

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 24th, 2026

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1. CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE

The meeting was called to order by S. Peisch at 7:00 pm.

Members in attendance:

Sam Peisch (Chair, Clerk), John Dunham (Vice Chair), Joe Szarejko, Walter Crandall

Others in attendance:

Stan Wilbur (Town administrator) Renee McGuinness, John McNerney, Chan Washburn, Scott Gordon, Tom Steadman, Brandon Hanley, Abigail Hanley, Don Gould, Julie Gould, Gail VanStearburg, Bill VanStearburg, Sarah Bouchard, Nathan Clark, Ted McGuinness, Charles Caldwell, Lisa Burns, Lynne Caulfield, Christopher Kruckel, Jaime Schulte, Tom Kenyon, Danielle Bois, Eugennie Doyle, Kathy Malzac, Robin Hopps, Debra Sprague, Randy Charboneau, Trevor (online, no last name), Mark Burns, Scott Zeitter, Stacy Jones (minutes recorder)

Introductions were made by the Selectboard members (Sam Peisch, Joe Szarejko, Walt Crandall, and John Dunham) and Town Administrator Stan Wilbur.

2. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

Additions: Discussion of the Paving RFP, the Audit RFP, and financing for the new town grader were added to the agenda.

Deletions: Review and Approve Facility Use Requests (Item 10) was deleted, as requests were being managed by email.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

S. Peisch took time to review the Selectboard Rules and Procedures.

No other announcements were offered by the board or community.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

T. Steadman inquired about the Paving RFP, asking if the culverts in the proposed paving stretches were inspected to prevent future failure. J. Szarejko and S. Peisch confirmed that culvert inspection and replacement/compaction were planned prior to or concurrent with the paving work.

5. SELECTBOARD VACANCY APPOINTMENT

The process to fill the Selectboard vacancy, which resulted from a resignation, was held pursuant to state statute (24 V.S.A. § 963) which requires the board to appoint a replacement "forthwith". The Selectboard chose to hold a public forum to hear from the four interested candidates: Scott Gordon, Sarah Bouchard, Tom Steadman, and Scott Zeitter.

Sarah Bouchard

S. Peisch Question (Three Traits)

Collaborative, comfortable with public speaking, and possessing a practical business sense.

J. Szarejko Question (Keeping "in your lane")

She would first clarify everyone's roles, then delegate and defer, similar to triage and care coordination in her work as a primary care clinician.

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W. Crandall Question (Maintaining Meeting Schedule)

No issue; she is an accountable team member and takes the commitment seriously, citing her consistent attendance on the REC committee.

J. Dunham Question (Accepting Minority Vote)

Agreed, she has been in the minority before and would accept the decision and move on.

Tom Steadman

S. Peisch Question (Three Traits)

Dedicated (willing to commit necessary time), open and available (willing to give his public phone number), and honest.

J. Szarejko Question (Keeping "in your lane")

He would make his phone number available to field calls but would defer specific issues to the appropriate Selectboard liaison.

W. Crandall Question (Maintaining Meeting Schedule)

No issue; he has attended every meeting since the last election and would continue to participate fully.

J. Dunham Question (Accepting Minority Vote)

He would let the board know if he thought they were wrong, but he would accept the final vote outcome.

Scott Gordon

S. Peisch Question (Three Traits)

Integrity, the ability to work with others (gained from 28 years in the military), and attention to detail.

J. Szarejko Question (Keeping "in your lane")

He would not interfere with others' tasks ("stay in my lane") and would pass along constituent calls to the correct board contact.

W. Crandall Question (Maintaining Meeting Schedule)

No issue; he has missed very few DRB meetings in 13 years, with exceptions only for military obligations.

J. Dunham Question (Accepting Minority Vote)

It is part of civic duty to vote and move on without hard feelings.

Scott Zeitter

S. Peisch Question (Three Traits)

To be facilitative (supporting the work of elected members), strong engagement with the community, and an operational mindset.

J. Szarejko Question (Keeping "in your lane")

He views the board as a team and would respect individual talents and areas of focus, acknowledging the learning curve.

W. Crandall Question (Maintaining Meeting Schedule)

He would attend virtually every meeting in person, with very rare exceptions that would be communicated in advance.

J. Dunham Question (Accepting Minority Vote)

Since the position is temporary and unelected, he would accept the decision of the board majority.

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S. Peisch moved to find, pursuant to title 1 V.S.A. § 313(a), that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. W. Crandall seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

S. Peisch moved to enter executive session for the specific purpose of discussing personnel under Title 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). W. Crandall seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

S. Peisch moved to exit the executive session. J. Dunham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

W. Crandall moved to nominate Sarah Bouchard to fill the vacancy on the select board. S. Peisch seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

6. OUTSTANDING COMMITTEE & TOWN APPOINTMENTS

S. Peisch moved to make the following appointments and reappointments: Ashley Haefele (Monkton Delegate for Maple Broadband), Mark Boltz-Robinson (Alternate for Maple Broadband), Deb Gaynor (Green Up Coordinator), and Tim Hunt (Rec Committee). W. Crandall seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

7. APPROVE MINUTES

S. Peisch moved to accept the regular Selectboard minutes of March 10th, 2026 as written. J. Dunham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

8. REVIEW & APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

J. Szarejko moved to approve accounts payable check warrant report number 60312 in the amount of \$13,807.98. S. Peisch seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

J. Szarejko moved to approve accounts payable check warrant report number 60324 in the amount of \$50,083.09. S. Peisch seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

J. Szarejko moved to approve payroll check warrant report number 91288 in the amount of \$16,262.90. S. Peisch seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

9. REVIEW & APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

J. Szarejko reported that a number of overweight permits were approved, having been reviewed for compliance with town ordinance and state law (Title 23, Chapter 1392).

Permits approved since last selectboard meeting include:

ABF Freught, Amerigas, Barrett Trucking Co., BP Wastewater Services, BFT, CP Site Construction, Catamount North Sitework, Champlain Valley Plumbing & Heating, Conant Trucking, Cota Trucking, DeBisschop Excavating LLC., Dennis Casey, Don Weston Excavating, Elevation Excavation & Septic, Feed Commodities International, JP Carrara & Sons, K Pope & Sons, Keegan Mccullough, Lapete Construction, Livingston Farm Landscape, Master & Son Excavation, Monument Farms, Mountains Edge Excavation, Pike Industries, SD Ireland, Sidney Sumner, Vaillancourt Transport

10. 2030 REAPPRAISAL/APPRaisal UPDATE (LISA BURNS)

L. Burns (Appraisal Officer) informed the board that due to state legislation (Act 68 of 2023), the town will likely be required to conduct a reappraisal in 2030. Given the scarcity of appraisal companies, she requested authorization to begin preliminary discussions with the town's

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previous appraiser, NEMRC, to secure a booking slot for 2030 or 2031. The Board reached a consensus for L. Burns to proceed with these preliminary, non-committal discussions.

11. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

J. Szarejko provided an update on the Highway Department's activities: The new grader was delivered, followed by immediate setup that included installing a new stinger bit system, applying wax/ceramic coating, and receiving training from the John Deere dealer and United

Road maintenance involved continuous sanding and salting routes due to icy conditions, and extensive all-day work filling potholes with gravel on both dirt roads and streets like Silver Street

Crews also addressed frost heaves on Bennett Road, performed repairs on driveways on Covered Bridge Road, and fixed a drainage trench at the Coyle curb cut

Preparations for the 2026 season included taking the sander out of the F550, getting the roadside mower and chloride trailer ready for use, and organizing tires to switch trucks to summer configurations

The department also managed tasks like dealing with a fallen tree, clearing a hit deer from the road, repairing signage, and meeting with the treasurer, town administrator, and paving companies

A. Paving bids

The Board discussed the paving bids, noting that only one bid was within the voter-approved budget. The bid from Pike Industries covers 2.9 miles on Monkton Road, 1.6 miles on Silver Street, and 1.4 miles from Twin Ridge Road to Tyler Ridge Road, with the work required to be completed by July 1st.

S. Peisch moved to accept the bid from Pike Industries for paving. J. Dunham seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

B. VTrans Highway grant

The Board discussed the April 15 deadline for the VTrans Highway Grant. S. Wilbur confirmed the Structures Grant, which offers up to \$200,000 with a 20% match, is the "big grant" for paving structures on Tyler Ridge Road. The Board agreed to apply to reduce tax exposure.

S. Peisch moved to authorize Joe Szarejko to work with Stan Wilbur and Trevor Currier to complete the VTrans grant application and any other related highway grants. W. Crandall seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

12. AUDIT RFP

The Board discussed the two bids received for a town audit. T. Steadman questioned the value of a single-year audit for 2025. D. Gould criticized past delays in providing financial information to the town auditors. S. Peisch defended the one-year audit, noting the \$25,000 budget constraint and the necessity of a recent audit for favorable state financing.

13. PINEY WOODS ROAD

S. Peisch stated the Selectboard has the final decision-making authority for the road and proposed scheduling at least two public forums within the next two to three weeks to gather more public input.

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Joe Szarejko reported on a recent meeting with S. Peisch, FEMA and engineers, confirming that both rebuilding or closing the road would incur costs for the town due to environmental and infrastructure requirements (Clean Water Program, WISPR). FEMA has indicated that the road can remain "rustic" if rebuilt, with box culverts being the only current option for the river crossings.

Construction is limited to between July and October (due to bat habitats), and tree cutting must be completed by mid-April (due to fish spawning).

T. Steadman questioned if the Board had a conflict of interest, given that several members live near the road. He additionally questioned the choice to move forward with the town meeting vote, which was deemed non-binding. J. McNerney noted that proximity to the road is not an inherent conflict of interest and that state law dictates the advisory nature of the vote. C. Caldwell inquired about the estimated cost of alternative actions, such as converting the road to a path.

The Board reached a consensus to schedule a public forum.

14. GRADER FINANCING

S. Peisch presented financing options for the new \$311,930 grader, noting a state municipal loan fund offers a low interest rate (~2%) but is capped at \$150,000, while a loan from a bank like the National Bank of Middlebury would be around 4%.

S. Peisch moved to have the treasurer prepare an application from the Municipal Equipment Loan Fund and the National Bank of Middlebury for Selectboard review at the next Selectboard meeting on April 14th, 2026. W. Crandall seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

15. ACTION ITEMS

Stan Wilbur: Prepare applications for grader financing from the Vermont Municipal Equipment Loan Fund and the National Bank of Middlebury for review at the April 14 meeting.

Joe Szarejko: Work with Stan Wilbur and Trevor Carrier to complete the VTrans Highway Grant applications.

Sam Peisch:

- Finalize the meeting minutes.
- Schedule at least two public forums/listening sessions for Piney Woods Road.
- Follow up with Sharon regarding finalizing the Town Meeting minutes.
- Provide Sarah Bouchard with the Selectboard "handbook"

16. DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, April 14th, 2026 at 7:00 pm at Monkton Town Hall.

17. ADJOURNMENT

W. Crandall moved to adjourn. J. Szarejko seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Jones