

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

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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:

Stan Wilbur (Town Administrator), Bill Joos (Town Treasurer), Jaime Schulte, Debra Sprague, Lisa Burns, Tom Steadman, Tom Kenyon, Randy Charboneau, Rachel Czar, John Mc Nerney, Marilyn Cargill, Don Mannigan, Kirk Lea, Sam Burr, Jane Palmer, Mark Palmer, Trevor Denton (online), Stacy Jones

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None offered

4. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

None offered

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

R. Charboneau presented his individual analysis of the town report's financial pages, citing multiple discrepancies and errors.

J. Demeritt questioned why R. Charboneau, identifying himself as an individual and not representing the town auditor's office this evening, had not discussed his findings with the Treasurer first. R. Charboneau explained that due to a poor working relationship with the Treasurer, he chose to come directly to the Board.

J. Demeritt acknowledged that she and the Treasurer were also struggling with conflicting deficit numbers from the budget spreadsheet and the NEMRC system, and noted the need to consult with the Treasurer for definitive answers. J. Demeritt stated that the discrepancies would likely be addressed at Town Meeting and that the town was in the process of seeking an auditor to audit the books. There was general consensus that an audit was necessary to resolve the financial confusion. S. Wilbur requested a copy of R. Charboneau's presented sheet.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

*S. Peisch moved to approve the minutes of January 27th, 2026 as written. J. Szarejko seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

7. REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

*J. Dunham moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #60209 in the amount of \$21,262.47 (primarily for utilities and some highway materials). W. Crandall seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

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W. Crandall moved to approve Payroll Check Warrant #60209 in the amount of \$18,600.32. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

8. REVIEW OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

W. Crandall reported that a number of overweight permits have been received since the last meeting, and all necessary insurance certificates and information are in order and being distributed to the correct parties:

- Bakemark Usa
- Bourne Energy/ Dead River Co.
- Dutch Valley Transportation
- Green State Excavating
- Hinesburg Sand & Gravel
- Mr. Bult's, Inc
- Onsite Septic Solutions
- Ormond Bushey & Sons
- Spafford & Sons Of Williston Vt
- Waterman Siteworks

9. FACILITY USE REQUESTS

W. Crandall reported that the town office meeting room is very busy, especially on weekends, with people booking into June and July. He is coordinating with the library regarding the use of the patio space.

10. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

J. Szarejko provided The Monkton Highway department update. The crew reported two weeks of intense winter weather operations, requiring the crew to be out almost daily for plowing, salting, or sanding. The first week was dominated by a 17.5-inch snowstorm that required the crew to be out continuously clearing and sanding roads from Sunday through Thursday. Equipment focus included bringing the Western Star to Viking for repairs, working on the 2024 Mack plow and repairing its bed chain and glad hand cover, and addressing the ice on Monkton Road. The team also conducted servicing on the 524K loader and F550 and retrieved the 2013 Mack truck, with the Western Star being picked up on Friday. Overall, equipment repairs were ongoing, including getting the 2017 Mack truck back in service, and work is progressing on a tree cutting grant with the Town Administrator. The following week saw significant effort clearing drifts, with early call-ins on Monday, Wednesday (for new snow), and Saturday. A major ice issue on Monkton Road required extensive work on Monday and Tuesday, including breaking out over 17 inches of ice and using the excavator, loader, and various trucks. The crew also managed equipment maintenance, including replacing tires on the Western Star, greasing all equipment, and repairing the camera system on the Western Star. Administrative work included meetings regarding a safety grant and tree work, as well as setting up new explosive cabinets and receiving a freight delivery for the PACIF Grant. The week concluded with preparations for a coming weekend storm.

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Rachel Czar, a State of Vermont River Management Engineer, presented information relevant to the ongoing discussion of Piney Woods Road potential repair options. R. Czar confirmed that a state permit is required for any construction, regardless of FEMA involvement, noting that FEMA typically operates on a reimbursement basis.

The replacement structures must meet specific physical and hydraulic standards for a Class Three road, with a Q25 design storm, translating to a required bankable width of sixteen feet as determined by VTrans. This standard eliminates the option of replacing the old, undersized culverts or using multiple smaller culverts. Viable options are largely confined to a concrete box culvert or a pipe arch, though a bridge is also comparable in cost. A concrete box culvert is generally preferred as it requires less road elevation change.

R. Czar noted that the cheapest option for the town is discontinuing the road. Reducing the road to Class Four is also an option; while still requiring the sixteen-foot wide structure, it would allow the town flexibility for winter closure and less stringent design standards for emergency access.

Construction is typically limited between July 1st and October 1st to protect fish species, although an earlier start in May or June may be possible depending on the level of disturbance and specific fish species present. The longevity of box culverts is heavily dependent on proper installation, with a minimum 15-year life expectancy when installed correctly. R. Czar advised that future failure would likely occur to the road and banks, not the culvert itself, which may necessitate future bank stabilization work. A town-hired professional engineer would be responsible for quality control and inspection during installation, possessing the authority to issue a stop-work order. R. Czar noted that a state engineer would not possess such authority, and further suggested a local contractor may not have the required engineering background to complete the undertaking to necessary specifications.

11. COYLE CURBCUT

The Selectboard discussed the ongoing issue of ice accumulation on the town road, originating from water runoff at the Coyle property's residential driveway, which was distinct from the previously discussed Coyle Curb Cut matter. J. Szarejko reported the road crew had spent nearly ten hours over two days removing ice, believed to be caused by a leak, possibly from a broken water line or hose, on the Coyle property.

The discussion addressed the question of compensating the Town for this work. S. Peisch cited Section 9 of the Town's Highway Access Policy, adopted in 2021, which holds property owners responsible for expenses incurred to restore a highway damaged by improper driveway construction, maintenance, or grading, making no exemption for pre-existing driveways. W. Crandall noted having previously spoken with Mrs. Coyle, who assumed her access was "grandfathered in." J. Demeritt, L. Burns, and J. Dunham expressed concern regarding the

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equitable application of the 2021 policy to a pre-existing driveway and the potential punitive nature of immediate cost recovery, given the crew's need to act quickly for a safety hazard before the property owner had received formal notification of non-compliance and an opportunity to correct the issue.

Consensus affirmed that property owners must be notified of non-compliance with the policy and given an opportunity to achieve compliance before the Town imposes costs, emphasizing the need for consistent enforcement. S. Wilbur suggested the "Work in the Right of Way" policy might also apply to technical issues like grading and culverting.

W. Crandall committed to drafting a formal letter to the Coyle property owners clarifying the Town's policy, the expectation of corrective action, and documenting the Town's expectation that any work and associated costs between the present time and spring would be re-evaluated and discussed in the spring.

12. BURR CURBCUT

The Board considered the Burr curb cut application on Turkey Lane. S. Burr explained that a permit was initially issued in 2021; however, due to an ongoing dispute, S. Burr requested that the Board proceed with the inspection and approval process as if the existing curb cut were a new application. S. Burr confirmed the location is on Turkey Lane, approximately 500 feet from the Monkton/Hinesburg town line, where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour. Per state regulation 250 feet of sight distance is required, which S. Burr felt was met due to the flat nature of the land. It was noted that a culvert was unnecessary as the land slopes away from the road. The existing application and map were confirmed to be in the possession of the Board and/or Zoning Administrator. J. Szarejko agreed he and T. Currier (Highway Foreman) would perform the necessary site inspection.

13. NEW CURBCUT

J. Szarejko reported that the required site work for this application was delayed because the contractor mistakenly marked the cut on the wrong property. The application will be brought forward for approval at a later meeting.

The selectboard then discussed the general practice regarding multiple curb cuts. J. McNerney noted that the applicant, the New family, intends to split their property and is requesting an additional curb cut for the existing parcel, which is typically made contingent on subdivision approval. J. Dunham noted an email that confirmed there is no official policy barring one curb cut per parcel. J. McNerney clarified that the practice had been to minimize the number of curb cuts to reduce potential safety issues or other challenges, and acknowledged that this was a practice, not a formal policy.

14. TYLER BRIDGE ROAD

S. Peisch led a discussion on the temporary Tyler Bridge Road structure, inquiring about its lifespan and grant options for future repairs. A prior grant application, despite a completed hydraulic study, was unsuccessful. S. Peisch

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proposed reapplying to minimize future costs, and S. Wibur confirmed this was possible, explaining the prior denial was due to miscategorization ("pollution abatement" instead of "structural") and a high volume of applications. The Board agreed to reapply, with S. Peisch assisting.

J. Dunham noted that the Tyler Bridge Road culvert is one of three in the area of the same age, alongside Mountain Road (already replaced) and Church Road (also in serious need of repair). J. McNerney suggested the recent Mountain Road expense might have influenced the first grant denial.

A question was raised about the temporary structure's expected lifespan, particularly given heavy truck traffic. It was confirmed that the contractor estimated it would last "probably a year" under current traffic, and there was agreement that restricting heavy truck traffic could extend its use until a permanent replacement is built. A long-term goal of defraying costs was mentioned, with the suggestion that better enforcement of overweight restrictions would be helpful.

15. DISCONTINUING TH 14 & TH 33

The Selectboard considered the Road Foreman's request to discontinue Town Highway 14 and Town Highway 33. J. Demeritt opened the discussion, inviting residents of Town Highway 14, M. Palmer and J. Palmer, to speak. The Palmers strongly opposed the discontinuance, citing reliance on Town maintenance for their property and inability to afford maintenance and replacement of a large, aging culvert (estimated at \$4,000 plus installation). Concerns were raised regarding potential liability issues associated with the culvert, which also affects Rotax Road, and residents suggested a Town-performed cost analysis to determine actual savings. M. Palmer also questioned the policy of discontinuing Town roads, suggesting a benefit to maintaining the right-of-way for future housing needs.

An alternative to closure of the road, downgrading it from a Class 3 to a Class 4 was proposed as a compromise on maintenance, given the Town's currently unclear maintenance obligations for culverts and bridges on Class 4 roads.

Discussion occurred regarding the criteria for selecting roads considered for discontinuation. A suggestion was put forth that roads considered for discontinuation in the future should have an equitable process for selection and review. Additionally, residents should be directly invited to a public meeting discussing potential discontinuation of a road they live on. The board generally agreed that if spur roads are to be considered for discontinuance, all similar roads should be examined.

16. TREASURER RESIGNATION

*J. Demeritt moved to accept the treasurer's resignation. J. Dunham seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

The board formally accepted the treasurer's resignation.

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17. TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

The Select Board discussed the Technology Use Policy, an addendum to the personnel policy, to determine how to apply it to appointed/elected officials, focusing on access transfer upon departure and prohibiting viewing others' email. VLCT advised the town could ask elected officials to voluntarily sign the policy but could not compel compliance.

S. Peisch suggested a standalone policy, voluntarily signed by elected officials, rolled out via separate emails post-elections (March/April) to allow time for questions. W. Crandall preferred an "awareness" approach over collecting signatures, which J. Demeritt supported due to logistics, while J. Dunham noted the benefit of signatures for acknowledgement.

L. Burns raised concern about the lack of a designated person for onboarding/exiting (e.g., shutting down email). J. Demeritt agreed, noting informal roles exist. W. Crandall suggested a two-person process (webmaster and board member) for rights removal. J. McNerney stressed the need to change passwords, not delete accounts, to maintain records.

J. Demeritt suggested hiring a dedicated IT security person (salaried or stipend) due to hacking risk, prompting a discussion on internal vs. contract service. J. Dunham offered to investigate contract services. The Board agreed the Select Board would handle the initial implementation process, with any future formal IT role added to the policy later.

S. Peisch moved to make the technology use policy a standalone policy rather than an addendum to the personnel policy. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

18. CREDIT CARD USE POLICY

The Selectboard discussed the logistics of implementing the new credit card policy, specifically addressing the requirement that the card and all receipts be returned to the Treasurer by the next business day following use. Concern was expressed regarding the inconvenience this posed for the Highway Foreman, particularly when fueling the town truck outside of normal business hours.

J. Demeritt noted the existing card was reportedly issued in an individual's name, because the bank had declined to issue it in the Town of Monkton's name, and was currently held by the Town Clerk, not the Treasurer. The Board agreed to cancel the current card and seek a new one issued to the Town of Monkton, ideally from the National Bank of Middlebury.

During the discussion on managing the card's use, options were considered including issuing two cards—one for Town Hall and one for the Foreman—or establishing a fuel account with a local gas station. Security concerns were raised, suggesting a sign-out log and bi-weekly expense reports for the card.

Consensus leaned toward the two-card option for town use. L. Burns recommended first consulting with the financial institutions to confirm their ability

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to issue credit cards to a municipality before setting specific limits or authorized users.

S. Peisch volunteered to follow up with the National Bank of Middlebury to inquire about their ability to issue credit cards to the Town of Monkton, advise on potential limits and guidelines, and set up the card.

19. WEIGHT LIMIT ORDINANCE

The board's discussion focused on the proposed vehicle weight limit ordinance, specifically addressing the town lawyer's concern that restricting "through trucks" could be discriminatory and invite legal challenges. The revised ordinance, therefore, omitted the "no-through trucks" language, instead setting a general weight limit of 24,000 pounds. Selectboard members felt that enacting this ordinance would immediately authorize the Sheriff to enforce the 24,000-pound limit, which they hoped would deter excessive heavy truck traffic. They clarified that permitted overweight vehicles would still be subject to weighing and fining if they exceeded the weight specified on their permits. K. Lea expressed skepticism about the efficacy of enforcement.

Selectboard members agreed that the ordinance's success would be measured over time by reports from the Sheriff and the number of tickets issued, acknowledging that it might take several years for trucking companies to recognize and comply with the new limits. Following the discussion,

*W. Crandall moved to adopt the vehicle weight limit ordinance pending the removal of "text marked in red". J. Szarejko seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

The ordinance is scheduled to be posted and published, becoming effective sixty days after its adoption.

20. APPOINTMENT POLICY

The Select Board reviewed a revised appointment policy, presented by J. Demeritt, focusing on several proposed amendments. Discussion centered on the advertisement of vacant positions, with the initial proposal suggesting advertising all positions in February and subsequent vacancies only on the town website. The Board agreed to an amendment, recommended by W. Crandall and S. Peisch, to include physical postings at the town hall for all vacancies. The method for applicants to express interest was discussed, leading to the clarification that the required "letter of interest" was understood to include electronic submissions, such as email, with the intent to ensure a written record. A new provision was included stating that an appointee who missed more than three consecutive regular meetings and failed to reply to an inquiry from the relevant committee chair would be deemed to have resigned. J. McNerney raised a concern about positions that are clearly unfilled without a formal written resignation, resulting in an amendment allowing the Select Board to formally determine a position as vacant. The policy was noted to include the mandatory post-Town Meeting appointment of a Tree Warden, as required by state statute. Finally, the Board agreed to add a clause, suggested by S. Peisch, to clarify that

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emergency interim appointments do not fall under the policy. Following discussion and agreement on the amendments, a motion was made to approve the policy.

S. Peisch moved to approve the appointment policy as amended with the edits discussed. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

21. PREPARATION FOR TOWN MEETING

Tabled.

22. AUDIT – REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

J. Demeritt requested S. Wilbur draft a request for proposal (RFP) to begin the process of soliciting bids for the town audit.

23. NEW COMPUTERS

Tabled.

24. OTHER BUSINESS

None offered.

25. ACTION ITEM ROUNDUP

- **W. Crandall:** Send a letter to the Coyle's.
- **Board Members:** Think about which town meeting items they can discuss and address questions on during Town Meeting
- **J. Szarejko and T. Currier:** Look at the Burr curb cut and the New curb cut.
- **S. Piesch:**
 - Work on the grant for Tyler Bridge Road.
 - Fix up the technology policy to be standalone.
 - Investigate the credit card issue.
- **J. Dunham:** Investigate IT security.
- **S. Wilbur:** Create an RFP for the audit.
- **S. Peisch and J. Demeritt:** Finalize the Appointment policy update.

26. DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

February 24th, 2025 at 7:00pm

27. 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 personnel relations, provision of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) of the Vermont statutes. The vote passed 5-0-0. Entered Executive Session at 9:05 pm.

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

J. Dunham moved to exit the Executive Session. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0. Exited the Executive Session at 10:00 pm.

Following the executive session it was noted:

- S. Peisch will contact NEMRC to inquire about engaging their services for the transition between Town Treasurers.
- To facilitate a comparison of services and pricing, J. Demeritt will also reach out to Munify for a similar proposal for transitional services.
- J. Demeritt will prepare and post job descriptions for both the Delinquent Tax Collector and the Treasurer positions.
- J. Demeritt will also discuss the compensation structure, specifically hourly versus salary, for the Delinquent Tax Collector with the resigning Town Treasurer.
- The Selectboard affirmed that J. Demeritt possessed the authority to post the job descriptions without requiring a subsequent Selectboard vote.

28. ADJOURNMENT

S. Piesch moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:02 pm. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Jones