

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 22nd, 2025

Final

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Jessica Demeritt at 7:01pm.

ATTENDANCE

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

Members absent: John Dunham

Others in attendance: Stan Wilbur (Town Administrator), Jaime Schulte, Mickey Schwarz (Acting Recording Secretary), Shane Lawrence (Highway Department), Mark Burns, Stephen Pilcher, Tom Steadman, Bill Joos (Town Treasurer), Randy Charboneau, Theresa Smith, Lisa Burns, Mark Burns, Debra Sprague, Carol Lea, and Kirk Lea.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None offered.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

The \$25,000 VTrans Grant-in-Aid Agreement for fiscal year 2026 was received for storm water mitigation.

Move 2025 Municipal Tax Rate and the Delinquent Tax Policy to the first order of New Business.

REGULAR BUSINESS

APPROVE SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

JULY 8, 2025

S. Peisch moved to approve the minutes of July 8th, 2025 as written. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed 4-0-0.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

S. Peisch moved to approve Payroll Check Warrant #50714 in the amount of \$15,105.32. J. Szarejko seconded. Amounts include health insurance, dental, supplies, etc.. **The vote passed 4-0-0.**

S. Peisch moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #50710 in the amount of \$50,901.67. J. Demeritt seconded. This is for the contract with the Sheriff Department, fuel, highway, and gravel. **The vote passed 4-0-0.**

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REVIEW OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

There were three new permits approved:

ALLARD LUMBER CO.

D + L PROPERTY SERVICES

SJW DOCKS LLC

FACILITY USE REQUESTS

No update/no action taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Guests)

None offered.

NEW BUSINESS

DELIQUENT TAX POLICY

J. Demeritt stated that the town lawyer got back to the Selectboard with the Delinquent Tax Policy which needed to be updated according to state statute. J. Demeritt requested B. Joos to review and stated that there are a few edits to the Tax Policy and for the town lawyer to review the edits. These edits do not change the policy significantly from the town lawyer prospective.

2025 MUNICIPAL TAX RATE

J. Demeritt stated that the Selectboard can approve the new tax rate increase of 0.3881 cents per one hundred. The tax rate is determined by the grand list which has been finalized. The budget (voter approved in March 2025) is divided by the grand list to get the municipal tax rate. S. Peisch stated that the previously voted in additional amount for the Fire Department is what makes the tax rate a penny different. **J. Demeritt moved to approve the 2025 Municipal Tax Rate. S. Peisch seconded. The motion passed 3-0-1.** W. Crandall abstained due to technical difficulties.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT AND FEMA UPDATE

S. Lawrence stated that the highway department has continued roadside mowing, ditching along Monkton Rd at the intersection of Nichols Rd in preparation for paving, ditching and stump removal on Rotax Rd. S. Lawrence contacted Lafayette's for the guard rail the Selectboard was inquiring about on Silver St and waiting to hear back on pricing from them. Met with Parent Construction twice about the Tyler Bridge Rd culvert to come up with a temporary fix to prepare for a more permanent solution (bridge or box culvert). Parent Construction recommended doing 5x8 concrete slabs along the edges with 1 inch steel plates in the middle and estimated \$46,000 for the work for the temporary fix. J. Demeritt asked S. Lawrence how much time that temporary fix would give the town and S. Lawrence responded that Parent Construction said it

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would give the town a couple of years to get a more permanent fix in place. S. Lawrence further stated that if the culvert was compromised even more, this fix would allow a car to drive over it without getting sucked in. There would be an assumed 2-day road closure to complete the temporary fix. J. Demeritt and S. Lawrence discussed available grants for the future permanent fix and S. Lawrence stated that there are grants available, but not for the full amount, the Structures Grant is \$200,000 and a TAP Grant which S. Wilbur stated that the town was turned down for. S. Lawrence stated that work could potentially start in August and recommended that work should take place as soon as possible, indicating \$26,000 in contracted services and would need to make up \$20,000 in a different line item. J. Demeritt asked if there was flexibility in the highway budget for the work. S. Lawrence stated that he received the Paving Bid back which came out to \$368,000 giving the highway department around \$50,000 of extra budget to play with (budget is \$425,000). There is also a \$200,000 grant with a \$50,000 obligation and as long as the obligation is filled the rest of the grant is good. S. Lawrence asked for approval from everyone on the board for a project of this scale. W. Crandall asked S. Lawrence the priority of projects, S. Lawrence stated that this culvert repair should take top priority. W. Crandall endorsed and supported S. Lawrence's recommendation on the culvert repair. J. Szarejko agreed that the town needs to repair the culvert. S. Lawrence reiterated that this will be a temporary fix and that discussion is needed to determine a long term solution. J. Demeritt mentioned that if the town receives a \$200,000 Structures Grant, the town would still need to find a further \$500,000 in grants needed to fund a long term solution. S. Lawrence and S. Wilbur stated that there is an estimate of \$780,000 for a bridge. S. Lawrence will look into a couple of other smaller potential grants, (Class D grant of \$80,000). J. Demeritt discussed that as the Selectboard develops the budget for next year the board will have to see what can be done to bridge the funding gap. From a safety standpoint and with available budget, J. Demeritt stated that this temporary fix is necessary for the Selectboard to approve and S. Peisch agreed. S. Lawrence will reach out to Parent Construction to let them know that the town wants to move forward with their proposal.

FEMA update - J. Demeritt stated during the FEMA meeting that large projects need to be approved by the Head of DHS and that those large projects are all getting hung up and not being approved very timely. There are 3 small projects (defined by less than \$55,000 from the federal government) and those monies are obligated and the town should be receiving around \$86,000 from federal share and another \$14,000 from the state to help pay for work already done. J. Demeritt stated that she did not know what would happen with the Piney Woods Rd and Old Stage Rd/Jockey Ln/Davis Rd projects.

OVERWEIGHT ORDINANCE

J. Demeritt stated that the town lawyer got back to Selectboard with corrections to be made. S. Wilbur sent it to the County Sheriff and the sheriff states that it

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looks good. S. Lawrence will look over ordinance first thing tomorrow, Wednesday, July 23rd, 2025. Once the review is done, the Selectboard can vote to approve the Ordinance, S. Wilbur would then advertise it in the paper and allow for public discourse. Upon that discourse, the Sheriff's Department would be able to put the scales back up.

OVERWEIGHT PERMIT FEE

J. Demeritt discussed raising permit fees from what they currently are, generally speaking statewide there are the same fees for overweights. She recently attended Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) on how to create and enforce an ordinance and the VLCT recommended not using fees to generate revenue, but rather the important thing of the ordinance is to enforce it. J. Demeritt commented that the town should stay with permit fees as they currently stand. S. Peisch asked if raising fees would be in conflict with some state statute. S. Peisch will inquire with the VLCT into potential statute issues. K. Lea asked what the Overweight Permit looks like and if all towns have the same requirements. W. Crandall confirmed that every town has the same requirements. W. Crandall further discussed that the owner of the fleet of trucks or even a single truck is supposed to register that vehicle once per year to the maximum amount of weight based on axles and material to be carried and that once the registration is approved by the town, the owner is supposed to carry a copy of said registration in the vehicle at all times. If the vehicle is pulled over and weighed and if shown to be over weight, the owner would be fined a sizable amount in monetary damage. There are state standards that all towns must abide by based on the number of axles which is retrievable from the state DOT website. W. Crandall discusses that the Permit is good for one calendar year and is his understanding that within that calendar year. T. Steadman stated that some town limits are different, Monkton's limit is 60,000lbs and some towns limit it to 55,000. S. Peisch stated that the information is on the town website under Town Information > Forms and Fees, under Municipal Access Weight towards the bottom.

SILVER STREET GUARD RAIL

J. Demeritt stated that this item was already discussed within the Highway Department Update. S. Lawrence is looking into a fix for the guard rail.

TOWN HIGHWAY 13 MORSE ROAD DISCONTINUATION

J. Demeritt stated that S. Wilbur is keeping the process in order, Abutters Letters have been sent out. Proceeding as planned.

MEADER ROAD – CLASS 4

J. Demeritt stated that a resident has concerns with how the road is being treated. J. Demeritt and T. Smith discussed fixing Meader Rd. People driving in the ditches are becoming washouts on the road itself, in the past year it has been

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more of an issue than in previous. Unknown drivers are driving in ditches causing road damage, mostly cars. T. Smith stated that a sign was put up last year saying the road has no outlet, but it does not appear to be helping (gps still saying Meader Rd connects). S. Lawrence was under the impression that logging trucks were contributing to the damage and that a concrete barrier was placed on the road back in 2019 or 2020. T. Smith asked if people are upset over the right of way for road ditches. S. Lawrence asked about rights of way in a previous Selectboard meeting. T. Smith was unsure of the cause of people driving into ditches. J. Demeritt asked T. Smith if they have a shared road agreement for Meader Rd. J. Demeritt stated that the town has a contract with the county sheriff department for being called to incidents of damage to Meader Rd. T. Smith stated that they do not want the road to be wider as that could encourage more traffic along the road.

WINDSHIELD DAMAGE CLAIM

J. Demeritt stated there was a \$627.19 claim for windshield damage to a car in the vicinity of roadside mowing. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns recommended sending a letter to the complainant and denying payment for windshield damage due to lack of negligence of the operator of the roadside mower. S. Lawrence stated that he did not hear about it until the day after it happened and that the risk was on the motorist for following too closely, behind the roadside mower when the windshield was hit. B. Joos stated that the car passed from the south just as the mower deck was lowered and that it was just bad luck that a rock was kicked up to damage the car's windshield. S. Peisch stated that it would set a bad precedent for paying for windshields when no negligence occurred. J. Demeritt stated that the town's insurance policy has a deductible of \$1,000 which would cover the claim but agreed with S. Peisch. J. Szarejko and W. Crandall also agreed with the VLCT's recommendation. J. Demeritt stated that the League will send a letter to the resident. **S. Peisch moved to accept the League of Cities and Towns recommendation to deny payment for the claim. J. Szarejko seconded. The motion passed 4-0-0.**

FEMA DR-4810-VT SUBGRANT AGREEMENT

J. Demeritt stated that there are 3 projects that FEMA has approved and has obligated for Higbee Rd, Boro Hill Rd/Mountain Rd, and Tyler Bridge Rd. The federal funds will amount to about \$86,000 for the 3 different projects (75%) and the state will pay 12.5% totalling \$14,000. The town will pay the remaining \$14,000 and the projects have already been completed. **S. Peisch moved to approve and authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the agreement. W. Crandall seconded. The motion passes 4-0-0.**

\$25,000 VTRANS GRANT-IN-AID AGREEMENT

No action taken.

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VERGENNES RESCUE CONTRACT

J. Demeritt stated that Vergennes' contract runs on a different fiscal year schedule than Monkton's and that their contract is coming up July 1st. Vergennes is increasing the contract rate from \$15 per residence to \$25 per residence (for roughly 220 residences), an increase of a few thousand dollars over last year. Additionally, Charlotte Rescue discontinued service to Monkton. The invoice date is July 1st, 2025 and will carry until June 30th, 2026. J. Demeritt stated that this will put the town out of budget slightly, but for as large of a budget the town has, this change is manageable. S. Peisch stated that the town should expect the costs to increase and since there is no viable alternative the Board should approve the increase. T. Steadman asks about the coverage area for Vergennes Rescue. S. Wilbur printed a coverage area map for T. Steadman. **S. Peisch moved to approve an increase in the Vergennes Rescue Contract agreement in the amount of \$5,500. W. Crandall seconded. The motion passed 4-0-0.**

CEMETERY ADMINISTRATOR APPOINTMENT

J. Demeritt nominated Lisa Burns for Cemetery Administrator for a term ending March 2026. S. Peisch seconded. The nomination is approved 4-0-0.

ASSISTANT TREASURER

J. Demeritt stated that the board has interviewed two candidates and a third candidate who will be interviewed soon for Assistant Treasurer. J. Demeritt requested J. Szarejko to meet with B. Joos to discuss a candidate to bring forward to the next Selectboard Meeting.

EMPLOYEE ANNUAL EVALUATIONS

J. Demeritt stated annual evaluations have been sent out and that one has been completed. An executive session will be held at the next Selectboard meeting to discuss evaluations. J. Szarejko spoke with S. Lawrence. The Road Foreman conducts employee evaluations for the highway department.

CONNECTING WITH THE LIBRARY TRUSTEES

J. Demeritt reached out to the Library to get on their agenda for July and they requested more time while they search for a new librarian. The Selectboard will connect with the Library Trustees in August.

CONNECTING WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

J. Demeritt called and emailed the fire department without response yet and will go there during one of their meetings to see if they have any interest in connecting.

ACTION ITEM ROUNDUP

- 1) S. Wilbur to complete his employee evaluation

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- 2) J. Szarejko to follow up with S. Lawrence in regards to the concerns over the pointy guard rail on Silver St

OLD BUSINESS

VGS CASE UPDATE

J. Demeritt stated that the only update at this time is that the schedule has been approved by the Public Utility Commission to begin August 1st, 2025. The Public Utility Commission believes the case will run into April or May of next year (2026).

OTHER BUSINESS

DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be August 12th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Not needed.

ADJOURNMENT

S. Peisch moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed, 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Mickey Schwarz