

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

(approved 8/13/24)

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Pilcher at 7:00 p.m.

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

Members absent: none

Others in attendance: Jessica Demeritt (recording secretary), Stan Wilbur (town administrator), Debra Sprague, Kevin Lambert, Jaime Schulte, Janet Fairchild, Theresa Schwegel

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

S. Pilcher noted that the tax sale that was scheduled for August 29, 2024 is canceled because there are new tax statutes requiring the town to offer payment plans for those with delinquent taxes.

S. Pilcher noted that the bike/ped study presentation was delayed because DuBois and King asked for more time to do some further work. It will be rescheduled for August 27.

**REGULAR BUSINESS:**

APPROVE MINUTES

**W. Crandall moved to approve the minutes of July 9, 2024 as written. J. McNerney seconded. The vote passed 4-0-1. M. Kelley abstained.**

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

**M. Kelley moved to approve PR 40715 in the amount of \$15,211.14. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.**

**M. Kelley moved to approve AP 40723 in the amount of \$51,330.91. W. Crandall seconded. All voted in favor.**

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC

none

FACILITY USE REQUEST

none

PUBLIC COMMENT

K. Lambert turned in a plan for the hardcourt with some estimates. He noted that Morse Park seems like the best place to build. There was discussion about the topic being on the next Selectboard agenda.

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### **NEW BUSINESS:**

BIKE / PEDESTRIAN SCOPING STUDY - ALTERNATIVES PRESENTATION  
delayed

#### HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

J. Szarejko praised the work that the road crew has done, repairing the roads from the heavy rains. He said that the crew has been very busy repairing washouts on Silver Street, Boro Hill Road, and part of Piney Woods Road. He noted that Jockey Lane, Bennett Road, and Murray Road had also been repaired. Culverts and washout repairs are currently under way on Mountain Road and Higbee Road. Davis Road had some work done. The landslide on Bristol Road was cleaned up and the new paving was unaffected. J. Szarejko said Piney Woods Road below Barnum Rd needs a complete rebuild, and Old Stage Road is still closed. Nichols Road and States Prison Hollow Road are on the repair list. Roger Parker, Chris Acker, and Max Murray have been used as subcontractors. The costs for the repairs are adding up. There was discussion about whether Piney Woods Road should be repaired due to the costs and repeated damage. S. Pilcher noted that there will probably be FEMA money to cover some of the work. There was discussion about driveways that drain water onto town roads. J. McNerney asked if the town would need a tax anticipation note or FEMA anticipation note to pay for the work until funds from those sources became available. S. Pilcher replied that might be possible. J. Szarejko noted that S. Lawrence has been keeping up with FEMA regarding costs.

#### TOWN GARAGE / RECYCLING GATE

S. Pilcher asked S. Lawrence about the gate, and a larger gate than quoted was proposed in order to allow clearance for grading and snow removal. Al so questioned at what point it makes sense to go with two smaller gates rather than one large one. S. Pilcher said he would follow up with Middlebury Fence. J. Szarejko spoke with the farmer who was in support of the gate as long as he had full access. The farmer requested that the town highway and recycling signs be moved. It was agreed that the town would look at what can be done about that.

#### RIGHT OF WAY PERMIT - 303 DAVIS ROAD

**M. Kelley moved to approve the right of way permit of Justin Webster for 303 Davis Road. J. McNerney seconded.** This work is to allow for installation of a utility pole. **All voted in favor.**

#### BUDGET STATUS REPORT

S. Wilbur noted the doors and parking lot costs exceeded the budget. M. Kelley asked if it should be in the construction fund. There was discussion about available funds in the building fund and the general fund. There was discussion about costs being correctly attributed. There was discussion about how to post expenses and revenues. S. Pilcher observed that grants have been challenging to post in the budget. M. Kelley noted that highway maintenance numbers looked

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like they had funds to cover the expenses generated by the heavy rains. J. Szarejko asked about highway funds that were not spent last year. S. Pilcher replied that the surplus does not get carried over into the next year; it goes back to the general fund. J. McNerney noted it might be useful to create dedicated funds like Bristol does, so surpluses could be carried over when a project is delayed, or to build up reserves over time. S. Pilcher noted that equipment repairs for the highway department were up.

### 2024 MUNICIPAL TAX RATE

The grand list in 2023 was \$2,681,000. In 2024 it is \$4,279,000 for a 59% increase. The change was due in large part to the town-wide reassessment to bring Monkton into compliance with the state's common level of appraisal requirements. **M. Kelley moved to set the town of Monkton's municipal tax rate to be .2971. W. Crandall seconded.** It was noted that last year, prior to the reassessment, it was .4541. **All voted in favor.**

### RUSSELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY - ANNEX

J. Fairchild said the board would like to call the new room the South Wing. There was discussion about the needs for the space, including lighting fixtures, outlets, a keypad for patio door, drop ceiling, and internet access. J. Fairchild presented a layout for the space. S. Pilcher noted the work would need to be bid out. There was discussion about what was required to start the process.

### ANIMAL CONTROL CITATIONS

M. Kelley noted that citations had been sent by registered mail. They had not yet been picked up. She said the next step was for the Sheriff to serve them. J. McNerney noted that there were multiple people complaining now. S. Pilcher asked S. Wilbur to contact the sheriff to learn more.

### OLD AIRPORT ROAD MAINTENANCE

S. Pilcher said there is \$3900 in the budget for maintenance for Old Airport Road. J. Schulte noted that the closing for the Town Forest may be in October or November. M. Kelley noted we would have trouble justifying that doing maintenance on a private road was in the town's interest. W. Crandall observed that there was increased use of the road since the Town Forest purchase had been announced. J. Schulte noted if the project fell apart, did the town have some impact on the road? J. McNerney said that the town had said they would pay half of the yearly cost of the road, without prorating it for the fact that the town would only own the road for part of the year. It was agreed that it was a legal issue to take to the town attorney. W. Crandall noted that residents are currently maintaining the road.

### MONKTON/VERGENNES ROAD TRAFFIC REPORT AND SCHOOL ZONE

no action taken

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**OLD BUSINESS**

none

**OTHER BUSINESS**

S. Pilcher said the town did not get a grant for an electric vehicle charger. Green Mountain Power said they could offer a rebate of \$750. A free charging station would cost under \$1000, and a fee based charging station would be \$3000. S. Pilcher explained an RFID card. There was discussion about putting a meter on the charger. J. Schulte suggested it may cost the town about \$10 per charge. S. Pilcher noted there was a boat on Old Stage Road. Mr. Nye dropped a boat on Mr. Hurlburt's field, and Mr. Hurlburt moved it to the town right of way. It was noted that the sheriff can issue a ticket for illegal dumping. S. Wilbur was asked to follow up with the sheriff.

S. Pilcher said the Town Meeting minutes had not yet been passed and will be on the next agenda.

J. Szarejko asked how to follow up on Piney Woods Road. S. Pilcher replied that an engineering study may be needed. J. Szarejko noted that T. Eaton may be able to help out. There was discussion about the history of Piney Woods Road.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

none

The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 7 p.m.

**M. Kelley moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. All voted in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Demeritt