

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 24th 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, Debra Sprague, Lisa Burns, Stephen Pilcher, Tom Steadman, Tom Kenyon, Trevor Currier (Road Forman), Robbin Hopps, Stan Burritt, Randy Charboneau, Kirk Lea, Trevor Denton, Kathy Malzac, Charles Caldwell, Anthony DelGreco, Cynthia Stoddard (NEMRC), Jim Jewell, Julie Kenyon, Jim Carroll, Debbie Houghton

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None offered.

4. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

The Catalyst grant will be struck from the agenda.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

T. Steadman expressed disappointment at not being considered for the delinquent tax collector position after being asked for a cover letter and three references.

T. Kenyon expressed concern that the 60,000-pound weight limit for agricultural vehicles is too low and suggested an increase to 80,000 pounds. W. Crandall volunteered to follow up on the agricultural vehicle weight limit.

6. APPROVE MINUTES

*J. Dunham moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 10th, 2026, as written. W. Crandall seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

*J. Demeritt moved to approve the special meeting minutes of February 13th, 2026, as amended to reflect a meeting start time of 12:00 noon and an end time of 12:11 pm. W. Crandall seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

7. REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

*J. Szarejko moved to approve Payroll Check Warrant #60223 in the amount of \$18,384.97. J. Dunham seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

*J. Dunham moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #60223 in the amount of \$53,240.53, which covers full payroll transfer, highway equipment, parts and repair, state property tax insurance payment, and the expense of printing the town reports. W. Crandall seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #60213 in the amount of \$25,057.38, for items including Blue Cross Vermont, Hinesburg Sand

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

DRAFT

and Gravel for winter sand, State of Vermont payroll transfer, and TIFCO Industries Incorporated. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

8. REVIEW OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

W. Crandall reported that he reviewed approximately a half dozen overweight permits. All were approved, with all necessary insurances confirmed to be in order and distributed to the Sheriff. The approved companies were: A. Duie Pyle Inc, BSP Trans-Law Motor Freight, Champlain Construction, Chevalier Drilling, Fyles Bros, Giroux's Poultry Farm, Jackman Fuels, K.A. Bagley, Rice Lumber Company, and Sheehan Excavation.

9. FACILITY USE REQUESTS

W. Crandall reported the facility is very busy and things are going well.

10. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

J. Szarejko provided an update on the Highway Department's work for the previous two weeks.

The crew was out on Sunday, February 8th, to check roads, plow drifts, and sand. The week of February 8th through the 14th was dominated by winter operations and equipment maintenance. This included repairing the wheel loader's brake pedal, holding a shop meeting with another town on a 5-ton truck build, and acquiring parts and performing repairs on the 2024 Mack, 2013 Mack, and 2016 F550 trucks. During a storm on Tuesday, they plowed until 8:30 pm and were called back in at 11:00 pm by MVFD (Monkton Volunteer Fire Department), working through the night into Wednesday to clear heavy drifts and sand all routes. On Thursday, they cleared and sanded roads and worked on servicing the roadside mower for the spring season. The crew was off on Friday and Saturday.

The week of February 15th through the 21st began with a holiday on Monday. On Tuesday, they continued truck work, including the camera system on the 2013 Mack and F550 sander, and installed cameras and work lights on the 2013 Mack and 2017 Western Star. On Wednesday, the crew checked and sanded for ice, worked at the Coyle driveway due to an ice issue, held curb cut meetings with the selectboard, and did some cold patching. Thursday's work included cold patching on Monkton Road, thawing culverts at the end of driveways at the request of homeowners, repairing a Nichols Road street sign, and working on their culvert thawing trailer. They also worked with a dealer on a new truck build and prepped for an upcoming storm. The crew came in on Friday and Saturday to plow and sand all routes. T. Currier commented that it had been "quite the winter so far."

11. ROAD FOREMAN TRUCK

T. Currier reported that the 2020 GMC truck is unusable due to transmission damage, which occurred when a transmission line rotted and a previous employee attempted to operate the truck without fluid. He is currently using his personal truck for town business. T. Currier presented two options:

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

DRAFT

Repair: New transmission parts are estimated at \$11,000, not including labor, with a total repair cost potentially reaching \$25,000. The estimated repair time is two to three weeks, and a repair would be a "band-aid" for a truck originally scheduled for replacement in 2030.

Replace: A new 2026 Ford F-250 diesel was spec'd out for \$72,000 (with municipal pricing), which would allow the crew to utilize the bulk diesel fuel at the shop, saving time and money. T. Currier estimated a trade-in value of \$15,000 to \$20,000 for the disabled GMC. The lead time for a new truck is four to six weeks.

The selectboard members, concerned about proceeding with a major purchase without a definitive repair cost and acknowledging that a new truck purchase over \$50,000 would require a sealed bid process and a vote by the public, agreed to proceed with obtaining an accurate repair estimate.

A decision was made to bring the truck to a GM dealership for an evaluation to get a firm quote on the full cost of repair. J. Dunham asked for clarification on when the truck was officially due for repair. J. Demeritt asked if a used truck was priced out. It was not. S. Peisch volunteered to contact the National Bank of Middlebury to research financing options for a potential new truck purchase.

12. NEMRC

The selectboard met with Cynthia from New England Municipal Resource Corporation (NEMRC), who, along with her colleague Dayna, is assisting the town with the financial transition following the Treasurer's resignation. Cynthia, drawing on her extensive background in municipal finance, presented her findings from a limited review of the town's general fund.

Financial Review Findings

State Education Payment and Fund Balance: Monkton's practice of deducting the estimated State Education Payment liability (currently \$104,000) from revenue at the end of the calendar year artificially decreases the year's revenue, contributing to a perceived deficit. This practice is done to ensure the money is set aside for the school payment in the spring. Cynthia noted that historical data suggests the town often owes less than the preliminary estimate, and asked the selectboard for direction on whether to continue this practice. The selectboard requested Cynthia try to calculate a more accurate liability number.

Assigned Fund Balances: Cynthia recommended moving \$10,469 assigned for Planning and Zoning into the unassigned fund balance, as she believes the funds were spent on a Town Plan rewrite. She will leave the \$30,000 in the tax stabilization fund, which was confirmed to have only been used once.

Delinquent Taxes: Cynthia made a "definite recommendation" to stop the practice of budgeting for delinquent tax principal as revenue (currently budgeted at \$180,000). She explained that this practice counts the money twice and contributes to the town's deficit over time by reducing the amount of current tax revenue raised. She noted a growing trend of delinquent taxes over time.

FEMA Funds: She questioned a large balance of \$494,000 in the FEMA 2024 flood recovery fund, as FEMA typically operates on a reimbursement basis. Town

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

DRAFT

Administrator S. Wilbur clarified that the amount was a reimbursement for work already completed in 2024, received ahead of schedule.

*S. Peisch moved to assign himself as the single point of contact for communications with NEMRC, and to grant NEMRC access to the town accounts to assist with town finances. **The motion passed 4-1-0** (J. Demeritt opposed).*

*The motion was then amended by S. Peisch to be contingent on NEMRC providing proof of bonding and insurance. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

13. COYLE CURB CUT

W. Crandall reported that a letter was sent to Mrs. Coyle expressing concerns about the driveway and illegal curb cut, to which she provided a thankful response, acknowledging the efforts of the Road Foreman and his team to mitigate water flow. Road Foreman T. Currier confirmed his team had been out to the site and had removed two feet of ice from the roadway. They also established a temporary ditch parallel to the road to divert water, but the work resulted in a "mess" that must be cleaned up and landscaped in the spring. T. Currier explained that deeper work cannot be done until the ground thaws. His current concern is a pool of water at the illegal curb cut, which is higher than the road and will flow onto the road before it can drain. The selectboard agreed to continue monitoring the situation and wait for warmer weather to proceed with permanent work. T. Currier is maintaining a detailed log sheet of all work performed at the site for future reference.

14. BURR CURB CUT & NEW CURB CUT

J. Szarejko reported that he and Road Foreman T. Currier had inspected the Burr curb cut, which is for a new duplex with four bedrooms. He noted that there is good visibility to the left and right, and a culvert is not needed.

*J. Szarejko moved to approve the curb cut. S. Peisch seconded the motion. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

J. Szarejko reported that he and Trevor Currier had inspected the New curb cut. He stated that it would not require a culvert and that there was approximately a half mile of clear visibility in each direction.

*J. Szarejko moved to approve the New curb cut, contingent on the property being divided up for a relative. S. Peisch seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

15. CATALYST GRANT

Tabled

16. AUDIT RFP

The selectboard began discussing the Audit Request for Proposals (RFP) drafted by Town Administrator S. Wilbur, who noted it was based on templates from other towns and was lengthy, suggesting it could be simplified. Discussion focused on the scope and timing of the RFP, including whether to solicit bids for a single year or for multiple years with an option to extend, as a longer contract could potentially impact the price.

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

DRAFT

J. Demeritt reported receiving informal quotes for a one-year audit ranging from \$20,000 to \$35,000, confirming that \$25,000 had been allocated in the budget.

S. Peisch volunteered to edit and finalize the RFP and proposed an end of March deadline for submissions. S. Wilbur advised that the advertisement should run for at least three weeks and should be sent directly to in-state auditing firms for expediency.

17. CREDIT CARD POLICY

S. Peisch provided an update on the credit card policy, reporting that the local bank could issue cards in an individual's name with "Town of Monkton" listed underneath, but not directly to the Town of Monkton. The selectboard agreed to proceed with the Treasurer's suggestion to cancel the current card and issue two new cards with the local bank on the same multi-user account:

Town Hall Card: A spending limit of \$5,000 was proposed to allow flexibility for larger occasional purchases, such as mailing out town reports. S. Peisch agreed to ask a designated individual (Sharon) if she would be comfortable having the card in her name, with Town Administrator S. Wilbur offered as an alternative as he is in the building more than selectboard members.

Road Foreman Card: A limit of \$500 was proposed for the Road Foreman, T. Currier, primarily for gasoline (estimated at approximately \$70 per week, or \$500 per month).

Additionally, T. Currier raised an issue with an existing, unusable Home Depot credit card that was set up under a previous employee's name (Shane Lawrence). He noted the utility of the Home Depot card for cost-effective purchases like lumber and mailboxes.

W. Crandall moved that T. Currier be authorized to contact Home Depot to arrange for a new card representing the Town for town purchases. The vote passed 5-0-0.

18. TREASURER/DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR UPDATE

J. Demeritt provided an update on advertising for the Treasurer's position, noting it had been posted in the Addison Independent and on VLCT. Following a discussion on reaching a broader audience, the selectboard agreed to ask Town Administrator Stan Wilbur to advertise the position further afield in the Rutland Herald and Seven Days. J. Demeritt reported there is currently one applicant for the Treasurer position, and she and S. Peisch, along with Jean Holloway, are scheduled to conduct an initial interview.

19. APPOINTMENTS ADVERTISING

S. Peisch, with the support of J. Demeritt and J. Dunham, drafted a policy for advertising appointments. S. Peisch reported feeling good about the draft and agreed to send it to Town Administrator Stan Wilbur for publication in the paper.

20. NEW COMPUTERS

Tabled

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

DRAFT

21. PREPARATIONS FOR TOWN MEETING

The selectboard discussed preparations for the upcoming Town Meeting, focusing heavily on the financial articles, the impact of recent advice from the New England Municipal Resource Corporation (NEMRC), and the need for transparency with voters.

Article 4 - General Fund Deficit and Financial Adjustments

The discussion centered on three key financial issues that would necessitate amending the figures in the Town Meeting Warning:

- **Library Cost Error:** The general fund deficit in the budget spreadsheet was overstated by approximately \$41,000 because the cost of the Russell Memorial Library was inadvertently counted twice. The correct general fund deficit number is \$202,362.96.
- **Delinquent Taxes as Revenue:** Following a strong recommendation from NEMRC to cease the practice, the selectboard debated whether to immediately remove the budgeted \$180,000 in delinquent tax principal from non-tax revenue for the 2026 budget. This practice counts money twice and increases the long-term town deficit.
- **State Education Payment:** NEMRC advised that historically, the final State Education Payment liability (for which \$104,000 is currently withheld) is less than the preliminary estimate, and approximately \$78,000 could potentially be moved back into the property tax fund.

The selectboard outlined three possible approaches for Town Meeting:

1. **Minimal Change:** Correct only the library double-count error.
2. **Immediate Correction:** Correct all three issues, potentially utilizing the Tax Rate Stabilization Fund (\$30,000) to offset a portion of the tax increase that would result from removing the delinquent tax revenue. A majority of the selectboard favored making these changes now to be transparent, contingent on firm numbers.
3. **Delayed Correction:** Disclose the error in budgeting delinquent taxes as revenue, but postpone the actual budgetary change until the 2027 budget to avoid a substantial tax increase this year.

Ultimately, the selectboard decided on a path forward that required more information: S. Peisch will contact NEMRC for a more accurate estimate of the State Education Payment liability, and J. Demeritt will contact the moderator (Jerry Schwartz) to determine if amending the warned article to increase the total amount of money to be raised is permissible. J. Schulte suggested preparing a one-page document to clearly explain the financial complexities to voters.

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

DRAFT

Article 5 - Financial Correction

The selectboard noted a small, immaterial financial adjustment of \$4,253.92 (reducing the surplus) for Article 5 due to discrepancies between the Treasurer's and the selectboard's figures and agreed to correct it for consistency.

Article 6 - New Grader

J. Szarejko volunteered to be the primary person to discuss the article for the new grader and its proposed multi-year financing with voters.

Article 7 - Piney Woods Road Repair

The selectboard discussed the high cost of the Piney Woods Road repair, estimated at \$1.2 million via the FEMA route, necessitated by VTrans stream crossing standards. S. Pilcher questioned why an \$89,000 FEMA surplus related to a previous storm was not properly accounted for in the Town Report as a reserve fund balance. J. Demeritt confirmed she is seeking clarification from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) on whether the voters' decision on this article is binding, as road maintenance is a selectboard duty. The estimated tax increase for this project is about \$15 per \$100,000 of home value.

Article 8 - Annual Report Notice

J. Demeritt reported that switching the Annual Report distribution from a full mailing to a postcard notice of availability would result in a significant cost and material savings, reducing the cost from approximately \$10,000 to \$3,000 by printing only 250 copies instead of 1,200.

Town Report Discrepancies

J. Dunham reported on his research into several financial discrepancies in the Town Report, including unexplained zero-time elapsed changes in capital project fund balances. He confirmed the "Records and Restorations" fund has been moved out of the General Fund.

22. OTHER BUSINESS

*S. Peisch moved to approve the garage repairs, for which competitive bids were received, in the amount of \$5,045.32 with Multi-Builders, Lodge and Sons, and Connor for the garage doors. W. Crandall seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.***

J. Szarejko then announced that the town roads have been posted, effective until May 15th.

The selectboard also authorized the signing of Form PVR 4155, a certificate affirming there is no appeal or suit pending from the action of the listers to recover taxes paid.

23. ACTION ITEM ROUNDUP

- Stan Wilbur
 - Advertise for the Treasurer and Delinquent Tax Collector positions in the

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

DRAFT

Rutland Herald and Seven Days.

- Sam Peisch
 - Check on a loan/financing for the Road Foreman's truck replacement/repair.
 - Finalize the Audit Request for Proposals (RFP).
 - Get a credit card in Sharon's name (if she agrees), and one for Trevor, both with a \$5,000 limit.
 - Send the draft Appointments Policy to Stan for posting.
 - Reach out to Cynthia (NEMRC) for a more accurate calculation regarding the State Education Payment liability to potentially put more money back into the property tax line.
 - Amend the minutes from the beginning of the meeting (February 13th Special Meeting start/end times).
 - Confirm NEMRC's bond and liability insurance and share that information with the selectboard.
- Trevor Currier
 - Cancel the Home Depot credit card or get it assigned to a new name to make it usable for town purchases.
- Jess Demeritt
 - Reach out to Jerry Schwarz (Moderator) to confirm what he will allow at Town Meeting regarding amending Article 4 (the general fund deficit).
 - Work on a spreadsheet with financial numbers, possibly with help from John Dunham.
- Walt Crandall
 - No new action item was assigned; the discussion confirmed Sam forwarded the state statute on the 60,000-pound limit for agricultural vehicles to him and Tom Kenyon.

24. DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

March 10th, 2026 at 7:00pm

25. 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 then moved to enter Executive Session to discuss confidential attorney-client communications for the purpose of providing professional legal services under the provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F) of the Vermont statutes. W. Crandall seconded. **The vote passed 5-0-0.** Stan Wilbur, Jaime Schulte, and Town Attorney Jim Carroll were included in the Executive Session, which was entered at 9:00 pm.*

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24th 2026

DRAFT

The public and S. Jones, minutes recorder, left the room.

J. Demeritt moved to exit the Executive Session at 9:25 pm. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

Following the Executive Session, the selectboard agreed to wait for more information before making a decision about the town's potential participation in the appeal.

26. ADJOURNMENT

W. Crandall moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:41 pm. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Jones