

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES-2017

THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF MONKTON ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED AND WARNED TO MEET AT THE MONKTON CENTRAL SCHOOL ON SATURDAY MARCH 4, 2017 AT 10:00 A.M. FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

ARTICLE 1 TO BE VOTED ON BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT ON TUESDAY MARCH 7, 2017 AT THE MONKTON FIRE STATION POLLS WILL BE OPEN FROM 7:00 AM AND WILL CLOSE AT 7:00 PM

**ARTICLE 1: To elect all Town Officers by Australian Ballot.
Voting times**

ARTICLE 1 to be voted on by Australian ballot on Tuesday March 7, 2017 at the Monkton Fire station. Polls will be open from 7:00 AM and will close at 7:00 PM.

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

Mary Jane Huizenga moved to receive and act on the report of the auditors as submitted, David William seconded this motion.

Stephen Pilcher moved to accept the Report of the Auditors as written, Charlie Huizenga, Sr. seconded this motion. 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 be paid to the Town Treasurer.

Charlie Huizenga, Sr. moved to set the date for the payment of Real Estate Taxes to be paid to the town treasurer on November 15, 2017, Sam Burr seconded this motion. 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?

John Phillips moved to empower the Selectboard to set the Tax Rate when the Grand List is finalized. Charlie Huizenga, Sr. seconded this motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

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

Charlie Huizenga, Sr, moved to approve the following requests by various Social Service Agencies, Mark Rickner seconded this motion.

a) Addison County Community Action Group (Hope) \$1,250.00

b) Addison County Diversion & Community Justice \$ 550.00

Renee McGuinness asked for clarification on what the diversion program was. Barbara Davis explained that this was an alternative for nonviolent offenders. The offender completes a diversion program where community services are performed and the program has a 98% success rate. Stephen Pilcher also spoke in favor of the diversion program where there was vandalism and community service was completed to pay for the damages.

c) Addison County Counseling Service Inc. \$1,500.00

Heather Bessette spoke on behalf of CSAC indicating that in the previous year, CSAC provided 651 hours of service to residents for the Town of Monkton.

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 Dept. \$2,000.00

j) Bristol Rescue Squad \$4,000.00

Tom Steadman asked how much of Monkton Bristol Rescue squad covered, and if they covered all of Monkton, why did the Selectboard not agree to fund the full amount that was asked for. Stephen Pilcher indicated that the amount that was asked for was not to scale to what other towns were asking for, Vergennes asked for \$600.00 where Bristol asked for \$6,000.00. Mark Rickner, representing Bristol Rescue Squad, explained that they were all volunteer and recently had to purchase a \$145,000.00 ambulance, two \$30,000.00 heart rate monitors, and a new \$25,000.00 cot, and this is why the request was higher than in previous years.

John McNerney asked if the amounts could be changed, and Ken Wheeling instructed on how this could be done. Roger Parker stated that the Bristol Rescue Squad also accepts donations if it was felt that this amount was too low.

Bernie Wisnowski asked if the Charlotte Rescue made any requests. Stephen Pilcher said there was no request made by Charlotte Rescue.

k) Champlain Valley Agency on Aging \$1,100.00

l) Elderly Services \$ 800.00

m) Green Up Vermont \$ 150.00

n) Homeward Bound Humane Society \$ 250.00

o) Hospice Volunteer Services \$ 300.00

p) John W. Graham Emergency Shelter \$ 1000.00

q) Lewis Creek Assn. \$ 550.00

r) Monkton Mentors Program \$ 500.00

Susan Ledoux spoke on behalf of the Monkton Mentor program and encouraged support and volunteers.

s) Open Door Clinic **\$ 500.00**

Renee McGuinness asked what the Open Door Clinic was. Foresta Constanada explained that this clinic that offered services to uninsured and underinsured members of the community. This is a bi-weekly clinic that aids in covering healthcare needs.

t) Otter Creek Natural Resources Conservation District **\$ 198.00**

u) Retired & Senior Volunteer Program **\$ 400.00**

v) Rural Fire Protection Program **\$ 100.00**

w) Vergennes Rescue Squad **\$ 600.00**

x) Vermont Adult Learning **\$ 700.00**

y) Vermont Center for Independent Living **\$ 195.00**

z) Women Safe (Women in Crisis) **\$ 1250.00**

Total: \$22,989.00

Dana Thygesen asked how these requests came before the town of Monkton. Stephen Pilcher explained that these are received via written request form.

It was mentioned that the town report showed a different figure. After review, it was determined that the figures shown in the town report were correct.

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

Deb Gaynor moved to recess at 10:28 AM, Bailee Lay-Gordon seconded this motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

Senators Chris Bray and Representatives David Sharpe and Fred Baser provided legislative updates, shared concerns and opportunities, and answered questions.

Tim Earl moved to resume town meeting at 10:48 AM, Charlie Huizenga seconded. 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?

Tom Steadman moved to divide the article, Eric Bowen seconded this motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

a) Salaries and General Expenses \$320,265.31

Dana Thygesen requested more detail on the changes made to the salaries and general expenses. Stephen Pilcher provided more detail with the largest change being that the Town Clerk moved from Stipend to hourly.

Tom Steadman asked if the town clerk pay rate was going forward. Stephen Pilcher answered in the affirmative.

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

b) Highway Expenses \$887,715.96

Wayne Preston moved, Charlie Huizenga, Sr. seconded.

Stephen Pilcher outlined the major changes to this budget. Wayne Preston and Bruce Cassidy moved from full time to part time employees. Four full time employees to three full time employees. Logan LeCompte received grants to help keep expenses down. \$82,000.00 grant and \$30,000.00 grant for ditching. Peter Norris asked that the town stand and acknowledge the road crew for the services provided.

Anya Schwartz asked about the Property Tax line under Highway Revenues and wanted to know why it didn't match previous years. Stephen Pilcher stated that there was an omission and the proper figure was \$627,715.96

Jeff Fortin wanted to know about the extra hot mix increase. Logan LeCompte explained that there was an increase per ton, and gravel increased, as well as the winter salt increased. This increase also reflects the additional paving grant.

Barbara Deal wanted to know if brine would be used, Logan LeCompte moved the expenses to summer chloride on dirt roads to keep the dust down. The concern is that the brine is corrosive to vehicles.

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

c) Monkton Volunteer Fire Department \$36,000.00

Charlie Huizenga, Sr. moved, Ralph Fitzgerald seconded.

Robert Howard, second assistant chief provided an update to the Fire Department addition status. Paving needs to be finished, fire alarms need to be approved, but the addition is in use.

Stephen Pilcher asked about the Truck replacement fund of \$10,000.00. The newest truck is 10 years old. Neighboring towns that have purchased new trucks have ranged between \$500,000.00 and \$800,000.00.

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

d) Russell Memorial Library \$23,650.00

Jane Lowe moved for and Deb Gaynor seconded this motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

e) Monkton Museum and Historical Society \$1,000.00

Barbara Lowry-Earle moved and Wendy Sue Harper seconded the motion of approve the request from the Monkton Museum and Historical Society. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

f) Recreation Fund

\$4,500.00

Charlie Huizenga, Sr. moved the recreation fund expense, John Brace, Sr. seconded this motion.

Jeff Fortin asked what is the Recreation Fund? John Brace, Sr. It was explained that this covers the mowing and other expenses for Morse Park and Rec. Field. This does not cover maintenance on the trails or parking lots, dog path, bridges, etc. Jeff Fortin wanted to know when more money would be added to this fund. Paul Lowe explained that he has is no insight on repairing vandalism. Such issues are usually addressed by volunteers.

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

g) Agricultural and Natural Areas Fund

\$35,000.00

Wendy Sue Harper, Robin Hopps seconded this motion.

Laura Farrell explained that in the early years, this was funded by a \$0.02 addition to the tax rate, which generated between \$30 - \$35,000 per year for the Agricultural and Natural Areas Fund. Several years ago, this was changed to a flat rate appropriation which is voted on each year as part of Article 6. In the past year, two big projects, the Cota Farm and Norris Berry Farm, were approved which depleted the Fund by 75%. There are other large projects on the horizon which will require funds.

John Brace asked what ANAC does. Are projects overseen? It was clarified that the Agricultural and Natural Areas committee help landowners answer questions, and aid landowners through the process and helps town keep open land and farms. Sam Burr noted that there is an established application process. ANAC receives the applications and makes recommendations to the Selectboard. The Selectboard determines whether or not to fund different projects after holding a meeting to hear public input. Dana Thygesen how is this money used. Sam explained that the money fills gaps or serves as seed money for a land conservation project or easement. John McNerney explained that these funds are generally a smaller part in comparison to the total cost of the project. The balance typically comes from State or Federal money and from private donations.

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

h) Highway Capital Equipment Fund

\$30,000.00

Mark Rickner moved the Highway Capital Equipment Fund as written, Roger Parker, JR. seconded this motion.

Andrew Letourneau asked if there is there a balance in the fund, Stephen Pilcher explained that referenced on page 34, there is money in the fund and this amount will be added. This fund helps minimize the need for the town to take on long term debt. John McNerney referenced page 49 which shows when items are expected to be replaced.

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

i) Tax Stabilization Fund

\$60,000.00

Stephen Pilcher moved the Tax Stabilization Fund, Sam Burr seconded this motion.

Tom Steadman wanted to know what this used for, Stephen Pilcher referenced the Selectboard report and that it is calculated what the municipal property tax will be for the next year. Reappraisal will be taking effect. The municipal tax rate will be just under \$0.47 and the town tries to keep this rate under \$0.50. If there is a year where there is an issue staying under the \$50,000.00 to keep the municipal property value down, the town can draw from this fund. This has been used in 2013 and again in 2015. This \$60,000.00

Bill Joos explained that those moneys do not qualify as a fund, within the \$50,000.00 was used in 2013 and \$15,000.00. The current balance on this fund is \$0.00. Is this money used for lawsuits, and Bill Joos explained that this was not what it was used for. John McNerney reiterated that this levels out the rate.

Peter Straub referenced page 35, and asked where this amount would be reflected, Bill Joos explained that it reflects general fund, but does not classify as a fund from a reporting stand point, if unused as a general fund.

Tom Steadman asked if there was a tax stabilization fund that has been used before, this was not on last year's article. There was no money raised last year, but it was used.

Jen Stanley asked what has changed in the town budget to allow this. Stephen Pilcher referenced page 40 for delinquent taxes. The last tax sale was in 2013. There will be a tax sale to collect all delinquent taxes later this year. The highway department ran a surplus of \$68,000.00.

Jeff Fortin wanted to know why the town is asking for the full amount versus raising the full \$60,000.00 this year. The Selectboard felt like this was the right answer based on this year's budget and tax rate. If the town wants to only raise \$30,000.00 the tax rate might go down by \$0.015.

Jeff Fortin moved to change this line item amount from \$60,000.00 to \$30,000.00. Tom Steadman seconded this motion. Tom Steadman wanted to know how this would affect a \$250,000 property. Stephen Pilcher provided an estimate with the tax rate being \$0.455.

Renee McGuinness wanted to keep this at \$60,000.00 because if there is another issue like in the past where there is a major mistake this will keep stability. She felt that this should be funded fully to help keep tax rates stable. John McNerny feels that this is a good opportunity to replenish this fund without raising the tax rate. Dana Thygesen asked if this fund gets used for whatever the Selectboard deems appropriate and expressed concern about appropriate reporting.

Patrick Rowe expressed being in favor of putting aside the \$60,000.00 now.

Stephen Pilcher discussed that the town runs at a calendar year where money gets reviewed in December and the money starts getting used in January. This money is reported in the town meeting.

Andrew Letourneau asked if \$60,000.00 was given does it get put in to a line item in the next year to be sure that it's accounted for. Stephen Pilcher indicated that this would be accounted for.

The motion was voted in the negative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

Sam Burr asked when Vermont gas would be responsible for paying property tax. Stephen Pilcher's understanding that the amount would be \$2.3 million (about \$70k/year on annual property tax). Stephen Pilcher hopes to put some monies in to new town hall and town library.

Ivor Hughes wanted to know how the tax gets assessed on the natural gas line. Stephen Pilcher indicated there was a standard formula.

Bill Talbott referenced page 34 and noted that the Town started off this year with a General Fund deficit of \$120,000.00. Stephen Pilcher explained that this due to delinquent taxes outstanding on December 31, 2016.

Michael Hurlburt wanted to know if the land assessments would be affected by the VT gas line. Sam Burr explained that the fact finding was recently concluded. Neighboring

towns have been looked at this issue and there has not been a great deal of change in the neighboring town property values.

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

Total: \$1,398,131.27

Bob Radler moved to recess for lunch at 12:06 PM Deb Gaynor seconded this motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

Pilcher moved to resume town meeting at 1:00 PM, John McNerney seconded this motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters establish a reserve fund to be called the Municipal Building Fund to be used for building a new Town Hall, and approve the sum of \$40,000.00 for the fund this year.

Charlie Huizenga, Sr. Moved to establish a reserve fund to be called the Municipal Building Fund to be used for building a new Town Hall, and approve the sum of \$40,000.00 for the fund this year, and Deb Gaynor seconded this motion.

Andrew Letourneau asked why this was an article on the Agenda. Stephen Pilcher explained that 10 years ago a piece of property was purchased for a new Town Hall. There have been three different proposals presented to the Town but none have been approved. The last bond requested was for \$1 million and was not approved. This would have added \$0.10 to the tax rate. Since there was some flexibility in the budget this year, adding money to this fund seemed prudent.

Jeff Fortin asked if Town Hall and Library were approved, what would happen to the existing properties. The Selectboard hopes to reinstate a Municipal building committee to help determine what should be done with old town hall and library.

Barbara Deal asked if it was certain that the municipal building would include the library on the new property. Stephen Pilcher answered that this was uncertain at this time.

Robin Hopps, who was on Municipal Building Committee in the past, was pleased to see this as line item. The Town Hall has been voted down in the past due to design, cost, and what would be done with the existing structures.

Jane Lowe expressed that the working conditions in the existing town hall are not good, especially when there are multiple groups in the current town hall at one time.

Renee McGuinness asked if this were approved would the Selectboard be allowed to use the funds for purposes other than building a new Town Hall. Stephen Pilcher answered in the negative.

Renee McGuinness asked if a "by voice vote" would be required, would a Town Hall be built if there were no bond vote. She prefers the idea of a bond. Stephen Pilcher felt that the idea behind this line item was to present a bond vote of a lesser amount.

Tom Steadman asked if it would be cheaper in the long run to put up a bond versus interest on the \$40,000.00. Stephen Pilcher indicated that there is not a great deal of interest accrued, but a bond has fees and other various charges to obtain a bond.

Anya Schwartz feels that this is a step in the right direction and putting away money is a great idea and prepares the Town.

Jeff Fortin expressed concern about use of space and the amount of money.

Bob Radler asked how many bonds have been presented, Stephen Pilcher answered that there were 3 bonds presented. Bob Radler feels that the town needs to move ahead at this point since the land has been purchased.

Ann Layn would like to see a diverse committee to plan this town hall.

John McNerney described this as saving for a down payment on a town hall.

Rick Gomez mentioned that the current town hall was not energy efficient with heating and cooling.

Mark Bowman stated that it would cost more money to heat and cool the existing building if there is no decision made on what to do with it.

Barbara Deal also mentioned a community room that should be part of this building.

Andrew Letourneau asked if the Town were to set up reserve funds where would the funds go and he wants to be clear what the \$40,000.00 for and would this be drawn against. Stephen Pilcher stated that this money would only be used for what the town votes on. It can only be used for a town hall unless the town votes otherwise.

Sue Mahony asked to describe what this money was being specifically used for. Stephen Pilcher stated that this article could be amended to spell out what exactly the money was being used for.

Peter Straub clarified that the money would be raised for the starting process of new municipal building.

Charlie Huizenga, Sr. wanted to know why the old plans couldn't be used. Stephen Pilcher felt that there was no reason that they could not be used, but the planning process still needed to happen.

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

ARTICLE 8: Shall the voters approve a sum not to exceed \$185,000.00 for the purchase of a tandem dump truck equipped for winter road maintenance for the Highway Department.

Wayne Preston moved to approve a sum not to exceed \$185,000.00 for the purchase of a tandem dump truck equipped for winter road maintenance for the Highway Department, John Brace, Sr. seconded this motion.

Jeff Fortin asked if a truck was going to be traded in to help alleviate the costs. Logan LeCompte indicated a new truck would be over \$200,000.00 and that an older truck would be traded in.

Paul Lowe asked if the capital fund could be used towards this. Logan LeCompte indicated that the Selectboard would determine how much of Capital Equipment fund would be used.

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

ARTICLE 9: Shall the voters authorize the Select Board 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.

Wendy Sue Harper moved to 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. Stephen Pilcher seconded this motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.

ARTICLE 10: To transact any other business proper to come before this meeting.

Laura Farrell stated that there was a wildlife map located in the hall to post wildlife sightings along with older maps. There will also be a celebration at the Cota closing

Deb Gaynor took a moment to thank the Monkton Maples for running the recycling center and for the time and hard work that has been put in to this project.

Deb Gaynor mentioned that as of July 1, 2017 food scraps will be collected. Food scraps cannot go into trash and this service will be mandatory by 2020.

Marilyn Cargill thanked the citizens of Monkton for the Planning Commission survey responses. The data results will be reviewed and posted. She mentioned the business directory in the hall to help keep business local.

Sue Mahony wanted to thank everyone involved for the park and ride project, and wanted to know if the park and ride would be included on a bus route. Stephen Pilcher indicated that there would be a need for proof of ridership. A starting point would be a "van-pool". Stephen Pilcher is working on ACTR to add Monkton to the route.

Michael Hurlburt wanted to know if the next town meeting would be a Saturday. Stephen Pilcher indicated that Town Meeting will be held on the Saturday before the first Tuesday in March.

Jeff Fortin asked that residents take action against vandalism and that the town should show support and speak up.

Stephen Pilcher wanted to take a moment to recognize Thea Gaudette's contributions to the town. Robin Hopps and Wendy Sue Harper wrote a nice article in the Town Report.

Stephen Pilcher also mentioned the following positions coming up for renewal: Zoning Administrator, Developmental Review Board seats, Recreation Department, 911 Coordinator, Emergency Management Coordinator, Conservation Committee, Regional Planning Commission, ACSWMD, Energy Committee, Recycling Coordinator, Tree Warden, Animal Control Officer, Greenup Coordinator, Webmaster, Vermont State Police representative, Community Advisory Board, Transportation Advisory Committee, and Municipal Building Committee. Anyone interested should contact the Selectboard.

Peter Straub asked that the Selectboard to consider replacing the sign in the center of Town (announcement sign).

Rick Gomez stated that the Fire Department was currently seeking volunteers.

Thanks to Lee Mahony for the town entrance signs.

Mark Ricker stated the Bristol Resue Squad was looking for first response volunteers for as there are only 4 volunteers now.

Bob Radler acknowledged Will Aldrige was the Boy Scout that made the signs at the entrance to town.

John McNerney thanked Lee Kauppila for helping to make the wood bank happen. There is wood available for those in need. Those interested in helping out, or know someone in need can contact HOPE in Middlebury. They are also able to supply fuel oil to those in need.

Ken Wheeling indicated that the School Board meeting will be held Monday March 6, 2017 at 7:30PM at the Monkton Central School. Voting will be Tuesday for the Town Agenda and School Agenda; polls open at 7:00AM and will close at 7:00PM.

Stephen Pilcher moved to adjourn at 1:52PM, Seconded by Charlie Huizenga this motion. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote and so declared by the moderator.**

Monkton Town Clerk
Received and Recorded
On _____, 2017
at _____ AM/PM

Attest: _____
Sharon Gomez, Town Clerk
Monkton Town Clerk received

Stephen Pilcher, Chair Selectboard

Anne Layn , Vice Chair Selectboard

Henry Boisse, Member Selectboard

John McNerney, Member Selectboard

Roger Parker, Member Selectboard

Respectfully Submitted,
Miranda Boe
Recording Secretary