

Special MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 22nd, 2026
DRAFT

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, Randy Charboneau, Matt Dupont, Robert Howard, Curtis Layn, John McNerney, Eugenie Doyle, Marlylin Cargill

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The business portion of the meeting will be held without public comment. Public comment will be taken at the end of the evening. This special meeting of the Select Board will focus on reconciling a significant deficit in the General Fund and finalizing the 2026 budget.

4. BUDGET DISCUSSION

J. Demeritt described several items of note including that the General Fund shows a deficit of approximately \$160,000 (roughly 10% of the total budget).

She shared that the board is investigating two primary causes:

- The distribution methods of delinquent taxes across various funds and
- Timing issues with Homestead Declarations relative to the state grant list, which may affect property tax credits.

Discussion occurred. Major Budget Adjustments to the highway budget included

Line Item	Description	Adjustment / Action
259	Part-time Employees	Reduced to \$0 (Saved \$12,000).
283	Property Maintenance	Reduced to \$2,000 (Saved \$18,000).

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258	Regular Employees	Adjusted for new hire rate (\$25/hr). New Total: \$304,042.50.
495	Capital Highway Fund	Contribution reduced to \$20,000 (Saved \$15,000).
308	Winter Sand	Reduced to \$35,000.
317	Gravel	Reduced to \$65,000 (from \$94k).
310	Hot Mix (Paving)	Maintained at \$676k. (The board opted not to cut paving further due to the road maintenance backlog).

Additional adjustments and discussion included:

Town Office Computers: Reduced the \$12,000 request to \$7,000 by committing to refurbished machines for the Windows 11 upgrade.

Consultant Fees (Line 116): Added \$25,000 to perform a formal municipal audit (the first in ~5 years) to address deficit concerns.

Payroll: Approved a 3% across-the-board increase. Confirmed Zoning Administrator hours will increase from 10 to 15 hours/week.

Agricultural and Natural Areas Committee (ANAC) (Line 389): Request reduced from \$35,000 to \$20,000.

Fire Department: The board discussed a proposed \$10,800 stipend fund to help retain volunteer members. Final decision pending for the Tuesday meeting.

Based on recommendations from the Treasurer, the board increased several revenue estimates to reflect a planned Tax Sale in 2026:

Delinquent Taxes: Increased to \$180,000.

Interest/Penalties: Increased to \$20k and \$14k respectively.

Administrative Fees: ZA/DRB fees increased to \$10,000.

S. Peisch proposed a separate article for Piney Woods Road for no more than \$150,000, partially offset by federal revenue.

Tax Rate Impact: Following these cuts, the projected tax rate increase was reduced from over 20% to approximately 12.33% (a ~5-cent increase).

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5. PUBLIC COMMENT

T. Steadman asked for clarification on line 8 item Property Tax

Further discussion on the MVFD budget

R. Charboneau asked for clarification on the Zoning Admin

J. Dunham asked some clarifying questions about the grader article

T. Steadman asked about special Funds accounts

J. McNerney offered some clarification regarding T. Steadman's question, S.

Pilcher offered further clarification

6. 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. W. Crandall 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. S. Peisch seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.** Entered Executive Session at 9:00pm*

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

*J. Demeritt moved to exit the Executive Session. J. Dunham seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.** Exited the Executive Session at 9:23 pm.*

S. Peisch and J. Szarejko will meet with a member of the highway crew.

7. ADJOURNMENT

*J. Dunham moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 pm. W. Crandall seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Jones