

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING
MINUTES

Tuesday, October 24, 2023
(Approved 11/14/23)

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Pilcher at 7:00 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), Shane Lawrence, Michael New, John Zaikowski, Joe Szarejko, Tom Kenyon, Ralph Fitz-Gerald, Cathie Buscaglia, Debra Sprague, Otto Funke, Kevin Lambert, Margaret Urban, Teri Fitz-Gerald, Andrew Peterson, Tom Mansfield, A. Crary, T. Hunt, R. Imes

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

S. Pilcher said the new zoning administrator, Steve True attended the DRB meeting and was very professional.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

APPROVE MINUTES

M. Kelley moved to approve the minutes of October 10, 2023 as written. J. McNerney seconded. The vote passed 4-0-1. S. Pilcher abstained.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 31012 in the amount of \$195,836.27. J. McNerney noted it was mostly for hot mix. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve PR 31023 in the amount of \$12,415.51. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 31019 in the amount of \$98,209.43. J. McNerney noted it was the bond principal and interest. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.

J. McNerney moved to approve AP 31023 in the amount of \$44,552.39. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC
none

FACILITY USE REQUEST

P. Low reported that there were two facility use requests.

PUBLIC COMMENT

T. Mansfield said he sent an email to the Selectboard 3 weeks ago. He lives on TH 36, a class 4 road, said S. Pilcher. T. Mansfield asked the town to provide road maintenance. He wants equal treatment, not special treatment. T. Mansfield said he has maintained the road for 35 years and is no longer able to do so. P. Low responded that he lives on a class 4 road and the property owners pay to maintain it. He sympathized with T. Mansfield. T. Mansfield said it is a 500 foot stretch of road. He asked the town to do what it can do. He wants fire and rescue and UPS and others to be able to use the road. M. Kelley said all class 4 property owners are treated the same. The town does not maintain class 4 roads. T. Mansfield asked for an answer. S. Pilcher replied the answer was no.

NEW BUSINESS:

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

S. Pilcher asked what projects are underway for the highway department. S. Lawrence said he completed the culvert replacement at the north end of Pond Rd. He said on Parks-Hurlburt ditching has been completed. A lot of gravel has been added, but they still have more to go. The States Prison Hollow paving is done, and the state will come in and do the lines. Shoulders are being completed by the town highway dept. S. Lawrence said ditching is happening on Higbee Road, Roscoe Road, and Piney Woods Road. He said the road crew is repairing potholes in the asphalt. S. Lawrence spoke with Junior Lewis to get help with grading instruction. He is checking culverts. W. Crandall asked about Boro Hill Road and noted a problem with driveway access after some recent grading. It was noted that the grader operator is working on feathering around driveways. S. Pilcher asked about Todd Eaton of Vermont Local Roads. S. Lawrence asked S. Pilcher to coordinate between the highway crew and Todd Eaton. P. Low noted Todd Eaton is very busy.

PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT

M. Kelley moved to appoint M. New to the open Planning Commission position expiring 3/25. W. Crandall seconded. M. New said he didn't know much about planning but he has been an active community volunteer for years, including volunteering as a firefighter. He noted that the work of the Planning Commission is valuable for the future of the town. S. Pilcher noted that the planning commission and zoning is about balancing personal property and community. **All voted in favor.**

RECREATIONAL COMMITTEE ARPA REQUEST

J. Zaikowski noted the highlights of the request: lost revenue due to COVID, some exercise equipment, path repair at Morse Park, 3 hole disc golf course, recoup cost on shade structure in dog park, baseball and softball fields. He noted there was an opportunity to maximize use of the fields for a wide range of Monkton residents. J. Zaikowski stated that the Rec Committee members are volunteers, and they feel the proposed projects can be handled, managed, and

they have the capacity to get them done. S. Pilcher asked about lost revenues and commented that it was exactly what ARPA funds were for. S. Pilcher said he is interested in spending money on things that will help move the community forward. He noted that the Rec Committee has \$18,000 in a fund. He feels that maintenance costs should not come from ARPA funds, for example, maintaining the path at Morse Park. P. Low noted that the Brian's mowing costs are 40% below average cost. He noted that the surplus is a protection against sudden cost increases if Brian stops mowing for the town. P. Low said ARPA funds paying for the maintenance would save the town money. M. Kelley noted it would be good to include money in yearly budgets to maintain the walking path or other maintenance issues. M. Kelley wondered if there was community input regarding the disc golf course and exercise equipment. R. Imes suggested that if it was built people would come. P. Low said 9 people would like to match the disc golf contribution, so it would go from 3 holes to 6 holes. T. Hunt noted that regarding the ball field at the rec field, volunteers have been working to accurately lay out the bases and the whole field. He said the maintenance phase has not started yet, as the ball fields have not been completed. T. Hunt and J. Zaikowski explained the absence of a completed ball field below the elementary school. R. Imes noted that a reset needs to happen before maintenance can begin. J. McNerney asked about disc golf. Where would it be? P. Low said it would be at the northern part of the athletic fields and transition to the fields. He noted that they are removable. It would be a process to determine how to implement them. There was discussion about possible increases to the mowing costs. M. Kelley asked about the loss of revenue. Did the Rec committee not spend as much because they were not offering activities? What would the replacement money be used for? P. Low noted that an old food truck at the rec field needs to be removed, and there are other maintenance issues that need to be addressed such as structural repairs to sheds or tear downs. J. Zaikowski noted that they had deferred costs for activities with lost revenue; they needed new basketballs, new catcher equipment. **J. McNerney moved to approve lost revenue in the amount of \$4220. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor. W. Crandall moved to approve enhancing the ball fields at the amount of \$15,325. J. McNerney seconded.** J. McNerney asked if there were grants that may cover some of this, enabling us to stretch the ARPA money further. J. Zaikowski said that he was not aware of any, and they don't have experienced grant writers among their volunteers on the Rec Committee. He noted that the ARPA money is here now. A. Crary said softball has seen a decline in recent year. So has baseball. However, they are seeing signs of increased interest in the younger grades. R. Imes noted that grants are a time consuming process and applying is a specialized skill. S. Pilcher said bandwidth was an issue, too. P. Low noted the Rec Field is used by families, not just teams. He said that field rentals have increased over time. J. McNerney said he is not at all questioning the value of these projects, but whether grant funds can cover the costs. **The vote passed 4-0-1 P. Low abstained.**

M. Kelley moved to approve the balance of the request in the amount of \$34,700. J. McNerney seconded. M. Kelley said she appreciated their work, the

value it brings to the community. She said she would have liked to have seen more input from the community about the projects. She asked what are people in the community looking for? P. Low said the Rec Committee has a lot of support because of the things the Rec Department does, and the involvement of families and neighbors. S. Pilcher said that the maintenance to the path ought to be part of the regular budget. **The vote passed 3-1-1. S. Pilcher voted against and P. Low abstained.**

MULTISPORT PLAYING COURT ARPA REQUEST

K. Lambert is advocating for a multi sport playing surface/hard court playing space. He noted the restrictions and complications to the use of Morse Park because of archaeologically significant sites. It was noted that the Department of Historic Preservation needed to be involved. K. Lambert stated that the Rec Field was a better location. He said he was requesting 75% of the estimated costs from ARPA. He noted the need due to access for open gym being closed down because of liability concerns on the part of MAUSD. M. Kelley asked what would be the first step. K. Lambert said he had an estimate from Sport Court of MA. Pete Norris agreed with the \$80,000 cost. K. Lambert said he would look for grants for the remaining costs. J. Zaikowski said K. Lambert had not brought the project to the rec committee for approval yet, because he is still bringing together the details. T. Fitz-Gerald offered support and said she had been working on getting proposals as well. S. Pilcher asked if the court would have a fence around it? K. Lambert said the southern side would have a barrier between the court and the road. T. Fitz-Gerald said fencing was expensive and could be a secondary project. S. Pilcher asked if there would be interference between the differing sports? T. Fitz-Gerald said Grand Isle had a similar project and noted what worked for them. S. Pilcher said he was disappointed to hear that the town did not have access to the school facilities. M. Kelley noted that the school is using the rec fields. T. Fitz-Gerald said if it was run through the rec program, insurance liability would be a non-issue. J. McNerney said not being able to use the gym for kids was frustrating. K. Lambert said he was not looking for approval but interest. S. Pilcher said it was an interesting project and noted that there was a lot to work through. The court would need scheduling and maintenance. There was discussion about the cost. W. Crandall noted the orientation was important to prevent sun from blinding the players. J. McNerney noted that noise from pickleball could be an issue. K. Lambert replied that possibly it could be set within trees to reduce noise. S. Pilcher said it was penciled in as a project of interest on our list of ARPA projects. The next steps for K. Lambert were to meet with the Rec Committee and look at grants. J. McNerney said the Selectboard could write a letter of support if that was of help when looking for grants.

SPEED BUMPS IN MONKTON BORO

Andrew Peterson noted that traffic has increased in the Boro. He said there was lots of commuter traffic, and large trucks were increasingly coming through. He noted increased speeding and passing in areas with short sight-lines. Coming through Monkton is the fastest way to go north or south by about 4 minutes.

Traffic calming might help Google show that it is too slow for commuters. He hoped to avoid accidents, and increase safety for pedestrians and bikes. Speed bumps, according to a report, are most effective. A toll booth was humorously discussed. S. Pilcher noted the radar signs can collect traffic and speed data. O. Funke said people are speeding and ending up off both sides of the road near his house. He commented that issues with speed bumps are snow and ice clearing, maintenance, and emergency use. Removable speed bumps were suggested. ACRPA can do a traffic study said S. Pilcher. He noted that trucks are really noisy when crossing speed bumps. He observed that the radar signs are not too expensive. J. McNerney spoke about speed tables being a possible solution, but noted that both speed bumps are typically used where speed limits are very low, and speed tables are typically used up to about 25 or 30 MPH. S. Pilcher said a traffic study would be a minimum first step. He asked if the neighborhood could suggest where radar signs might be best. O. Funke said he sees little speed enforcement in that area lately. J. McNerney noted the town contracts with the Addison County Sheriff's Department. He noted that everyone is complaining about speeding on their roads, spreading out enforcement coverage. S. Pilcher noted that the sheriff has been working to enforce overweight truck violations. There was discussion about how many hours the town has coverage from the Sheriff. J. McNerney noted fog lines were recommended as a traffic calming measure in the past. We have tried these in Monkton Ridge, but he was not certain what effect they had. The town is contracted to receive fog lines this fall, with the areas to receive them expanded beyond the ridge. P. Low noted that the availability of the contractor to paint the lines is an issue. S. Pilcher noted that an engineering study will start for a bike/ped path around the lake. He said that work is a process, but it will have a traffic effect over time.

MAPLE BROADBAND RIGHT OF WAY APPLICATION

M. Kelley moved to approve the Maple Broadband right-of-way permit application located on the westerly side of Monkton Road by the intersection of Parks-Hurlburt Road. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.

MONKTON ROAD CURB CUT APPLICATION - URBAN

W. Crandall said the current curb cut was a little dangerous and the homeowner is working on clearing plants for visibility. M. Kelley asked if the second curb cut could become the only one. The town has a general policy to limit each residence to one curb cut. M. Urban explained the need for a U shaped driveway. J. McNerney asked if the issue could be addressed by a turn around instead of a second curb cut. P. Low said a turn around would be limited to a couple of cars. M. Urban said the second curb cut is preferred, because it would be difficult to turn around and the request is safety related. She explained it would be easier to turn around with 2 curb cuts. **M. Kelley moved to approve the curb cut at 4012 Monkton Road for M. Urban. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.**

MOUNTAIN ROAD CULVERT CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

M. Kelly moved to give the chair approval to sign the Large Project Closeout Request Form for FEMA's Public Assistance Program. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.

ENERGY ASSESSMENT MEMO OF AGREEMENT

M. Kelley moved to authorize S. Pilcher to sign the agreement between the town of Monkton and the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services for an energy assessment. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.

APPOINT AGENT TO DEED REAL ESTATE

J. McNerney moved to appoint M. Kelley as agent to deed real estate. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.

TECH GROUP IT SERVICES CONTRACT

J. McNerney moved to authorize the Selectboard chair to sign the IT services agreement with Tech Group. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.

2024 EMPLOYEE HEALTH PLAN

S. Pilcher said the town has a BCBS gold plan mostly for the road crew. Since it is the open enrollment period, the town could change it. There was discussion about the health plan. It was decided to continue with the current plan.

PACIF UNINSURED MOTORIST COVERAGE

S. Pilcher explained that if the road crew was hit by an uninsured motorist, this is additional insurance for resulting injuries. Our current coverage is quite low. The other option was \$10 million coverage. Additional annual premium only amounted to a few hundred dollars. **J. McNerney moved that the town of Monkton would insure their employees with uninsured motorist coverage to \$10,000,000. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 4-0-1. M. Kelley abstained.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR ANNUAL REVIEW

There was discussion about the process for doing a review. There was discussion about noting the work of the town administrator. A suggestion was made that the description of the job needs to be updated. M. Kelley suggested that a review could also be done for the road foreman, the town treasurer, and the road foreman could review the road crew.

OLD BUSINESS:

SALVAGE YARDS IN MONKTON

no action taken

LOWER TOWN HALL PARKING LOT

no action taken

BEAVERS

P. Low noted that he spoke with the landowner on Boro Hill. The landowner felt the town was insensitive to what he is trying to accomplish. He is very aware of the situation with the dam. He removes one foot of water from an area on a regular basis. He monitors the situation during rainy conditions. He's spending the money; he's monitoring regularly. And he would prefer to work with T. Brown of VT Fish and Wildlife. J. McNerney stopped to offer to help the owner. He was told that his help was not wanted. J. McNerney noted that concerns have been expressed about the effectiveness of the fence by the Boro Hill Rd culvert. P. Low said efforts to work with the landowner will hopefully yield positive results for the future of the dam.

J. Demeritt noted that Skip Lisle had been in town checking on a few other sites in town. J McNerney noted that he was in town today to do prep work for modifications to the device the Cedar Lake Association (Monkton Pond) had installed, since the beavers had built a second dam.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The next meeting will be Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7:00pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

none required

M. Kelley moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:00pm. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Demeritt