

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

(approved 10/10/2023)

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Pilcher at 7:01 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), Jaime Schulte, Beverly Soyachak, Lauren Parren, Steve Parren, Bob Heiser, Matt Dupont, Bill Martin, Margo Casco

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

S. Pilcher mentioned that a zoning decision that was appealed to the Environmental Court was returned to the Development Review Board.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

APPROVE MINUTES

M. Kelley moved to approve the minutes of September 12, 2023 as written.

P. Low seconded. All voted in favor

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

J. McNerney moved to approve PR 30925 in the amount of \$12,251.16. M.

Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30914 in the amount of \$71,300.30. He explained that much of that was an award of ARPA funds to the fire department.

M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30926 in the amount of \$237,654. He noted that it was for the Mountain Road Culvert. The town will be reimbursed by FEMA. **M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.**

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 30925 in the amount of \$54,040. M.

Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC

none

FACILITY USE REQUEST

P. Low said there was one.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Candace Polzella asked about the Horan Cemetery off Bear Pond Road which is overgrown and needs attention. There was discussion about whether it was a private cemetery. Bill Martin said it was privately owned. S. Pilcher said he would speak with the property owner.

Lauren Parren and Candace Polzella showed the Selectboard a banner of the Monkton flag that was designed to engage the public with the Monkton Historical Society. They offered the banner to the town for display at the Town Offices. S. Pilcher suggested keeping it in the community room; it looked very nice.

J. Demeritt noted that the sandpile was cut off from the public with the new restricted access to the recycling center. The Selectboard was aware and had some thoughts of where to move it before the snow flies.

NEW BUSINESS:

UPDATE ON CATS AND BEAVERS - B. SOYCHAK

B. Soyachak said there had been an arrest in the abandoned cat case. There were damages to a rental property and other costs amounting to \$100,000. The Addison County Sheriff's department is trying to create an animal cruelty division. Many towns have an animal control officer that handles just dogs and no other issues. There would be two police officers to investigate issues, and follow up on care for the animals. The 20 towns of Addison County would share the \$20,000 cost. M. Kelley asked if the help could include impoundment. Impoundment issues were discussed. S. Pilcher said there were multiple ways the town could pay for the yearly \$1000 cost.

SALE OF 1859 TOWN HALL

M. Casco and B. Martin presented three offers to the Selectboard. There was discussion about the offers. It was noted that the had limited limited septic, 2 parking spots, and the exterior must remain as it appears now. **M. Kelley moved to accept B. Wahl's offer of \$105,000, the highest offer. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.**

ANIMAL CONTROL

J. Palmer discussed a change to the dog ordinance. She suggested removing the time requirement on the disturbance. S. Pilcher said to change an ordinance, there is a legal procedure that must be followed. M. Kelley offered to review the existing policy for other changes. The Select Board will initiate the process to update the policy once M. Kelley has completed her review.

TOWN FOREST UPDATE

J. Schulte said the last federal grant had been awarded and 95% of the funding is complete. The public fundraising will kick off soon. There was discussion about a boundary line adjustment. There was discussion about a landowner removing

some timber through the future town forest on an existing road. J. Schulte said management plan creation would begin around the end of the year; a draft is needed by closing; and a final version is due four months after the anticipated Summer 2024 closing. He explained that we are discussing with a UVM professor about bringing Masters and PhD level students to survey/inventory the land and offer some guidance for management. The cost would be \$1000-2000 which could be part of the public fund raising or could be taken from the Management Fund, which is part of the budgeted fund-raising.

J. Schulte mentioned the Arrowwood Environmental presentation about the natural resources and habitats of Monkton on Thursday, September 28, at 7pm.

IT SERVICES VENDOR SELECTION

S. Pilcher said there was a good discussion with two vendors, Open Approach and Tech Group. The Tech Group was more cost effective and said they would work with what the town already had in place. J. Schulte said the Tech Group works with other Vermont towns. Costs were discussed and found to be similar to existing costs, but potentially better service. M. Kelley thanked J. Schulte and S. Pilcher for their work.

GRANT STATUS

There was discussion about the grants for the lower parking lot. The town would need to provide some matching funds to qualify for the grant. **M. Kelley moved to commit \$9622 toward the lower parking lot project. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.**

CURB CUT

There was discussion about a curb cut on Monkton Road. There was a suggestion to add information about an apron on the curb cut application.

POSSIBLE CHANGE OF SELECTBOARD MEETING DAY

The change may occur in Jan or March 2024.

OLD BUSINESS:

SALVAGE YARDS IN MONKTON

no action taken

LOWER TOWN HALL PARKING LOT

See "Grant Status" discussion

BEAVERS

B. Soychak noted that Skip Lisle would be coming to Monkton before the end of year to clean up the Church Road culvert fencing and to work on a device on Hollow Road.

OTHER BUSINESS:

J. McNerney said he had spoken with a Starksboro Selectboard member who is interested in gathering representatives from several area towns to discuss issues we may have in common.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 7:00pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

none required

M. Kelley moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 pm. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Demeritt