

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, June 10th, 2025  
DRAFT

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Jessica Demeritt at 7:00pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

Members in attendance: Jessica Demeritt (Chair), Walter Crandall (Vice-Chair), Joe Szarejko, Sam Peisch, John Dunham

Members absent: None

Others in attendance: Stan Wilbur (Town Administrator), Jaime Schulte (Acting Recording Secretary), Cindy Hill (New Haven Town Attorney), Tom Steadman, Ivor Hughes, Lisa Burns, Stephen Pilcher, John McNerney, Deb Gaynor, Nathan Palmer, Jane Palmer.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA**

Added an Action Item Roundup under Other Business.

**REGULAR BUSINESS**

APPROVE SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

MAY 27, 2025

**S. Peisch moved to approve the minutes of May 27th, 2025 as written. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.**

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

**J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Payroll Warrant #50602 in the amount of \$14,990.22. W. Crandall seconded. This is payroll for town employees. The vote passed 5-0-0.**

**W. Crandall moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #50528 in the amount of \$10,705.00. J. Szarejko seconded. Amounts include Pike Industries and Heffernan for gravel, etc. The vote passed 5-0-0.**

**J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #50604 in the amount of \$25,384.13. J. Dunham seconded. Amounts include summer chloride, EFTPS (payroll transfer), First National Bank of Middlebury for the F550 equipment repair. The vote passed 5-0-0.**

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### REVIEW OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

The following new permits were reviewed and approved by W. Crandall:

BROWNS CERTIFIED WELDING

CATAMOUNT NORTH SITEWORK

### FACILITY USE REQUESTS

The Russell Memorial Library requested the community room for a storyteller program, which fits into the schedule.

Another request was received in connection with the Monkton Day community event in August. Deb Gaynor, who is co-leading the Monkton Day, joined the Board to discuss insurance related to the event and the possibility of residents transporting individuals to/from events. The events are taking place on town property or at local farms/businesses (who carry their own insurance). There would need to be some carpooling from the Park & Ride, etc. D. Gaynor noted there is a goal of accessibility, so some volunteer drivers may well be needed. J. McNerney recommended it be clear that the town is not organizing rides and community members would do so on their own as they choose. It was also noted that the Monkton Community Coffee House is sponsoring the event, not the Town of Monkton.

### PUBLIC COMMENT (Guests)

Ivor Hughes updated the Board on the Planning Commission's recent activities. They are beginning the state-required 10-year questionnaire for the community about land uses, etc. They are also updating the Unified Planning Document for new housing requirements (Act 181) and also for forest blocks and connectors (Act 171). The bike/pedestrian study, recently completed, is also being reviewed.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER DUTIES

Jane Palmer joined the Board to discuss the role, which primarily involves dogs. Usually these are dogs running at large, not actual strays, so it is mostly about working with owners to get dogs registered and vaccinated, etc.

#### HOMEWARD BOUND CONTRACT

The contract involves a \$500 flat fee, which seems like a good deal for the town. The town has signed this arrangement before, to create a resource for handling stray animals. S. Pilcher asked if a stray needs to be registered before being picked up from Homeward Bound. Vaccinated yes, but not always registered.

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**W. Crandall moved to authorize the Chair to sign the annual Homeward Bound contract. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed (5-0-0).**

VGS – CINDY HILL

Cindy Hill and Ivor Hughes joined the Board to discuss the Vermont Gas System process. C. Hill noted that Hinesburg and Monkton may wish to join New Haven's filings in the case and should consult their attorneys about any concerns.

New Haven did not oppose the original Certificate of Public Good, but now a number of concerns have arisen with how the project was actually implemented. C. Hill has shared information with the Board, including how to subscribe to updates on the Public Utility Commission (PUC)'s open case.

At this time there has been a preliminary determination about the scope, which will be a broader inquiry than perhaps what VGS would have preferred.

Scheduling is the next step. That is a discovery process, on or about June 20th, to be followed by testimony in August and a hearing later in the year.

The Board had some questions for C. Hill, who also invited thoughts related to the upcoming discovery process. New Haven, for instance, has concerns about the swamp area. There has been discussion of inadequate ground compacting in town road rights of way.

J. Demeritt asked about the scheduling deadline of June 20th. The PUC hasn't set a date, but it will be coming quickly. C. Hill suggested asking our Road Foreman to see what questions/concerns he has. J. Szarejko said that the Monkton and New Haven Road Foremen have been in contact.

I. Hughes noted that there were reportedly faulty sleeve repairs on the pipe and he would like to know if VGS knows where the faults are and if any are located in Monkton. C. Hill also would like to know the locations of issues with trench breakers. Without those the pipe can become a drainage path. The breakers function like a weir to retain soil. I. Hughes also noted a development on Pond Rd. which involves directional drilling for wastewater underneath the gas pipeline. He believes VGS should be present when such work is done. The depth of pipes can change over time and tend to float up.

C. Hill noted that the issues of pipe depth and soil compaction reduce our confidence in the safety of the pipe. There was discussion of a mapping of the pipe depth throughout our towns.

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S. Pilcher suggested that C. Hill should ask for a set of as-built plans for the pipeline. Attendees suggested those may not exist, but it is worth asking.

J. Dunham asked I. Hughes about anodes that protect the pipeline. I. Hughes described their function and said they are supposed to be monitored. J. Dunham also asked about heavy farm equipment potentially sinking into the ground in a place where the pipe is not deep enough. It was discussed that heavy equipment coming in contact with pipes is a leading cause of incidents.

J. Palmer thanked C. Hill for attending. She noted that the pipeline is faulty and running at a lower pressure than intended, currently. She would like it to be considered as a damaged section that would not be pressured up in the future (or otherwise have expanded function). Possibly that could be a solution if the pipe cannot be confirmed to be safe and to match build specifications/depths.

J. Demeritt suggested a point-person from Monkton to work with the point-person from New Haven, etc. J. Dunham is interested and willing. The Board expressed appreciation for that and discussed holding a Special Meeting in the next few days on this topic.

S. Peisch asked C. Hill if she has everything she needs from the Monkton Select Board at this point. Yes, and she will be in contact with J. Dunham.

I. Hughes noted that there will be turnover in road crews in the coming decades, so it will be important to have clear markings of where the pipe is located throughout Monkton. S. Pilcher said the road crossings in Monkton are clearly marked and C. Hill added that they are not well marked in New Haven.

### CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR DUTIES

S. Pilcher joined the board to discuss a draft of duties created by S. Wilbur and what work he has done in the past. Duties for this role include tasks like supervising maintenance and upkeep of the four town-owned cemeteries (Boro, Smith, Barnumtown, and the Grange), helping families find the bounds of their plots in cemeteries, etc. S. Pilcher established a book of deeds, which will be added to the land records. Plots are \$450, although they are now only available in part of the Boro cemetery. S. Pilcher will continue to work with the Board on the description. There was a brief discussion of how a new cemetery might be established in Monkton (would need to find land). Most cemeteries in town are owned by associations or on private property and not owned by the town (such as the East Monkton, Ridge, and Horan cemeteries), at least until they run out of plots. J. McNerney noted that after some work in 1976 the Barnumtown cemetery's stones may not all be in the correct places. It should not be assumed that there are any remaining plots there. There was speculation that

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ground-penetrating radar might be able to help remap the cemetery. S. Pilcher to follow up on that possibility.

#### HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT AND FEMA UPDATE

J. Szarejko noted the road crew finished Old Stage Rd. the other day and will submit the related FEMA hours through S. Wilbur. They are clearing culverts on Mountain Rd., mostly clogged with silt and gravel. Yogi Alger has been working with the road crew on techniques to manage this. The crew got most of the roadside mowing done before Memorial Day. They are also continuing work on grading and chloride. They are working on remaining washouts/damage around town. There is ditching work coming on Monkton Rd. near Nichols Rd. The Road Foreman received a successful grant application for paving.

J. Dunham asked about driveway standards and having a level area before meeting the road. Older driveways that don't meet that standard are causing damage and increasing cost. Can the town do anything about that? J. McNerney suggested asking the Vermont League of Cities & Towns for options to manage runoff. J. Demeritt suggested that the Road Foreman may know of problematic areas around town and whether they are significant enough to be worth working with landowners to resolve. S. Peisch recommended asking Yogi to advise the Road Crew on ways to manage water coming into roads from driveways.

FEMA update: S. Wilbur said reimbursement can happen by-road. The entire agreement does not need to be completed. Money can flow as soon as each defined project segment is completed. There are some obligated funds at this point.

#### F550 LOAN

The voters approved \$114,801.00 of funds in March to buy an F550 truck in five annual principal installments. The truck is already ready for the town to pick up and the dealer is indicating that interest may be due. S. Pilcher asked what the interest rate would be on the note. 4.55% over 5 years or 4.14% for 3 years. J. Dunham would like to discuss 5 years vs. 3 years. The 5-year represents about a third of a penny (about \$15,000) less on the tax rate per year, but would cost about \$6,600 more in interest over the term.

**J. Dunham moved to approve the loan of \$114,801.00 for financing the highway truck authorized at the annual Town Meeting on March 1st, 2025 at an interest rate of 4.55% with five annual principal payments of \$22,960.20. W. Crandall seconded. All were in favor 5-0-0.**

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COALITION AGAINST BIGGER TRUCKS

W. Crandall wanted to discuss as a board whether to join this petition request. It was discussed that heavy trucks do damage to roads. S. Peisch asked if the Select Board has normally approved petition requests like this. S. Pilcher and J. McNerney said there have not been many in the past and the focus has been on whether the request is related to town business. Discussion focused on whether this petition would have any practical impact. J. Schulte noted that managing over weight permits carefully would likely have more impact.

No action will be taken on the request.

OVER WEIGHT ORDINANCE

The draft over weight ordinance was reviewed. Weights were added. The roads in town are listed at 24,000 and there is a section on mud season (special restrictions to 18,000 possible from November through April). The next step is a review of the ordinance by the sheriff's department, to make sure it is enforceable.

T. Steadman asked where the over weight permit fee goes. There was discussion that the fees are minimal, but penalties can be steep if you don't have a permit.

J. Demeritt did a timecheck and asked the board to prioritize the remainder of the agenda.

BC/BS AUTO PAY

S. Peisch is working on the question of auto-pay feasibility. The Treasurer will set up auto-pay if the Board directs him to. The first goal is to prevent a recurrence of the issue, which likely was a one-time problem. No action to be taken at this time.

HEALTH REIMBURSEMENT ACCOUNT

No issues with the HRAs - no further update needed.

MOWING UPDATE

S. Wilbur followed up with Rick Rockwell. Mowing is going better now with the improved weather.

WELCOME SIGNS

Postponed to a future meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENT SIGN

Postponed to a future meeting.

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### LIQUOR LICENSES

**J. Dunham moved to approve the Second Class License application #61484 for Yates Family Orchard, LLC. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.**

**J. Demeritt moved to approve the First Class Commercial Caterer license #61486 for Yates Family Orchard, LLC. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.**

**J. Dunham moved to approve the Request to Cater Permit #61606 for Bevo LLC (Stine Orchard) on June 14th. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.**

### TOWN WEBSITE UPDATE

S. Peisch has been working with Ian Schulze (webmaster) to improve how the website functions, making it more modern and accessible, new photos, etc. More to come on that.

### ASSISTANT TREASURER JOB DESCRIPTION

J. Demeritt followed up with the Treasurer about the hourly rate and proposed to adjust the description to remove the number of hours per week, but keep the hourly wage. The Board agreed. The next step is to make final adjustments and advertise it in the Independent. S. Wilbur noted that a salary range would need to be in the notice if the town has a certain number of employees.

### RULES OF PROCEDURES

Postponed to a future meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

### DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 24th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

### ACTION ITEM ROUNDUP

- 1) J. Demeritt will reach out to schedule a Special Meeting to work with J. Dunham related to Vermont Gas and working with New Haven and C. Hill.
- 2) J. Szarejko will ask our Road Foreman to speak with New Haven's Road Foreman.
- 3) J. Szarejko will contact VLCT about options for steep driveways.
- 4) J. Demeritt will work with S. Pilcher on the Cemetery Administrator job description.

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- 5) S. Wilbur to share the FEMA spreadsheet with the Board.
- 6) S. Wilbur to send the overweight ordinance to the sheriff.
- 7) The Board to all think about changes that would help the town website.
- 8) J. Demeritt to work with S. Wilbur on the Assistant Treasurer job description.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

PERSONNEL REVIEW

**J. Demeritt moved to find that premature public knowledge about a person or persons employed by the town would place both the person or persons and the town at a substantial disadvantage. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0.**

**J. Demeritt moved to enter Executive Session to discuss a person or persons employed by the town under the provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) of the Vermont statutes and invite Stan Wilbur to join the Board. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0. Entered Executive Session at 9:12pm.**

The public left the meeting and J. Schulte stepped out of the room.

**J. Demeritt moved to exit the Executive Session. J. Dunham seconded. The vote passed 5-0-0. Exited the Executive Session at 10:15pm.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**W. Crandall moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:16pm. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed, 5-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jaime Schulte