

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 23, 2025

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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:

Tom Steadman, Mark Guillemette, Stan Burritt, Debra Sprague, Stephen Pilcher, Trevor Denton, Bob Howard, Tom Kenyon, Rick Gomez, Curtis Layn, Stacy Jones, Stan Wilbur (Town Administrator)

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

J. Demeritt shared that the selectboard would be sticking tightly to their schedule during this meeting and that community members may be asked to hold questions during parts of the meeting.

J. Szarejko shared gratitude to Tom Kenyon for bringing his acetylene tanks to the highway department to repair their equipment. It was noted they were a big help and allowed for considerable work to be accomplished.

4. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

Coyle curb cut, Astel mortgage discharge, John Deere purchase order, and Monkton Mentors' request were added

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

T. Steadman requested that new town policies impacting the general public be posted on Front Porch Forum in addition to on the town website to better promote awareness.

M. Guillemette raised concerns about how the zoning administrator is interacting with him about his property.

T. Kenyon inquired about the fuel tanks for the highway department.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

J. Dunham moved to approve the selectboard regular meeting minutes of December 9th, 2025 as written. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

W. Crandall moved to approve the selectboard special meeting minutes of December 9th, 2025 as written. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

7. REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

J. Dunham moved to approve Payroll Check Warrant #51215 in the amount of \$13,880.76. W. Crandall seconded. This is payroll for town employees. The vote passed 3-0-2. S. Peisch and J. Szarejko abstained.

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*J. Dunham moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51219 in the amount of \$4,121,971.71. W. Crandall seconded. This is largely for the allocation to Mt Abraham School District. **The vote passed 3-0-2.** S. Peisch and J. Szarejko abstained.*

*W. Crandall moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51215 in the amount of \$43,994.30. J. Dunham seconded. This is largely for the East Monkton Church Association ARPA disbursement. **The vote passed 3-0-2.** S. Peisch and J. Szarejko abstained.*

*W. Crandall moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51222 in the amount of \$186,112.24. J. Dunham seconded. This is largely for the Monkton Volunteer Fire Department. **The vote passed 3-0-2.** S. Peisch and J. Szarejko abstained.*

8. REVIEW OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

None reported.

9. FACILITY USE REQUESTS

W. Crandall reports the rooms continue to be used. He also shared that the application form and process of submission are being updated.

10. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

For the two-week period from December 7 to December 20, the Monkton Highway Department focused heavily on winter weather response and essential equipment maintenance. Road crews were called in multiple times for plowing, salting, and sanding due to continuous snow and ice, which included responding to a truck and a car sliding off the roads. Major weather incidents also included tree removal from roadways on December 19 and 20 following high wind gusts, as well as fixing a washout and cleaning a culvert in preparation for rain. In the shop, the F550 was serviced and readied for use, and significant work was performed on the Western Star and 2017 Star sanders, including securing parts from Williston. A walking meeting on Piney Woods took place to evaluate its current state. J. Szarejko will write up findings and compile photos taken in preparation for a walkthrough with contractors interested in bidding to repair the road. Administrative tasks included installing new radios, setting up a new computer and printer, and creating new log forms for materials tracking.

J. Szarejko reported that the highway department will be very short staffed in mid-January. One of the current crew members will be out on medical leave soon, leaving only the foreman and one crew member. J. Szarejko has spoken with the crew foreman on this matter and recommends that the town contract with Pete Bouvier, who has extensive experience and has assisted the town highway crew previously, to support them on an as-needed basis until they reach full-staffing again.

As of this meeting date, there has been no substantive response to the job posting for an additional highway crew member. J. Demeritt suggested posting the ad on Indeed. No further discussion occurred.

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J. Demeritt moved to authorize Trevor Currier to sign a non-binding purchase order with United for a new John Deere Grader for the Town of Monkton. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

J. Szarejko reported that there have been at least three unique attempts to engage the property owners/users about the need for a curb cut on the Coyle property: by mail, telephone, and in person, without result. J. Szarejko advocated that the right-of-way be cleared by the road crew for safety reasons. J. Demeritt expressed concern that there may be additional steps to take prior to digging up the access. Following further discussion, it was decided W. Crandall will follow up with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns regarding best practice in pursuing action when an unauthorized curb cut poses a safety risk to the town.

S. Peisch moved to issue a notice of violation to the Coyle property for failure to comply with town regulations requiring an application and approval prior to commencing with a curb cut. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

J. Szarejko shared that the property on Hollow Rd that had previously been in the right-of-way has now been removed.

11. PINEY WOODS ENGINEERING SERVICES

J. Demeritt reported that DuBois & King provided additional information regarding their engineering proposal for Piney Woods allowing the selectboard to make a much more balanced comparison between the two firms that submitted proposals.

J. Dunham moved to accept the DuBois & King proposal for engineering for Piney Woods Road contingent on discussion of scope of work and cost. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

12. LIBRARY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

J. Demeritt shared that she met with the library last week and they approved the memorandum of understanding (MOU) previously discussed and shared with the selectboard. The library board authorized their chair person to sign the MOU. J. Demeritt requested she be granted the same authority as the selectboard chair to sign on behalf of the town.

S. Peisch moved to authorize the selectboard chair, J. Demeritt to sign the memorandum of understanding with the library. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

13. COMMUNITY ROOM USE INSTRUCTIONS

A proposal for guidelines governing use of the community rooms was discussed. S. Peisch recommended that they be included with the forthcoming updated room use application.

14. MONKTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST

Three members of the Monkton Volunteer Fire Department, Bob Howard,

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Rick Gomez, and Curtis Layn sat with the selectboard to discuss their budget. The fire department is requesting a budget increase driven primarily by rising dispatch service costs, due to a change in Bristol Rescue's dispatch service structure requiring an intermediary stop through Middlebury. Another significant expense is the ongoing, rolling replacement of carbon fiber air packs. These have a shelf life and must be replaced even if minimally used. New gear for three incoming firefighters, in addition to needing updated tools for modern vehicles are also part of the increase. The department is also increasing its truck fund by \$10,000 this year to adequately save for future replacements, recognizing they have waited too long in the past. Finally, there is no line item for recruitment and retention, and internal consensus has not been reached on strategies like paying firefighters or offering tax breaks.

15. 2026 BUDGET

The budget in its current state was shared on the screen and discussed line by line. Some numbers may be lowered to match past actuals more closely and others will be increased to account for inflation. No final decisions were made.

16. PROPOSED NEW POLICIES

Tabled.

17. OTHER BUSINESS

J. Demeritt reported that the town clerk has asked the selectboard to sign off on a full mortgage discharge. What the Selectboard would be certifying is that P. Astel has paid-in-full and satisfied the town of Monkton and the town is now discharging his mortgage as recommended by the town clerk and treasurer.

J. Dunham moved to authorize the selectboard chair to sign the full mortgage discharge for Paul Astel. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

S. Peisch moved to approve the Monkton Mentors' request to increase their appropriation allocation request from \$500 to \$1,000 in the town warning. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

18. 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. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

J. Demeritt moved to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel relations, provision of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) of the Vermont statutes and to discuss confidential lawyer communications, provision of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F) of the Vermont statutes. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0. Entered Executive Session at 9:02 pm.

The public left the meeting.

W. Crandall moved to exit the Executive Session. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0. Exited the Executive Session at 10:06 pm.

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No action taken.

19. ADJOURNMENT

J. Dunham moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 pm. W. Crandall seconded.

The vote passed 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Jones