

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING
AGENDA
Monday December 13, 2021
(Approved 12/27/21)

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Pilcher at 7:00pm.

Members in attendance: Stephen Pilcher (chair), Marikate Kelley, Paul Low, Bill Martin, John McNerney

Members absent: none

Others in attendance: Jessica Demeritt (recording secretary), Shane Lawrence, Nancy Cornell (remote), Steve Huffaker (remote)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Acker Waste Management will be collecting waste at the recycling center on 12/18 from 9am-12pm. The regular pickup schedule was changed due to the Christmas Holiday.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

APPROVE MINUTES

J. McNerney moved to approve the minutes of 11/22/21. P. Low seconded. M. Kelley abstained. The vote passed 4-0-1.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

B. Martin moved to approve AP#11129 in the amount of \$32,877.69. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor. B Martin observed that there were multiple invoices from the same vendor including 13 from GMP. He is wondering if everything is being paid on time. One GMP invoice is from the park and ride, and two are from the Rec Committee areas, one is from the old town hall, one from the town garage is from 9/28/21. S. Pilcher says there will be a conversation with the treasurer to determine the reason for bills being paid late. S. Pilcher thanked B. Martin for taking a closer look.

Paul Low again offered his time to winterize the old town hall to reduce costs. B Martin cautioned that the water pressure tank in the town hall may also serve the old library. Need to make sure we are not cutting off water to that building when the old town hall is winterized.

B. Martin made a motion to approve PR#11206 in the amount of \$10,355.20. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

B. Martin moved to approve AP#11210 in the amount of \$31,408.63. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC.

none

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

NEW BUSINESS:

DAVIS CURB CUT – 4537 SILVER STREET

The new curb cut is a much better location than the existing drive according to P. Low. S. Pilcher says it will need to meet the Monkton highway access policy. **J. McNerney made a motion to approve the Davis Curb Cut at 4537 Silver Street with the condition to include the requirement to meet the Monkton Highway Access Policy for Curb Cuts and Driveways. B. Martin abstained. The vote passed 4-0-1.** (NOTE: Policy may be found on the town web site.)

OPIOID SETTLEMENT PARTICIPATION

S. Pilcher says there is a national settlement with J&J as well as the distributors. There is a lot of money but it is nationally distributed. The money is to be distributed over a number of years. The distribution is based on population. Should Monkton agree to participate in the settlement? It will be taken up at the next meeting; the deadline for participation is 1/6/22.

MAPLE BROADBAND DISCUSSION

S. Huffaker and N. Cornell from Maple Broadband joined the Select Board meeting on Zoom. S. Pilcher asks where they are in their planning and how much money they might want from ARPA. S. Huffaker says they have received contributions: Cornwall gave \$50,000, Weybridge gave \$40,000, Ripton gave \$25,000, and hopefully Ferrisburg will offer \$50,000. The VT Community Broadband Board (VCBB) may match funds. There are pre-construction costs, and construction materials costs. Pre-construction involves surveying poles, working with GMP on where to attach to poles, and there was money for that, \$2.3 million. Lead time for electronics is six months right now. To plan for construction for the summer they need to order now. They need to apply for a construction grant but the money would arrive too late to be used for pre-purchase of materials with a long lead time. In Monkton 229 households or 25% of the town is unserved or underserved by internet service. S. Pilcher asks how much they are looking for in total to pre-buy construction materials. S. Huffaker thinks it will be about \$1 million. Other towns seem to be rounding up \$50,000 for Maple Broadband. M. Kelley asks when they are fully operational will it be available for all residents? S. Huffaker says they are expected to focus on unserved and underserved areas, but it should be available to those along the route. They are nonprofit, they are volunteers and must comply with the VCBB. J. McNerney asks how much it will cost to bring service to the 229 homes in Monkton? S. Huffaker says they don't know because they haven't started building out yet. They don't know if they will need to borrow money and other

unknowns. \$30 million for 20 Addison County towns is the current rough estimate. Christine Hallquist, executive director of VCB, says it will cost \$500 million for the state. Maple Broadband's only function is to build out to all the towns regardless of how much money a town contributes from ARPA. S. Pilcher says this model is working well in central Vermont. S. Huffaker says it has been working there for 10 years. Maple Broadband is trying to replicate a working model. M. Kelley asks if any towns had voted to not give any money? S. Huffaker answers no. S. Pilcher says the Select Board has not yet approved any spending from ARPA funds. M. Kelley says it's hard to pick a number without looking at the whole thing. She suggests maybe \$25,000 now, with the option to pay more later. S. Huffaker says good internet access is attractive to incoming residents. B. Martin would like to see the total current needs for ARPA money first. He is ready to fund \$50,000. The plan is to allocate money at the next Select Board meeting. P. Low would like to see underserved towns give more money. J. McNerney questions where the underserved and unserved numbers come from and whether they reflect residents who have made arrangements other than through telecom and cable companies.

APPOINTMENTS - DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

Marc Bolz-Robinson is interested. There needs to be more conversation. Currently no open positions, but some terms are expiring in March, and one current member may be resigning.

BOARD OF LISTERS DISCUSSION

B. Wisniowski is not running. John Howard will not be running again when his term expires on 2023, and there is one vacant position. S. Pilcher has discussed some ideas with the listers. There are four models for accomplishing the work that the Monkton Listers have done: 1) a board of listers only, 2) listers and an assessor that assesses buildings. 3) assessor do more, listers do less, 4) or a third party does it all. Liz Pecor is not running for auditor. S. Pilcher suggests there should be a discussion on Town Meeting Day to determine the direction the town will take. B. Martin notes that assessors are difficult to find and keep.

HIGHWAY DEPT BUDGET REVIEW

S. Pilcher thanked S. Lawrence for coming in. S. Lawrence says the Mountain Road culvert will be covered with FEMA money and Otter Creek will be handling the build. It has been complicated. B. Martin asks if the grader can be invoiced this year. Nortrax bid was high; a shop in Bristol looks like a better option and we may be able to repair the backhoe as well and for less money. M. Kelley asked about health insurance costs and S. Lawrence replied it depends on who elected to be covered under the town's health insurance. The Municipal Roads Grant Program goes under the highway grant and looks to be \$15,000 for 2022. HRA account reimbursements have not been working well and need some improvement. Due to a budgeting error under debt service principal in 2021 there will be a surplus as numbers get finalized. S. Lawrence asks where to budget for a new pickup, about \$40,000 with a plow and a sander. He needs to replace the

250. S. Pilcher suggests that it would be an ask of the voters in March. Monkton can only store enough salt for one storm, so more salt will need to be ordered. Because there is an 18 month back order on the big plow trucks it may be necessary to order a truck due to be replaced in 2023 in the near future. The excavator was paid off this year.

TRASH PICKUP AT RECYCLING

J. McNerney said that Randy of Moose Rubbish confirmed that Acker will be taking over Moose Rubbish. M. Kelley asked if prices will be changing. J. Demeritt responded that yes, according to Acker prices will be changing from \$3 to \$4 for a small bag, and from \$5 to \$6 for a large bag.

SELECTBOARD MEETING TIME / POSSIBLE CHANGES

M. Kelley has a conflict with the 1st and 3rd Mondays. S. Pilcher suggests going back to the 2nd and 4th Mondays, or to pick another day. **B. Martin made a motion to meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month starting in January at 7pm. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.**

UPDATED TRAFFIC ORDINANCE

S. Pilcher drafted an ordinance in response to concerns expressed about enforcing our current ordinance. It was suggested to add that gravel roads have a maximum speed of 35 mph unless otherwise posted. There was discussion about whether to add a note about not parking on the traveled portion of the road. There will be a future addition of a winter ordinance. **J. McNerney made a motion to adopt the Town of Monkton Traffic Ordinance. B. Martin seconded. All voted in favor.**

ARPA FUNDS STATUS

K. Farrell sent around a note about repurposing the old town hall as a community center and a location for the historical society. J. McNerney is concerned about how much money it will cost to continue to own the old town hall. P. Low says there is a minimum of \$80,000 that needs to be invested to make it energy efficient. Is there a pressure tank at the old RML? Should ARPA money be used for the old town hall? M. Kelley would like an article to let the voters decide whether to spend money on the old town hall. P. Low wonders about the use of the old town hall by the historical society. S. Pilcher asks if the Select Board would like someone to continue down the road of exploring restoring the old town hall. Does the town keep the old town hall, or will a private entity own it? J. McNerney has concerns about the town continuing to be responsible for the building. P. Low agrees. Both the library and historical society could share the expansion space in the new town hall. M. Kelley suggests that if the Historical Society doesn't have human resources to generate a proposal, they might not have the human resources to operate it. M. Kelley observes that if the vision works it would be great for the town, but it may be costly. S. Pilcher has the opinion that they should keep working on the project. The board agreed that they

are open to proposals for the building, but a firm proposal needs to be presented for consideration by summer of 2022. Such proposal should include information on the intended ownership of the building, a budget for known needed repairs and for ongoing operating expenses (including how much of those expenses they intend to ask the town to cover), who is responsible for overseeing and managing needed repairs, upkeep and regular operating expenses, as well as a determination of whether the intended use is eligible for ARPA funding. The selectboard will determine how to proceed based on the proposal. S. Pilcher will draft an email in response to K. Farrell.

M. Kelley notes that ARPA money for the mentor program could be taken up by Sue Ledoux. Kid's mental health has taken a hit and it would be a good use of money. She will follow up with S. Ledoux.

S. Pilcher is interested in a feasibility study for town water and/or septic. There was a suggestion from a state official that there are sources of funds through the State to support this other than municipal ARPA funds. S. Pilcher reported that those other sources appear to be tied to having a state-approved designated village district, but Monkton has not gone through the process to create such a district. S. Pilcher would like to follow up with the state. A municipal water treatment system is very expensive, maybe \$2 million according to B. Martin. Town water might be more affordable. B. Martin says the stumbling block of affordable housing everywhere is water and septic. S. Pilcher will talk to the state and try to get some more clarity.

2022 BUDGET

Should there be a cost of living increase for town positions? A 5% increase may be appropriate this year.

OLD BUSINESS:

RUSSELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY PROPOSAL REGARDING ROOM DESIGNATED FOR EXPANSION AT NEW TOWN OFFICES

no action taken

DISTURBANCE OF SURVEY PIN IN ROW – MCKENZIE

no action taken

SALVAGE YARDS IN MONKTON

no action taken

TOWN CREDIT CARD AND POLICY

no action taken

CLOUD STORAGE AND POLICY

S. Pilcher is hoping to make a video to help with cloud storage. There are some challenges with email and Google Drive.

SIGN

The Boy Scouts can install the sign if it is completed in the next few weeks.

OTHER BUSINESS:

DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, December 27, 2021 at 7pm at the new town offices

M. Kelley made a motion to adjourn at 10:02pm. All voted in favor.