

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING
MINUTES

Tuesday, September 12, 2023
(Approved 9/26/23)

The meeting was called to order by Marikate Kelley at 7:11 pm.

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

Members absent: none

Others in attendance: Jessica Demeritt (recording secretary), Stan Wilbur (town administrator), Debra Sprague, Susan Davis, Larry Pike, Julie Kenyon, Amy Savage, Tom Kenyon, Mark Driscoll, Jim Jewell, Joe Szarejko, Jane Palmer, Sue Grover, Todd Eaton, Steven True

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

P. Low said he attended the Vergennes swim team celebration; two swimmers were from Monkton. He commented that it was outstanding.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

APPROVE MINUTES

J. McNerney moved to approve the minutes of August 22, 2022 as written.

P. Low seconded. The vote passed 3-0-2. W. Crandall and M. Kelley abstained.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

W. Crandall moved to approve PR 30911 in the amount of \$10,743.31. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

W. Crandall moved to approve AP 30828 in the amount of \$3,569.15. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

W. Crandall moved to approve AP 30911 in the amount of \$34,216.15. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.

W. Crandall moved to approve PR 30828 in the amount of \$10,253.06. P. Low seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC

none

FACILITY USE REQUEST

P. Low said there were two.

PUBLIC COMMENT

J. Palmer, the Animal Control Officer, attended a webinar on enforcement. She said the town is required to have an impoundment facility for enforcement. She noted that other towns do not have them, but it is an important tool. The town's Homeward Bound contract is for strays only. J. Palmer recently had to manage a dog who was relinquished and had no option for placement. There was discussion about how impoundment could work for the town. J. Palmer described two options she had found. She was asked to investigate further and then make a recommendation to the town. She was also asked to propose an amendment for changing the dog ordinance reflecting recommendations she had received at the webinar. M. Kelley thanked J. Palmer for her work.

NEW BUSINESS:

SALE OF 1859 TOWN HALL

S. Pilcher said the town had received two offers. He proposed discussing them at the next meeting. He noted that when the town sells town property, it must be advertised and warned with required information.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE WHEEL - OCTOBER EVENT

S. Pilcher said the event occurred last year, a bicycle tour loops through the northern part of town. J. McNerney noted it was a courtesy to notify the town.

ROAD MAINTENANCE - JOE SZAREJCO

J. Szarejko is looking for a solution for the road crew to do a better job maintaining roads, saving wear and tear on vehicles.. When J. Szarejko toured Monkton with a road foreman with 30 years of experience, he noted some issues: the roadway is lower than the shoulder of the road, pothole maintenance, the rocks in the drainage ditches are too high causing more erosion. He noted that some residents are fixing the roads on their own. He suggested that the road crew needs a mentor and wants the road crew to have the skills to do the work. T. Kenyon said he has spent hours talking to the Selectboard members about the conditions of the road. He would like to move the ball forward and turn things around.

T. Eaton manages Vermont Local Roads. The program provides information, training and technical assistance to cities, towns and villages in Vermont at no charge. He said they have great relationships with many towns. P. Low said he would follow up with T. Eaton. He noted that Vermont Local Roads was a neutral party to offer solutions. W. Crandall asked how busy they were. T. Eaton said they work with crews when they have time. S. Pilcher said a priority list would be useful. T. Eaton noted that they offer accreditation programs. He said a willingness to learn will yield the most results. Creating a matrix can be helpful for maintaining and growing the road crew. T. Kenyon asked about a timeline. P. Low said it would be a process. M. Kelley thanked J. Szarejko for bringing in some resources to help the town move forward.

P. Low noted that he is not the road foreman's boss. He is the Selectboard member who communicates with the road crew. The Selectboard supports the road crew operating independently with feedback and guidance.

M. Driscoll asked how much experience the road crew has. He expressed interest in having the training result in long term results. He suggested working with some of the experienced retired road crew.

J. Jewell suggested hiring and paying road crew that were experienced. He noted that many driveways on dirt roads have a significant lip.

T. Eaton said the road foreman is managing a crew, the Selectboard, resident complaints, equipment maintenance, and vendor relationships. Towns cannot compete with private industry on pay scale. Expecting a high level of experience is unrealistic. There is some pressure on the Selectboard to keep employees because it is hard to attract employees. S. Pilcher noted that complaints about the roads have led to some prior road foremen to leave the job. He said improving the culture around the roads could lead to improvements. T. Eaton said clear written expectations between the community and the road crew would benefit everyone. He suggested a committee to move this forward.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR APPOINTMENT

S. Pilcher said the Monkton Planning Commission recommended Steven True as the Zoning Administrator. S. True currently serves in Ferrisburg and Waltham as Zoning Administrator. He enjoys working with the public. M. Kelley noted that he has a lot of experience. S. True said Monkton's schedule worked well with his existing schedule. **J. McNerney moved to authorize S. Pilcher to negotiate the terms for the Zoning Administrator position and extend an offer to S. True. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.**

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

S. Pilcher asked if the Selectboard wanted to create a property manager. P. Low said it would need to be someone who understands construction. He suggested a contact list of all the vendors who had done work on the building for maintenance. He felt working with the town clerk, the vendor list, and himself would serve. There was discussion about costs. P. Low noted that current issues are maintenance problems, not equipment problems.

MOUNTAIN ROAD CULVERT

S. Wilbur said there is a certificate of substantial completion for S. Pilcher to sign. The road foreman approved the work. It was noted that the contractor had not invoiced the town. S. Wilbur suggested asking for two invoices and said he will finish up the paperwork.

GRANT STATUS

S. Wilbur put together a list of grants the town has applied for. He described each grant and its current status.

MERP ENERGY ASSESSMENT MOU

S. Wilbur noted that the assessment program for the energy efficiency of two town buildings will be at no cost

J. McNerney moved to authorize S. Pilcher to sign the memorandum of agreement between the town of Monkton and the Vermont Department of Buildings and Services for the provision of municipal energy assessment services. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.

IT SERVICES VENDOR SELECTION

S. Pilcher said they received a number of proposals, but three local vendors looked to be the best. He proposed interviewing the two best options regarding costs and implementation. The goal is managed tech services with an account manager, and a dedicated individual providing support within the town's budget. He cited the example of public records requests as creating a need for better IT. M. Kelley suggested forming a small committee to recommend the vendor.

PACIF LOSS CONTROL / SAFETY INSPECTION

P. Low said there are a few issues that need to be resolved. The inspector is satisfied with the progress that is being made.

OLD BUSINESS:

SALVAGE YARDS IN MONKTON

no action taken

LOWER TOWN HALL PARKING LOT

no action taken

BEAVERS

no action taken

OTHER BUSINESS:

There was discussion about moving Selectboard meetings to Mondays. It is more efficient for working with the Addison Independent for warnings and news.

The Monkton Planning Commission is going to hold a hybrid in-person and Zoom public hearing on proposed updates to the Town Plan on October 17, 2023 at 8pm.

S. Grover is having concerns about a private property right-of-way. M. Kelley replied it was a civil issue because it is private property and probably the next step was speaking with a lawyer.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 7:00pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

none required

W. Crandall moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 pm. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Demeritt