P. Norris spoke against the project, which he views as shortsighted. P. Norris wondered if more criminal activity and litter will result, if the MP&R is built. P. Norris asked if the ACTR bus route is assured if the MP&R is built. “No,” per S. Pilcher, but ACTR is very interested in Monkton adding a MP&R. S. Pilcher confirmed that the Town would maintain the MP&R. Amy Moody commented on historical precedent and voiced concern about the project as proposed. M. Cousino asked about signage, and Rebecca Gould also commented. Marc Beaupre urged consideration of the existing lot adjacent to the Monkton Central School. Dolores Norris spoke against the MP&R, and expressed concern about activity at the MP&R, and the resulting imposition/privacy invasion placed on its neighbors. D. Norris suggested a better location might be on States Prison Hollow Rd. Jane Lindholm spoke in favor of the MP&R, and noted the community would become more accessible. Phil Russell stated that the MP&R would not be a permitted use in the village. T. Gaudette offered a point of information: the DRB will consider site approval. D. Mager-Rickner noted that many of these same issues will apply if the town hall is built. Bob Dixon spoke against the MP&R, and expressed concern about the lighting and the project’s impact on his sheep herd. Recreation Committee member Paul Low spoke in favor of instead using the Morse Park lot. B. Layn-Gordon shared potential traffic concerns. S. Pilcher explained that the existing curb cut for the church would be used, with a second curb cut to follow, as necessary. S. Pilcher reinforced the municipal aspect of the project, with the Town determining the hours of use, for example. P. Norris mentioned other options. T. Gaudette confirmed that the grant money is tied to the land as proposed. J. Schlesinger asked if the SB was bound by today’s vote on Article 12. Nina Badger suggested use of the existing Recreation Dept. parking lot. R. Wallace noted that a de facto MP&R already exists today in front of the library. E. Doyle-Burr believes that Morse Park would be a preferable MP&R location. J. McNerney spoke in favor, and noted that the MP&R as proposed would be entirely compatible with the plans for a new town hall. J. McNerney noted the successful addition of MP&Rs in Hinesburg and Starksboro, with no increased crime activity resulting. Also, it was noted that lighting is not mandated; the Town can decide what is best. Karen Dixon expressed concerns about use of the MP&R by others and the resulting traffic flow. **Kathy Bushey made a motion to amend language in the Article, as follows, “... as a site of a new Town Hall or other community approved facility and not for a Municipal Park and Ride Lot?” C. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion to amend was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.** P. Norris called the question. S. Pilcher seconded. **A voice vote on the amended Article 12: Shall the voters of the Town of Monkton vote to advise the Select Board to use the Town land adjacent to the Monkton Friends Methodist Church as a site of a new Town Hall or other community approved facility and not for a Municipal Park and Ride Lot? was inconclusive.** A hand count resulted. The Selectboard divided the audience into sections, and counted, with a written total provided to the moderator. The resulting tally: **Aye: 72, Nay: 30. Article 12, as amended, was voted in the affirmative by a show of hands, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 13: 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?

T. Gaudette moved the question; C. Huizenga seconded the motion. J. Fortin asked about the need for such an authorization. S. Pilcher replied, and explained briefly why the need exists, citing the Town’s use of Tax Anticipation Notes, as one example. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

Article 14: To transact any other business proper to come before this meeting.

Senator Chris Bray addressed the audience and responded to several questions, many of which revolved around pollution and water quality. Laura Farrell of ANAC advised of a map in the hallway for which the group is seeking resident input about wildlife sightings in town. **Sue Many offered a motion regarding the P&R: “Shall the voters of Monkton advise the SB to pursue other options suitable to ACTR besides the Monkton Ridge location?” Charles Johnson seconded the motion.** S. Pilcher commented on Morse Park, and the vandalism/late evening activity there, to which the Addison County Sheriff has responded. Marc Beaupre urged the SB to consider for the P&R the existing dirt parking lot adjacent to MCS. J. McNerney called the question. A. Finkbeiner seconded. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the moderator.**

S. Pilcher introduced Joy Bora, who represents Meals on Wheels, which is seeking volunteers. Barbara Deal requested an update on the Vermont Gas Systems pipeline project, and the amphibian crossing. S. Pilcher replied, and noted that the pipeline matter has been remanded back to the VT Supreme Court, with plan economics being considered. S. Pilcher also advised regarding the amphibian crossing that the SB is very close to bidding out the project, with no money due from the Town of Monkton. J. McNerney thanked the audience for having a civil discourse today, and thanked Ken Wheeling for serving as moderator. J. McNerney also mentioned Joe Boisse’s many years of service as a lister, and noted his recent passing. Applause followed.

T. Earle moved to adjourn at 2:52 PM. D. Mager-Rickner 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 ____ March, 2015 at _____ AM/PM

Stephen Pilcher, Selectboard

Anne Layn, Selectboard

Henry Boisse, Selectboard

Attest: _____
Sharon Gomez
Town Clerk

John McNerney, Selectboard

Roger Parker, Jr., Selectboard