

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING
AGENDA
Tuesday January 11, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Stephen Pilcher at 7:01pm.

Members in attendance: Stephen Pilcher (chair), Paul Low, Bill Martin, Marikate Kelley, John McNerney

Members absent: none

Others in attendance: Jessica Demeritt (recording secretary), Tasha Ball, Mark Rickner

ANNOUNCEMENTS

none

REGULAR BUSINESS:

APPROVE MINUTES

B. Martin moved to approve the minutes as written. Seconded by M. Kelley. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

M. Kelley moved to approve AP 11229 in the amount of \$8,349.73. B. Martin seconded. All voted in favor.

B. Martin moved to approve AP 11231 in the amount of \$117,761.75. Seconded by J. McNerney. There are some problems with the elevator. Naylor & Breen are not responsible for it at this time. **All voted in favor.**

B. Martin moved to approve AP 11230 in the amount of \$12,428.07. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.

M. Kelley moved to approve AP 11227 in the amount of \$42,579.98 with the corrected AP number. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.

M. Kelley moved to approve PR 20103 in the amount of \$12,950.41. Seconded by B. Martin. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC.

Saia LTL

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

NEW BUSINESS:

WILLOWELL CHILD CARE DISCUSSION – Tasha Ball

Willowell has been running outdoor education for 21 years. Wren's Nest Forest Preschool has been running for 10 years. It is currently in Bristol. It is a 4 star fully licensed program. T. Ball wondered if the Select Board would be willing to use some ARPA money to help locate the preschool permanently in Monkton. She thinks it would be attractive to young families. They would be looking to build a 2000 sq ft building as infrastructure. There is room for 15 children. The pricing for attending is similar to Quarry Hill. They accept subsidies from the state. They have very experienced teachers including some with Masters. S. Pilcher asked what they needed right now? How much money are they asking for? What are the next steps? T. Ball said permitting is the next step. She does not know how much money it would take at this time. She will be looking for grants and a capital campaign. J. McNerney thinks there is a lot of interest in Monkton for a pre-k program. He thinks it is hard to comment without having a hard number for money needed. He thinks it might be important to determine who else is interested in starting preK programs in Monkton as there had been a recent discussion on the Monkton Community Facebook page.

M. Kelley asked where the program has been located in the past. T. Ball said It was at the Common Ground Center in Starksboro, it went to Treleven Farm in New Haven. Covid caused a move Bristol at Wild Woods Farm. M. Kelley asked how many Monkton residents are currently involved? T. Ball replied none. There is a possibility to expand the program to 17 children per day. J. McNerney asked if there are easements for a building at Willowell? T. Ball says there is Monkton approval for a building. There were issues in the past with a really large building proposal, and that was resolved. P. Low asked if there is a way to support lower income families. T. Ball said currently there are three children attending at almost no cost, and the state pays for the first 10 hours a week for all families. P. Low would like to see room for Monkton students if the town contributes ARPA funds. S. Pilcher thinks the Select Board is interested in trying to find child care options. T. Ball would like the program in Monkton by fall of 2024.

ARPA FUNDS STATUS

Mark Rickner of Bristol Rescue was asked to answer some questions about the Bristol Rescue request for ARPA funds. S. Pilcher asked how the funds requests were determined? M. Rickner replied that the total ask amount is divided by 6 and Bristol is asked to pay double the amount that Monkton, New Haven, Lincoln, and Starksboro are asked to pay. S Pilcher asked if ambulance replacements are going to be allowed by ARPA? M. Rickner thinks there is a grey area that will create a lot of allowances. He is requesting detail from others that may know. Vergennes EMS is out of service once or twice a week. Bristol has not been out of service for three years. \$10 per person per year is one calculation for funds for EMS. A new ambulance is already on the way. It will be financed unless ARPA funds become available. M. Kelley asked about Bristol Rescue coverage in the five town area. M. Rickner said Bristol Rescue covers most of Monkton, all of

Bristol, Lincoln, most of Starksboro, some of New Haven. Charlotte is pulling support for Monkton. EMS does mutual aid so Bristol Rescue goes to Middlebury and Vergennes, too. M. Kelley asked if there were about 790 calls in 2021, how many in Monkton? M. Rickner replied 38 calls for transports or medically determined not needing transports. The number 38 does not fully capture other calls that may have been made to Monkton. M. Kelley said she appreciates the work of EMS.

M. Kelley asked S. Pilcher to highlight the childcare issue.

J. McNerney said it would be helpful for those requesting funds to provide documentation from a reliable source that the request is eligible for ARPA funding. He would like to avoid giving funds that end up being not approved.

M. Rickner said there are old state-funded plans for a bike path from Rotax Road to the old rec park and offered to find them in the DRB files.

S. Pilcher will send out his request again for people to champion causes for the ARPA funds

REVIEW OF UNIFIED PLANNING DOCUMENT AND SCHEDULE HEARING

S. Pilcher asked if the Select Board wants to get the modified UPD to a town vote by Town Meeting? If so, the edits need to be examined tonight. M. Kelley asked if these will be looked at again next year? She doesn't want to rush through tonight. S. Pilcher observed there seems to be a two year cycle. J. McNerney is concerned about protecting forest blocks and Act 171, particularly in light of proposed reduced restrictions in the Ridgeline District. He also does not want to rush. S. Pilcher is interested in simplifying open land and open spaces. J. McNerney would like to see wording to protect wildlife corridors. S. Pilcher suggested tabling this for now. He will check with the Monkton Planning Commission. B. Martin will be following up on some related issues in Hinesburg. J. McNerney is tasked with chasing down the details of what Act 171 requires. The plan is to get it before the voters in August or November 2022.

2022 BUDGET

S. Pilcher said there was nearly \$172,000 left over in the general fund from 2021. The highway budget had a huge surplus due to a budgeting error and money that did not get spent. M. Kelley thinks a fair amount is due to employee hiring timing. The general fund brought in more funds than budgeted. A \$.01 increase on the municipal tax rate equates to an increase in town budget of \$25,000.

At present the municipal tax rate looks to be \$.40. Probably another 2 or 3 cents will be added on as budget items are finalized.

The used truck for the road foreman (to avoid paying mileage) barely runs at all. A one ton truck with a plow and sander would be \$44,500. It looks like the only loan the town is paying on is the Mack dump truck. Interest rates right now are pretty good. The capital equipment fund could pay down the cost of a new truck in part. It needs to be an article at town meeting. The budget will need to be finalized next meeting.

P. Low stated that the Russell Memorial Library budget will be much different.

TOWN MEETING WARNING

S, Pilcher observed that the state approved legislation allowing everything to be voted by Australian ballot again in 2022. The select board agreed that due to public health concerns, there will be an online/remote informational meeting on 2/26/22 and everything will be voted by Australian ballot on 3/1/22, B. Martin wondered how moderating might work? S. Pilcher reminded that it will be an informational meeting, rather than a formal Town Meeting. S. Pilcher asked 1) Do you want to vote social services as a block? The answer was yes. 2) Do you want to vote article 6 as a block (general fund, Historical Society, ANAC, Fire Department, Russel Memorial Library? The answer is yes.

OLD RUSSELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY BUILDING

S. Pilcher said the RML building reverts to the Russell family heir if not used as a library. The heir does not want to be involved in the sale of the building. S. Pilcher said Jim Carroll said the town needs a quit claim deed from the heir, and an affidavit, and a quiet title. M. Kelley said she is in favor of that. S. Pilcher said the town once offered \$25,000 to the heir for the building. J. McNerney noted that that offer was turned down. and M. Kelley said that never came before the Select Board. The board agreed to authorize P. Low to winterize both the old RML and the old town hall.

OLD BUSINESS:

SALVAGE YARDS IN MONKTON

S. Pilcher said he would take the issue to the zoning administrator. The budget may need a line item to allocate funds for a lawyer and environmental court. If enforced by the State it takes the form of a lien on the property.

CLOUD STORAGE AND POLICY

Google Drive is working well for S. Pilcher. He worked hard to set it up for another group. The DRB is making limited use of it.

SIGN

B. Martin said the design has still not been submitted and will follow up.

OTHER BUSINESS:

B. Martin reported that there have been 4 or 5 issues for an animal control officer. There is an ongoing issue with one animal that may result in fines based on Monkton's ordinance. B. Martin is taking responsibility for this role at this time.

DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 7pm.

B. Martin moved to adjourn at 9:19pm. All voted in favor.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Jessica Demeritt.