

DRAFT
MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 13th, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by J. Demeritt at 7:00 pm.

2. ATTENDANCE

Members in attendance:

Jessica Demeritt (Chair), Walter Crandall (Vice-Chair), Sam Peisch (Secretary), John Dunham (Member), Joe Szarejko (Member)

Others in attendance:

Stan Wilbur (Town Administrator), Jaime Schulte, Lisa Burns, Stephen Pilcher, Tom Steadman, Tom Kenyon, Trevor Currier (Road Forman), Randy Charboneau, Michael Hurlburt, David Hurlburt, Andrew Peterson, Liz Sayre, Meredith Rossignol, Barb Crandall, Nancy Ceruell, Robin Hopps

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gratitude offered for the updating of the town announcement sign.

4. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Andrew Peterson brought before the Selectboard a frustration about the process he has experienced with the Development and Review Board (DRB) for conditional use. He described concerns about public findings of facts, as well as timeliness of communications, and challenges with getting clear answers. He appeared before the Selectboard this evening to clarify by what date he needed to file an appeal.

The vice-chair of the DRB, Jamie Schulte, offered some clarification from the DRBs perspective, including clarification on the appeal date.

Tom Steadman raised concern about the volume and content of executive sessions held by the Selectboard. He requested that nonconfidential happenings that occur during executive sessions be more consistently documented and that fewer executive sessions be held. He stated that he feels the Selectboard is misusing executive sessions, excessively limiting public access to Selectboard processes.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

S. Peisch moved to approve the minutes of December 23rd, 2025 as written. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

7. REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

John Dunham moved to approve Accounts Payable Payroll Warrant #60112 in the amount of \$18,317.48. S. Peisch seconded. This is payroll for town employees. The vote passed 5-0-0.

DRAFT
MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 13th, 2026

J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Payroll Warrant #51229 in the amount of \$15,905.11. W. Crandall seconded. This is payroll for town employees. The vote passed 5-0-0.

W.Crandall moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51230 in the amount of \$29,690.72. S. Peisch seconded. This is primarily for the road supplies, Heart & Mead, a payroll transfer. The vote passed 5-0-0.

W. Crandall moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51226 in the amount of \$285,565.64. S. Peisch seconded. This is a loan repayment for the Tax Anticipation Note. The vote passed 5-0-0.

S. Peisch moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51224 in the amount of \$31,786.76. W. Crandall seconded. This is primarily for the Highway Department, salt, erosion control, parts and supplies. The vote passed 5-0-0.

8. REVIEW OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

W. Crandall reports no new overweight permits. Some insurance permits are starting to arrive, but no overweight permits yet.

9. FACILITY USE REQUESTS

W. Crandall noted there are no near-term requests of note. However, a request for use of the patio area on July 4th has been received. W. Crandall encouraged anyone interested in doing anything with the property on the 4th of July to please communicate that soon for coordination purposes.

10. MAUSD ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Meredith Rossignol, chair of the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) for the Mount Abraham Unified School District (MAUSD), delivered a slideshow presentation covering the following:

The MAUSD Selectboard is facing persistent budget challenges, despite cutting 43 positions in six years and maintaining a low 1.51% average annual budget increase. Simultaneously, the district is struggling with declining educational outcomes (only 30% of third graders are math proficient) and increasing major disciplinary issues (46% of sixth graders had two or more referrals last year).

To address these financial and educational challenges, the board is considering three different school configuration options for delivering education:

1. Option 1: Status Quo with Four K-6 Schools and One 7-12 High School.
 - Pros: Fewest layoffs, consistent with Vermont traditions, supports town development, potential savings of \$1.6M by FY28.

DRAFT
MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 13th, 2026

- Cons: Resources stretched across four schools, staff feel siloed, inconsistent experiences across schools, significant financial/sustainability concerns.
2. Option 2: Two K-5 Elementary Schools and One 6-12 Middle/High School.
- Pros: Consolidates resources for targeted support, allows for a dedicated middle school model, potential savings of up to \$2.9M by FY28.
 - Cons: Teacher/staff layoffs, loss of community schools/identity, requires a town vote for school closures.
3. Option 3: Grade-Banded (One PreK-2, One 3-5, and One 6-12 School).
- Pros: Overwhelmingly supported by the District Advisory Council, strong professional support for teacher collaboration within grade bands, potential savings of up to \$2.8M by FY28.
 - Cons: Loss of community schools, teacher/staff layoffs, two school transitions may be harder for parents, potential loss of connection between older and younger students.

The board is early in the process and presenting these options in the interest of transparency, encouraging the Selectboard to review the options and consider potential future cost savings through a Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA).

The slideshow can be reviewed in the recording of the evening's meeting.

Discussion followed.

11. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE

J. Szarejko reported the Highway Department's activities, from December 28, 2025, through January 10, 2026. The first week was dominated by an ice storm, which required crews to work extended, nonstop hours from Sunday night into Monday afternoon, followed by further clearing before a refreeze. Throughout both weeks, road maintenance, including plowing, salting, and sanding, was a regular occurrence, often starting early in the morning, and involved coordination with neighboring towns like New Haven. In addition to weather response, the department performed significant mechanical work, including dropping off the 2013 Mack for service, changing a cutting edge on the 524K loader, and installing a sander in the 2020 GMC. The second week saw continued work on equipment, notably on the 75G excavator and the fabrication and ultimate completion of a pusher blade for the loader, alongside ongoing meetings and preparations for a job on Piney Woods Road, including contacting multiple tree services.

DRAFT
MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 13th, 2026

12. VERMONT AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION 2026 HIGHWAY MILEAGE CERTIFICATE

J. Dunham moved that the Selectboard sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage year ending February 10, 2026. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

13. COYLE CURB CUT

J. Szarejko reported that he and the highway foreman, Trevor Currier, went onsite to evaluate the access point that requires a curb cut. Measurements were taken for supplies necessary for proper remediation. Discussion occurred regarding immediate mitigation efforts that could be undertaken, as one town plow has already hit material in the damaged right-of-way, and dangerous ice build-up has begun as a result of the improperly designed access.

W. Crandall reported speaking with the party who is using the land, their sense is reportedly that the access has been there a long time and he has no obligation to take corrective action.

Further discussion occurred.

J. Demeritt moved W. Crandall write a notification to the land user that actions to mitigate safety hazards will be taken on January 20th, 2026. J Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

14. PINEY WOODS ROAD

J. Demeritt outlined the two approaches currently being discussed to address Piney Woods Road, one being the engineering proposal by Dubois & King and the other being pursuing a local contractor for the project.

S. Wilbur described what the process might look like for either approach.

J. Szarejko and S. Peisch provided an overview of their discussion with local contractors about the project. They acknowledged that not all of the data is available to make a fully informed decision yet.

There was some discussion among the board and community members present including topics such as the character of the road, the budget implications of either approach, clarification about FEMA monies. Further decisions were tabled until more information is available.

15. SELECTBOARD REPORT 2025

Please review, it's in the packet.

16. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARNING - REVIEW & ADDITIONS

A review of the articles occurred. Acorn was added to the warning as a new social services organization seeking support. An exact dollar amount was determined for the warning for the new grader. Discussion about using the capital improvement funds account to defray costs of the grader took place. An article related to the annual town report mailing was discussed.

DRAFT
MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 13th, 2026

17. 2026 BUDGET

The budget was reviewed. The chairperson was the only Selectboard member who had access to review the current, updated budget numbers prior to this evening's meeting. Print copies were made and distributed for review. S. Wilbur noted where he and the treasurer are in their process. J. Demeritt expressed her preference to review and discuss payroll items in executive session following the public portion of this evening's meeting. S. Pilcher, who was working with the updated budget prior to this evening's meeting, gave an overview of the summary page of the budget. Following discussion, it was determined a special meeting is necessary to do additional budget work, giving Selectboard members some time to review the most up-to-date budget numbers.

18. RECYCLING COORDINATOR

J. Demeritt talked about the importance of having a recycling coordinator, and noted an urgency in finding someone to support that role.

19. CREDIT CARD, ELECTRONIC USE, & INVESTMENT POLICIES

Following discussion the investment policy was tabled.

W. Crandall moved to accept the credit card policy as written. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

Questions about tech policy were discussed.

S. Peisch moved to approve the tech policy as written. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 4-0-1. J. Demeritt abstained.

20. OTHER BUSINESS

None

21. ACTION ITEM ROUNDUP

- W. Crandall and J. Dunham will write a notice to Mr. Hill.
- S. Peisch and J. Szarejko will work on getting estimates for the Piney Woods project bids.

22. DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Special Meeting January 22nd, 2026 at 7:00pm

Regular meeting January 27th, 2026 at 7:00pm

23. EXECUTIVE SESSION

J. Demeritt moved to enter Executive Session because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or person involved at substantial disadvantage. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

J. Demeritt moved to enter Executive Session to discuss payroll, hiring, and labor relations, provision of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) of the Vermont statutes. J. Dunham

DRAFT
MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 13th, 2026

seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0. Entered Executive Session at 10:21 pm. T. Currier was invited to stay for a portion of the session.

The public left the meeting and S. Jones, minutes recorder, stepped out of the room.

J. Demeritt moved to exit the Executive Session. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0. Exited the Executive Session at 11:25 pm.

J. Demeritt moved to hire Cole Putnam for the highway crew position at a rate of \$25 per hour. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

J. Szarejko moved to promote Dan Bourgeois ? to the assistant foreman of the Monkton Highway Department. S. Peisch Seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

24. ADJOURNMENT

W. Crandall moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 pm. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Jones