

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING
MINUTES

Tuesday, May 23, 2023
(Approved 6/13/23)

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Pilcher at 7:01 pm.

Members in attendance: Stephen Pilcher (chair), John McNerney, Paul Low

Members absent: Marikate Kelley, Walter Crandall

Others in attendance: Jessica Demeritt (recording secretary), Stan Wilbur (town administrator), Brian Bydlik, Jaime Schulte, Lauren Parren, Kielee Pelland, Bob Heiser, Debra Sprague, Callie Brynn

ANNOUNCEMENTS

none

REGULAR BUSINESS:

APPROVE MINUTES

P. Low moved to approve the minutes of May 9, 2023 as written. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30512 in the amount of \$15,619.66. P. Low seconded. J. McNerney asked what account this a mapping project invoice was being billed to, since a note on an invoice incorrectly indicated it was a town forest project. **All voted in favor.**

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30523 in the amount of \$10,637.22. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve PR 30522 in the amount of \$13,134.61. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC.

The following overweight permits were reviewed and approved:

EB Campbell Forest Land Management LLC

Green Mountain Siteworks, LLC

White Falcon Solutions, LLC

Tim Paquette

VT Green Wood Resources, LLC

FACILITY USE REQUEST

P. Low said there were two requests, scheduled during weekdays. J. McNerney asked if the community room was used during the day. P. Low responded that it is mostly used in the evenings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

K. Pelland asked how American Recovery Plan Act funds work. She asked which allocations of those funds have been made, and what is being considered. S. Pilcher explained that the funds need to be allocated by the end of 2024. He showed the score card the Selectboard uses to approximately rate each request. He showed the spreadsheet on the Monkton town website which lists proposed projects which have requested funds. He noted some projects have been proposed, but no one is championing the project. He said the Selectboard is still open to new projects. K. Pelland asked how much land Monkton currently owns, and how much land is currently conserved. S. Pilcher explained the work of the Agricultural and Natural Areas Committee. One example of that work was buying the development rights to farmlands such as the Claflin Farm and Orb Weaver. K. Pelland asked how much land Monkton currently owns that is publicly accessible. J. McNerney shared his screen to explain that the town land includes Morse Park, the Recreation Field, the Town Garage, the cemetery, the town hall, and a wetland area in the east. J. McNerney explained that Little Hogback Community Forest is privately owned but currently allows public access. K. Pelland asked how much land in Monkton is state owned. S. Pilcher said he believed that the Monkton Pond access was the only state owned land. J. McNerney also mentioned the fishing access on Tyler Bridge Rd. K. Pelland asked how much land is already available for public use? J. Schulte said the final project from the Arrowood mapping project will have a conserved land layer, but not all of this is public use. S. Pilcher said the public access information could be generated and put on the town website. K. Pelland asked about the timber appraisal on the proposed town forest and was concerned about a potential conflict of interest. The conflict of interest policy and this situation were discussed. K. Pelland asked how the Selectboard communicated with the community. S. Pilcher responded that information is shared on the town website, Front Porch Forum, Monkton Community Facebook page, and some issues are in the paper. K. Pelland wanted better ways to engage the community. There was conversation about how to reach out to more people including direct mailing. K. Pelland asked how we move forward on community engagement. S. Pilcher said she could send suggestions to the Selectboard, or she could proceed on her own. C. Brynn asked the Selectboard to speak about doing a town vote on the Town Forest. The Selectboard responded that an Australian ballot cannot be used. S. Pilcher responded that the Selectboard is handling the town forest project the same way conserving other lands in Monkton has been handled. S. Pilcher thanked K. Pelland for her feedback and time.

NEW BUSINESS:

TOWN OFFICE LANDSCAPING QUOTE

J. McNerney moved to approve the two estimates of \$2600 and \$550 for Brian's Lawn Care to maintain the plantings at the town offices. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT CAPITAL EQUIPMENT

P. Low explained that the road foreman is not in favor of trading in the old truck because having a backup truck is invaluable. S. Pilcher asked if a backup could be shared with another town. P Low responded that this would probably not be practical. S. Pilcher asked if the recently signed mutual aid agreement would be able to fill in? He noted that the back-up truck will just sit. S Pilcher asked the board members their thoughts. J. McNerney responded that he was not familiar enough with the needs of the highway department, but was not inclined to second guess the road foreman on this issue if he feels there is a need..

ADDISON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Debra Sprague, Stephen Pilcher - ACRPC Full Commission 1 year term exp June 30, 2024

Debra Sprague - ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee delegate 1 year term exp June 30, 2024

Stephen Pilcher - ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee alternate 1 year term exp June 30, 2024

Stephen Pilcher - ACRPC Regional Emergency Management Committee 1 year term exp June 30, 2024

J. McNerney moved to approve the slate of candidates. All voted in favor.

Other Appointments

Tim Hunt - Recreation Committee term exp 3/26

Debra Houghton - ANAC balance of term exp 3/24

John Dunham - Energy Committee term exp 3/26

J. McNerney nominated the slate of candidates. All voted in favor.

HOUSING COMMITTEE

S. Pilcher asked if the Selectboard wanted to try to make a housing committee. The Monkton Planning Commission had a housing subcommittee that was not getting traction. It was noted that a mission statement would be needed.

TOWN FOREST COMMITTEE UPDATE

C. Brynn shared that a \$371,000 grant had been awarded. The committee is waiting to hear about a \$400,000 grant in June/July. She noted A. Johnson gave \$100,000 off the appraisal. She said up to \$45,000 will be requested from ANAC, who has plans to walk the property. And ARPA funds will be requested. \$50,000 will be funded through donations and smaller grants. She explained the work the committee has been doing to connect with the community. C. Brynn asked what else the Selectboard would like to see? P. Low suggested reaching out to the community weekly on social media. There were questions about the management plan. C. Brynn explained that it was a community process. S. Pilcher suggested reaching out to the VT Council on Rural Development regarding community engagement. J. Schulte noted that typically engagement is about 5-20% of the community as seen by participation at Town Meeting or

voting. S. Pilcher said when ANAC comes to request funds for the project, probably the Selectboard would make a formal allocation of ARPA funds.

MOUNTAIN ROAD CULVERT FINANCING

S. Pilcher noted the town doesn't get paid by FEMA until the project is complete. He thought a tax anticipation loan might be needed. S. Wilbur said the project should start around June and end in October. **J. McNerney moved to authorize the treasurer to apply for a tax anticipation note of up to \$700,000 as bridge financing for the Mountain Road bridge. Seconded by P. Low. All voted in favor.**

PERMISSION TO CLOSE ONE LANE OF MONKTON / VERGENNES ROAD

J. McNerney moved to approve the closure of one lane on Monkton road near the amphibian crossing on June 7, 2023 from 9-10am. The VT Fish and Wildlife Department will host the event and the Agency of Transportation will coordinate traffic control. **P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.**

CLASS 2 PAVING GRANT CHANGES

There was discussion about a grant to do paving on State Prison Hollow Road.

1859 BUILDING

S. Pilcher said a decision will need to be made about when and how to sell the 1859 building. It was decided to hold the discussion when the full board was present.

EV CHARGING STATION

The Monkton Energy Committee advised the town to go ahead and put in a charger. S. Pilcher will gather more information for the Selectboard.

LOWER TOWN HALL PARKING LOT

S. Pilcher said the town is waiting for a grant and will not be notified until September; the work must be done by 11/1. Does the town want to wait for the grant? The window from getting the grant to getting the work done is small which could be difficult. The lower parking lot purpose was to provide handicap access to the patio. P. Low said the total project would be about \$25,000. There is a \$15,000 grant already awarded. P. Low said the road crew could make the lot passable for now.

BEAVERS

P. Low said the landowner on Boro Hill Road spoke with Skip Lisle. Tyler Brown of VT Fish and Wildlife did the work on the dam. P. Low noted that that work had been modified by someone since it was installed, which might have reduced its effectiveness. S. Pilcher asked if P. Low could reach out to T. Brown and find out what happened. S. Pilcher said he would reach out to the town attorney. There are concerns about the quantity of water behind the dam constituting a threat to the road and downstream properties if the dam should let go.

OLD BUSINESS:

SALVAGE YARDS IN MONKTON

There is another one due to be cleaned up.

ARPA FUNDS STATUS / PROCESS

S. Pilcher said that he had not yet gotten an updated request or confirmation that the existing request for various equipment was still valid from the Monkton Fire Department.

OTHER BUSINESS:

S. Pilcher noted Tyler Bridge Road needs a new culvert or bridge. ANR did a hydrologic study and determined that a concrete slab bridge, concrete box, or open bottom arch with a clear height of eight feet would be required. S. Pilcher asked how the town would pay for it. S. Wilbur suggested a Class 2 structure grant might be a possibility.

S. Pilcher said R. Charbonneau wanted access to all the NEMRC modules. There was discussion about how to provide that information and what work the auditors do. There was discussion about town auditors and financial information. S. Pilcher said he would get a list of all the modules and ask which ones the auditors would like to access.

S. Wilbur said on June 8 he would be putting out an ad for a request to do a bike/pedestrian study. He said he needed 5 people, a committee, to review the selection of a consultant to do the work.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 7pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

none required

J. McNerney moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 pm. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Demeritt.