

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING

Virtual meeting

DATE: Monday January 11, 2021

S. Pilcher called the meeting to order at 7:13 pm.

Members Present: Stephen Pilcher, Marikate Kelley, Bill Martin, Paul Low, John McNerney

Members Absent: none

Others Present: Betsy Brown (Recording Secretary)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

none

**REGULAR BUSINESS:**

APPROVE MINUTES

**M. Kelley moved to approve the minutes of December 28, 2020. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.**

The Town Meeting minutes from 2020 were discussed. They need to be checked for typos and name spelling. M. Kelley noted that she would take care of doing the editing.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

**M. Kelley moved to approve check warrant A/P #10111 in the amount of \$15,292.55. B. Martin seconded. All voted in favor.**

**B. Martin moved to approve check warrant P/R #10104 in the amount of \$10,082.90. P. Low seconded All voted in favor.**

**J. McNerney moved to approve check warrant A/P #01230 in the amount of \$20,233.63. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.**

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC.

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

RUBBISH PICKUP AT MONKTON RECYCLING

S. Pilcher noted that he emailed the trash hauler who stated that he would make sure that the person working at the trash pick up would wear a mask.

VOTE TO HOLD TOWN MEETING BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

S. Pilcher stated that the legislature has allowed municipalities to change Town Meeting to Australian Ballot just for this year due to COVID. An informational meeting will be held via ZOOM on the Saturday originally scheduled for Town Meeting. **J. McNerney made a motion that in accordance with Act 162, for the 2021 Town Meeting, all votes at Town Meeting will be by Australian Ballot on Tuesday March 2, 2021 with an informational meeting to be held Saturday Feb 27th, 2021 at 10AM via ZOOM. B. Martin seconded.** M. Kelley noted that the legislation mentions “information hearing” instead of “informational meeting”. VLCT stated to J. McNerney that the informational meeting/hearing can be legally done via ZOOM. M. Kelley stated that she will look at what VLCT put out for some clarity. **All voted in favor.**

BUDGET REVIEW / FINALIZE

S. Pilcher noted that he, the Treasurer and Asst Treasurer have put together the summary page. The Highway Department is starting the year with a 68K deficit, but this is because the Town has not been reimbursed from the Grant for the Bristol Road culvert, which is expected to come in in 2021. The highway department would be ahead if those finds had come in during 2020. MVFD has asked for an extra \$5,000.00 over last year’s numbers. Russell Memorial Library has asked for a little more money for payroll. The Recreation Committee has asked for another \$1500. ANAC has asked for \$15,000. M. Kelley asked if the budget includes the payments on the new building bond. S. Pilcher stated yes. Money was added into the Highway Budget for the culvert on Mountain Road (220K). This is an estimate, since the engineering design has not yet been completed. 403,231.20 is the amount of grants the highway dept should be getting in 2021.

The Board then went through the budget line by line.

The part time employee in the highway budget was discussed. This would be for the rare occasion where Matt DuPont does work on the smaller highway trucks. Very occasionally Matt may go to the Town Garage to do work using town equipment where he would be considered an employee. He may also do in some fill in plowing if needed. J. McNerney is still in discussion with PACIF @ VLCT regarding employee vs. contractor. It was noted that maybe there should be a

written agreement between the parties. At the end of the review the estimated rate was projected as \$0.4451. **B. Martin made a motion to approve the budget. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.**

#### SELECTBOARD REPORT DRAFT

S. Pilcher shared the draft Selectboard Report. The Selectboard gave their thumbs up to the draft report.

#### TOWN MEETING WARNING DRAFT

M. Kelley shared some information from VLCT. They noted that social service requests can be voted on individually or as a block via Australian Ballot. The draft warning shows the social service requests as a separate article. Consensus was that the social services should be voted on as a block rather than individually, since that is almost always the way we end up voting it at Town Meeting. It was then discussed whether or not to vote on highway, fire, ANAC etc as a block or individually. J. McNerney noted that she feels they should be split, since they have been split at a number of the Town Meetings in the recent past. P. Low feels it has been more than 50% of the time. B. Martin noted he'd like to see them separately. P. Low noted he feels that blocking them might be a better way to go. If one gets voted down, it would have to go through the budget process again and have another vote which would cost more money and time for another vote. After hearing P. Low's argument, J. McNerney said he could go either way. M. Kelly noted that she leans toward a block. B. Martin said he was fine with either way. It was decided to warn them as a block.

#### HALLOCK LOT

S. Pilcher noted that he spoke with the landowner's representative who noted she is not interested in a tax sale or abatement and that the neighbor is not interested in buying the piece of land. She would be interested in the Town buying the land for her back taxes. S. Pilcher noted that he would check in with the lister regarding whether or not it is listed as a buildable lot. B. Martin commented that it is not buildable - all swamp. S. Pilcher noted that quit claim deed could be drawn up to take possession of that piece of land. J. McNerney is worried about setting a precedent. M. Kelley noted they'd be conveying it to the town in lieu of tax sale. M. Kelley asked about liability insurance for the town in owning a piece of swamp land like this. M. Kelley asked who would pay the attorney fees to get the quit claim drawn up and asked if a title search needs to be done? She wants to make sure the town wouldn't be taking on any environmental exposures etc. S. Pilcher noted he'll keep digging in to this. S. Pilcher noted that she can always wait until next year to do a tax sale, though that would cost more than taking the

property via quit claim.

#### MUTUAL AID FOR PUBLIC WORKS

J. McNerney noted that Ben Hollwedel does not feel the need to make any formal agreement as they always work well together with the surrounding towns without a formal structure. M. Kelley asked if there is an agreement upon financial arrangement when we help another town or vice versa? S. Pilcher noted it's generally done gratis. J. McNerney noted that last year when other towns helped us with sanding or salting when our truck was down, they provided the operator and truck, but used our sand or salt.

#### NEW TOWN OFFICES AND LIBRARY STATUS

S. Pilcher noted that he has checked in to the status of the Russel Memorial Library property: Bob Brun is the only known heir of Dr. Russell. S. Pilcher is working with him on the old library sale.

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR STATUS RE: COVID-19

No update

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### OLD STAGE ROAD

Ben Hollwedel has some additional signage in mind for that road that he plans to install in the spring.

#### INFRINGEMENT OF ROW ON JOCKEY LANE

The mylar is at Town Hall but has not been recorded yet. The town lawyer will be drafting a cease and desist to the landowner involved in the encroachment.

#### SALVAGE YARDS IN MONKTON

No action taken

#### TH 36 ROAD RECLASSIFICATION

No action taken

#### TOWN CREDIT CARD AND POLICY

No action taken

#### CLOUD STORAGE AND POLICY

No action taken

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

B. Brown noted that MCS had their first COVID positive case last week. She said they had done a good job of responding with steps to contain and minimize the chance of spreading.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**PART TIME EMPLOYEE:**

J. McNerney noted that he just forwarded an email to the Select Board from VLCT/PACIF regarding part time town employee vs. vendor/contractor to Board members. They are recommending that since the proposed new part time employee will be both an employee and a vendor/contractor, we should have a contract making clear what operations are as an employee, and what are as a contractor. B. Martin noted that he would get some draft contracts for the Board to look at.

**DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

January 25th, 2021 immediately following the UPD hearing. The informational meeting is at 6:30 and the formal hearing at 7:00.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**B. Martin moved to adjourn. P. Low seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:23pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsy Brown  
Recording Secretary