

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING
MINUTES

Tuesday, August 22, 2023
(Approved 9/12/23)

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Pilcher at 7:02 pm.

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

Members absent: Walter Crandall, Marikate Kelley

Others in attendance: Jessica Demeritt (recording secretary), Stan Wilbur (town administrator), Debra Sprague, Jaime Schulte, Bob Heiser, Jane Low, Mike New, Bob Howard, Matt Dupont

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

S. Pilcher said the Mountain Road culvert project finished early and the road is now open. He received a proposal from K. Lambert for ARPA funds. The road foreman replaced the culvert on State Prison Hollow Road today. Robin Hopps informed the Selectboard that she is not going to continue as the town health officer; her term ends on the last day of 3/24.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

APPROVE MINUTES

P. Low moved to approve the minutes of August 8, 2022 as written. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor. P. Low moved to approve the minutes of the special meeting on August 17, 2022 as written. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30821 in the amount of \$23,223.06. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30822 in the amount of \$14,499.80. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30807 in the amount of \$34,336.79. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30808 in the amount of \$21,883.36. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve PR 30814 in the amount of \$10,642.22. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC

none

FACILITY USE REQUEST

P. Low noted there was a request for both October and November.

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

NEW BUSINESS:

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER UPDATE

P. Low said the animal control officer asked for support to address a dog issue. The owners of the dog had previously been warned and fined. The owners gave up the animal because they could not manage the dog.

SALE OF 1859 TOWN HALL

S. Pilcher noted that this was the date the Selectboard set to put the building on the market. Bill Martin said he would sell it for a \$10 commission. P. Low said that while opportunity was given for the building to become a community asset, nothing materialized. He said the Selectboard must follow the will of the voters and sell the building. Multiple Selectboard members have had conversations with people who inquired about the condition of the building. **P. Low moved to have B. Martin put the building on the market for a fee of \$10. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.** A suggested starting price was \$105,000. J. Low inquired about preserving the historical exterior appearance.

ARPA REQUEST - MVFD

It was noted that the Monkton Volunteer Fire Department requested \$56,586 from the ARPA funds for equipment needs. The question was asked if grants could be applied for for some of the items. S. Pilcher said he spoke with Curtis Layn about grants. He replied that the biggest problem at the MVFD was retention and the time commitment required. M. Dupont said there is a lack of members. P. Low asked how many members would be desirable. B. Howard answered 20 members. There are currently 12. S. Pilcher asked how the Selectboard could help. B. Howard replied that some department members in other towns receive a stipend. He said in one town members are offered a 10% reduction on their property taxes. S. Pilcher suggested that the fire department could research what stipends similar surrounding fire departments are paying and make a proposal. J. McNerney mentioned the idea of paying members for training was discussed at a previous meeting. P. Low suggested that current members reach out to other departments to see how they manage it. The MVFD is trying to meet the requirements of the National Fire Protection Agency. B. Howard said gear is full of carcinogens after a fire. One set of gear weighs 35 pounds and needs a commercial washer to do the cleaning. **P. Low moved to approve the MVFD request for ARPA funds in the amount of \$56,586. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.**

AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES INSPECTION REPORT AND ACTION ITEMS FOR RECYCLING DROP OFF

Two issues were noted in the report: 1) access to the drop off needs to be restricted, and 2) compostable materials need to be secured/removed. P. Low said it could cost \$1100 for a chain to control access to the recycling drop off. J. Demeritt explained the current use of the recycling center. P. Low proposed using posts and ropes for the interim. Issues with compostable materials needing to be removed were discussed. S. Pilcher and P. Low offered to address the issues and send photos of the changes to indicate compliance with the inspection report.

MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING VERMONT LAND TRUST RE: MONKTON TOWN FOREST

There was discussion regarding lawyer fees likely exceeding the \$10,000 estimate. J. Schulte noted the meeting was to clarify the next twelve months and who is responsible for what and to verify that both parties are ready to move forward. B. Heiser said they wanted to clarify the shared expectations. P. Low asked how the property owners on Old Airport Road wanted things to go. J. Schulte said it appeared that they probably wanted the road to remain private and were interested in taking care of the road themselves. The neighbors would like to have the town contribute a portion of the costs. The residents on the road currently spend about \$2500-4000 per year in addition to 50 hours of labor. J. Schulte explained that the management plan will be started this winter, and a draft is required by closing. A final plan will be completed in September 2024 or so. There was discussion about harvesting lumber every ten to fifteen years or to cover the costs of the forest. There was discussion about the sustainability of Little Hogback Community Forest, and whether their timber harvest proceeds were enough to make the property self-sustaining. **P. Low moved to have the chair of the Selectboard sign the MOU with VLT. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.**

LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN COMMITTEE

S. Pilcher noted that a committee needs to be formed and plans to reach out to the MVFD, the MPC, an EMT, and more to form a committee.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REVIEW OF REQUEST FOR QUOTES

S. Pilcher said there were eight replies for the RFQ. He suggested a technology savvy committee to score the quotes.

PACIF LOSS CONTROL / SAFETY INSPECTION

P. Low said there is progress.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

S. Pilcher noted there is condensation in bathrooms at the town hall. P. Low is concerned the air conditioning is causing issues; the condensate is not being handled properly. He said he would take a look. P. Low suggested turning off the

A/C for the time being, and using it only if absolutely necessary. The front doors need to be replaced.

OLD BUSINESS:

SALVAGE YARDS IN MONKTON
no action taken

LOWER TOWN HALL PARKING LOT
There was discussion about timing to pave and costs.

BEAVERS
no action taken

OTHER BUSINESS:

D. Sprague asked about the dates for the work on State's Prison Hollow Road, and whether both lanes would be closed. S. Pilcher said it was likely that one lane would be open if there was an extended construction period. The dates are currently unknown. There was discussion about the Vergennes bypass. S. Pilcher said he spoke with S. True of Ferrisburgh, zoning administrator. He is applying for Monkton's zoning administrator position.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 7:00pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

none required

J. McNerney moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Demeritt