

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 24th, 2025

Final

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jessica Demeritt at 7:03pm.

ATTENDANCE

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

Members absent: John Dunham

Others in attendance: Stan Wilbur (Town Administrator), Shane Lawrence (Road Foreman), Jaime Schulte (Acting Recording Secretary), Debra Sprague, Lisa Burns, Stephen Pilcher, Tom Steadman, John McNerney, Ivor Hughes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None offered.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

No changes were made.

REGULAR BUSINESS

APPROVE SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 10, 2025

J. Szarejko moved to approve the minutes of June 10th, 2025 as written. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 4-0-0.

JUNE 13, 2025

S. Peisch moved to approve the minutes of June 13th, 2025 as written. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed 4-0-0.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

S. Peisch moved to approve Accounts Payable Payroll Warrant #50616 in the amount of \$14,604.40. J. Szarejko seconded. This is payroll for town employees. The vote passed 4-0-0.

J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #50611 in the amount of \$77,635.19. S. Peisch seconded. This is for the Heritage Ford purchase of the F550. The vote passed 4-0-0.

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J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #50618 in the amount of \$25,950.47. S. Peisch seconded. Amounts include Capital One, lawn care, Casellas, NEMRC, VLCT, etc. **The vote passed 4-0-0.**

REVIEW OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

The following new permit has been received, but not yet reviewed, by W. Crandall: MATT ATKINS PROPERTY SERVICES

FACILITY USE REQUESTS

W. Crandall has already received one request for an event in 2026. Interest in the community room continues to be strong.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Guests)

None offered.

NEW BUSINESS

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT AND FEMA UPDATE

S. Lawrence, Road Foreman, joined the board. Culverts and ditching work have taken place on Mountain Road along with more ditching on States Prison Hollow Rd. near Alderman's. Additional work is happening around town, including adding some recycled asphalt on Boro Hill. J. Demeritt asked if the earlier asphalt attempt on Boro Hill was unsuccessful. That was a different product and not successful, but this may work better. The excavator is doing work on Roscoe and preparing for culvert work. More ditching and tree work is coming on Rotax. There was a concern raised about stakes placed at the edge of Meader Rd making it difficult for larger vehicles to get through. S. Pilcher and J. McNerney noted that even as a Class 4 road the town maintains a 50' right of way. There was a brief discussion of the town Right of Way policy, which is currently with the Town Attorney.

The road crew has been considering approaches to the culvert on Tyler Bridge Rd. Reinforcing it with concrete may be helpful.

A quote for the paving on Monkton Rd. is coming in by next week from Pike's. There would be some work done at the corner with Nichols road to raise it a foot and improve the slope and how the roads meet. Work would happen over two seasons to allow time for changes to the road to settle. Paving may also occur this year on the Ridge.

Some July 2024 storm road repairs are eligible for FEMA help. We have spent about \$180,000 already, for work on Jockey Lane, Old Stage, and Davis. There is approximately \$30,000 still to be completed on those roads, for a total of some \$210,000. FEMA will pay 75% of these amounts.

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The bulk of remaining work to consider from July 2024 relates to Piney Woods Rd. and the estimate from FEMA to repair the road to more robust specifications, that should be sufficient for future storms, which would total some \$646,900. The federal share of that would be 75%. Other non-federal funds could assist, but the share needed directly from the town could be \$80,000 or more. J. Demeritt asked about the state recommendation to use box culverts. FEMA did not estimate a total with box culverts. One existing culvert was not considered damaged, but might not be adequate for the flow (it washed out in the July storm). The estimate would be higher if using box culverts in each of the three locations.

There was discussion of how to obtain reimbursement for the work already completed and to clarify estimates.

DRIVEWAY WATER RUNOFF UPDATE

J. Szarejko spoke with an attorney with the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) who had helpful information and state statute guidance about future driveways and approving curb cuts, but did not have guidance for how to address existing driveways. J. Demeritt noted that repeated road repairs cost the town money. It may be worth estimating the cost of the most problematic repeat locations in town, to see if it would save money to proactively address the issues at town expense (with landowner agreement) to save money in the longer term in the highway budget. There was general agreement that these estimates would be helpful.

HIGHWAY OVERWEIGHT ORDINANCE

The Town Administrator heard that the Sheriff's office has no concerns about the draft ordinance, but they did not comment on the legality of it. There was the discussion of whether to send it to the Town Attorney to review that aspect. The Town Administrator will send it to the Town Attorney for review.

S. Lawrence recommended not approving overweight permits for 80,000lbs when a lower amount was requested by the applicant. There was discussion of whether to approve what was requested vs. the state limit of 80k.

T. Steadman commented that applicants will only operate up to their legal maximum gross vehicle weight, so approving a permit for 80k might not make a difference. Only a tractor trailer could likely reach 80k on our roads.

S. Lawrence and W. Crandall will discuss next steps and may both review overweight permit requests.

MOWING UPDATE

S. Wilbur worked with the mowing contractor. The cemetery area to mow behind the Grange has been clarified.

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There was a concern from a resident about flags being placed in the wrong spots in the cemetery. The mowing contractor did not move them. The locations have been corrected to the best of the resident's knowledge.

CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR DUTIES

S. Pilcher has drafted a job description for the Cemetery Administrator. The Board discussed an appropriate annual stipend for the role. The next step is to advertise the position.

S. Peisch moved to establish the position of Cemetery Administrator with an annual stipend of \$500.00. W. Crandall seconded. The vote passed 4-0-0.

WELCOME SIGNS

Mary Morris raised a concern to the Board that the various Welcome to Monkton signs are in need of repair. S. Pilcher commented that there was also one near the Claflin farm, which is no longer there.

J. Szarejko would like to see the signs restored. S. Peisch is willing to help restore them. J. Demeritt and L. Burns mentioned that the scouts were involved in some of the signs in the past and might be able to help. There was discussion of sign locations and potential hazards involved in repairing them close to roads.

SELECTBOARD RULES AND PROCEDURES

The Board reviewed the latest draft of the Selectboard Rules and Procedures, for which comments from individual Board members were assembled into the document by S. Wilbur. J. Demeritt will update the document based on the discussion.

ACTION ITEM ROUNDUP

- 1) S. Wilbur to email about obtaining money for the obligated roads (FEMA).
- 2) S. Wilbur to send the Highway Overweight Ordinance to the Town Attorney for review.
- 3) S. Wilbur to advertise the Cemetery Administrator position.
- 4) S. Peisch and J. Szarejko to look into next steps for repair of the Welcome to Monkton signs.
- 5) S. Wilbur to send the agenda list to the Board on Thursdays, to invite additional items.
- 6) J. Demeritt to revise the Selectboard Rules & Procedures for the next meeting.
- 7) S. Wilbur to add a link to the Selectboard packet on the agenda going forward. S. Pilcher to work with S. Wilbur on this. There would need to be care taken not to include confidential information in a packet or undue personal information, but this would have benefit to the public.

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OLD BUSINESS

VGS CASE UPDATE

J. Dunham has heard from Cindy Hill. Vermont Gas's lawyer contacted C. Hill after her meeting with the Monkton Selectboard. C. Hill advises that due to pending litigation this topic be discussed only in Executive Session. J. Demeritt stated that the Board will follow this legal advice going forward.

I. Hughes asked if there would be further discussion of the topic or updates outside of an Executive Session. No, although the Board is willing to invite him to discuss the topic in the Executive Session. I. Hughes feels that his contribution has been to provide the historical context for this Board. He is willing to participate however it would be helpful. The pipeline will be in the ground for a very long time and there needs to be continuity as Road Crews and Select Boards turn over.

J. Demeritt will ask J. Dunham to talk with I. Hughes. S. Pilcher mentioned that there are field notes from an engineer from Green Mountain Engineering, paid for by Monkton, who was onsite for the work done in Monkton.

OTHER BUSINESS

DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday, July 8th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

J. Demeritt commented that she ran for the Selectboard on the idea of meeting people where they are at, literally and otherwise. Physically where they are, but also what their biggest issues are. She talked with Bob Howard, who is a member of the Fire Department, and learned that there is one meeting per month which is just the department leadership. She would like to start connecting more with the fire department to hear what they have to say and what their concerns might be. The Board supported this concept. S. Peisch would like to go with J. Demeritt to an upcoming meeting.

S. Peisch asked if there are other aspects of town government to engage with. J. Demeritt thinks the Recycling Center is a good place to interact. Maybe a meeting at a church or the school (or a PTO meeting).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

PERSONNEL REVIEW

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J. Demeritt moved to find that premature general 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. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 4-0-0.

J. Demeritt moved to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel review and also to discuss potential litigation, the first matter being under the provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) of the Vermont statutes and the second being under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(E), and invite Stan Wilbur to join the Board. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 4-0-0. Entered Executive Session at 8:38pm.

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

S. Peisch moved to exit the Executive Session. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed 4-0-0. Exited the Executive Session at 9:06pm.

J. Demeritt moved to authorize J. Dunham to proceed with regard to the pending VT Gas/PUC litigation in the manner discussed in Executive Session. S. Peisch seconded. The vote passed 4-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT

S. Peisch moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:12pm. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed, 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jaime Schulte