

MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 28th, 2025

Approved November 7th, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ATTENDANCE

Members in attendance: Jess Demeritt (chair), Sam Peisch (Secretary), Joe Szarejko (Member)

Absent: John Dunham, Walter Crandell

Others in attendance: Stan Wilbur, Shane Lawrence, Debra Sprague, Lisa Burns, Stephen Pilcher, Tom Steadman, Randy Charboneau, Jim Jewel, Tom Kenyon, Kevin Lambert, Adrienne Raphael, Ben Raphael, Kirk Lea

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None offered.

4. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

Addition: Coyle - curb cut (under highway)

Deletion: Abandoned boat, Park&Ride policy

5. LETTER OF SUPPORT MONKTON STORE

Adrienne and Ben Raphael are requesting a letter of support from the Selectboard for a Building Communities grant. They plan to open a coffee shop and general store at 216 Monkton Ridge. The grant will be submitted through the Addison County Economic Development Corporation. They have already received a historic preservation tax credit grant from the State of Vermont for facade updates. The general store will address a community need, and the coffee shop will serve as a community gathering space. They are surveying the community for input on desired items. They have also considered parking, with plans for additional space, and confirmed that no taxpayer monies will be used for the project.

*S. Peisch moved to authorize the Selectboard chair, J. Demeritt, to sign the letter of support for the Building Communities grant. J. Szarejko seconded. **The vote passed 3-0-0***

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kevin Lambert shared an update on grant applications for the hardcourt project. He thanked S. Wilbur for information on a grant, but noted it was unfortunately not aligned with the project. Two additional 2026 grants have not yet opened. He has been unsuccessful with three other grant attempts (Becca Balint's office congressional directive spending, AARP Community Challenge, a family foundation) and four local banks due to current humanitarian needs taking precedence over recreational projects. He forwarded a link for a Vermont

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Department of Buildings grant that is a good fit but requires a 50-75% match, which is currently unavailable. He also reached out to the Mount Abraham Unified School District superintendent to explore potential support. He concluded by highlighting the extensive efforts made to find alternative funding sources.

T. Kenyon will hold comment until the highway portion of the meeting.

7. APPROVE MINUTES

J. Demeritt shared that she received a message that Debra Sprague was in attendance on Zoom during the October 14th meeting and requested the minutes be amended to include Debra Sprague.

S. Peisch moved to approve the minutes of October 14th, 2025 as amended. J. Szarejko seconded. The vote passed 3-0-0.

8. REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Payroll Warrant #51020 in the amount of \$13,683.14. S. Peisch seconded. This is payroll for town employees. The vote passed 3-0-0.

J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51020 in the amount of \$32,784.89. S. Peisch seconded. This is for Addison County taxes, Blue Cross VT, payroll transfer, New England Forestry Foundation, Pete's Equipment Sales & Rental. The vote passed 3-0-0.

J. Szarejko moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51024 in the amount of \$20,849.00. S. Peisch seconded. This is for Addison County Home Health and Hospice, Addison County Parent Child Center, AgeWell, Counseling Service of Addison County, Atria Collective (formerly WomenSafe). The vote passed 3-0-0.

S. Peisch moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant #51023 in the amount of \$97,780.18. J. Szarejko seconded. This is for a bond bank payment. The vote passed 3-0-0.

9. REVIEW OVERWEIGHT PERMITS

None submitted

10. FACILITY USE REQUESTS

None submitted. J. Demeritt noted that Sharon Gomez has been overseeing facility use requests while W. Crandell is away.

11. HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

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S. Lawrence reported the completion of cutting and chipping on Nichols Rd, as well as extensive ditching, removing over 120 loads of material. A culvert was replaced on Nichols Rd. Some road signs were installed, others were repaired. A grader oil sample was sent out to NAPA, with results pending. Once ditching is complete, trucks will be winterized and plow-equipped. The State is responsible for line painting, S. Lawrence is awaiting a date for the Ridge line painting. Pike's was contacted regarding a bump in the fresh pavement and will send someone for repairs; the town has not yet paid the paving invoice. The town continues to utilize assistance from other towns for grading.

J. Demeritt inquired about the town's grader, and S. Lawrence confirmed it is in poor condition, making continued assistance from other towns preferable.

S. Lawrence responded to questions from T. Kenyon and J. Jewel, thanking them for their input.

S. Peisch asked a clarifying question about a shared line painting machine, and J. Szarejko inquired about a stump, both of which S. Lawrence addressed. He also responded to written questions from T. Kenyon in discussion with Selectboard and community members. Additional discussion occurred regarding winter plow scheduling, and S. Lawrence will seek further input from the road crew on potential schedule changes.

J. Szarejko reported there has been no response on the Coyle curb cut; there has also been no response on the Cousino property in the town right-of-way. Additionally there was discussion about the portion of Rotax Rd that abuts the McGuinness property.

Discussion occurred about potential remedies for the items in the right-of-way on the Cousino property. A fine was discussed.

*J. Demeritt moved to approve the Selectboard to work with the Addison County sheriff's department to pursue a fine for a resident on Hollow Rd for items in the right of way in the amount of \$1000. S. Peisch seconded. **The vote passed 3-0-0.***

12. VLTC PACIF GRANT - SAFETY EQUIPMENT

An application for a Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund grant has been completed. A list of items necessary for the town garage was provided by S. Lawrence for its completion. S. Lawrence thanked S. Wilbur for his assistance in completing the grant application. The grant offers 50% of the cost for pre-approved safety related items up to \$2,500.

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*S. Peisch moved to approve the 2025 PACIF Grant application in the amount of \$5,046.83 and to authorize the Selectboard chair, J. Demeritt, to sign. Seconded by J. Szarejko. **The vote passed 3-0-0.***

13. TOWN ANNOUNCEMENT SIGN

S. Peisch shared reflections on the sign presentation. Expressing personal opinion, he believes it's too expensive among other things. S. Peisch proposed repairing the existing sign in the town triangle. Discussion occurred.

14. TURNING POINT CENTER DONATION

The total amount for the Turning Point Center of Addison County donation was slightly higher than the amount voted and approved at the last meeting. The total donation was in the amount of \$864.75.

15. PACE & HAWLEY ENGAGEMENT LETTER

The item before the Selectboard this evening is whether the Town will engage Pace & Hawley to complete the 2024 financial report. The auditors have brought forward a recommendation that the Town consider contracting a new firm to prepare financial reports. J. Demeritt proposed that the Town move forward with Pace & Hawley for this year, and seek an alternative financial preparer next year.

R. Charboneau asked about permissions for access to some additional file locations for the auditors appointment.

S. Peisch shared his understanding regarding town reports vs audits, and his intention to advocate for an audit.

S. Pilcher - suggested that someone from the firm be invited to come and speak with the Selectboard. Additionally, he shared some concern about challenges that could come up with switching firms.

L. Burns offered some clarification around how the bidding process works for selecting a new financial firm and believed a public audit would cost closer to \$20k.

*J. Demeritt moved to approve Pace & Hawley services for the Town financial statements for 2024. S. Peisch seconded. **The vote passed 3-0-0.***

16. APPOINTMENT POLICY

Today S. Wilbur sent out an editable version of the appointment policy. All Selectboard members are requested to review the DRAFT and send any edits to S. Wilbur.

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17. 2026 BUDGETING UPDATE

S. Peisch and S. Wilbur are working on sending requests to committees and boards.

J. Demeritt shared an item of note regarding how towns can use a surplus to create and maintain an unassigned funds balance without voter approval. It's a flexible tool.

S. Peisch proposed exploring the creation of reserve funds for paving, capital equipment, and rainy day expenses.

S. Pilcher noted that a rainy day fund exists - it is titled the "tax stabilization fund."

J. Demeritt will be sitting down with Sharon Gomez and Bill Joos to talk about their pieces of the budget, respectively.

J. Demeritt suggested S. Peisch pursue his interest in making the town report more accessible. Among other things, perhaps it could include the annual budget timeline.

18. HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS

Conversations will occur offline.

19. OTHER BUSINESS

J. Szarejko will meet with Ted Palmer later this week regarding the McGuinness property.

T. Steadman raised a concern about how much time Selectboard is spending in executive sessions and how few outcomes are noted for that time in the recorded minutes. He would like more accountability and transparency.

20. ACTION ITEM ROUNDUP

- J. Szarejko will schedule the appointment with Munson for the grader
- J. Szarejko will contact the Sheriff's Department about ticketing the resident on Hollow Rd.
- All Selectboard members will review the Appointment Policy draft sent out earlier today and send any edits to S. Wilbur.
- J. Szarejko and S. Peisch will meet with the Road Crew regarding benefits, scheduling, winter work, and an emergency phone line.
- S. Peisch will amend the October 24th minutes to include Debra Sprague.
- S. Peisch will draft a proposal for refurbishing the town sign.
- S. Peisch will begin working on ideas to make the Town Report more accessible.

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- S. Wilbur will print out 17x11 copies of the health insurance matrix for S. Peisch and the Road Crew.
- S. Wilbur will submit the PACIF grant application.

21. DETERMINE TIME/DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Tuesday, November 11th at 7:00pm.

22. EXECUTIVE SESSION

*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 3-0-0.***

*J. Demeritt moved to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel relations provision of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) of the Vermont statutes. J. Szarejko seconded. **The vote passed 3-0-0.** S. Wilbur was invited to join the Selectboard for the Executive Session. Entered Executive Session at 9:16 pm.*

The public left the meeting and S. Jones, minutes recorder, stepped out of the room.

*J. Demeritt moved to exit the Executive Session. J. Szarejko seconded. **The vote passed 3-0-0.** Exited the Executive Session at 10:24pm.*

*J. Demeritt moved to have two members of the Selectboard meet with the Road Crew to discuss benefits, scheduling, and winter work. S. Peisch seconded. **The vote passed 3-0-0.***

23. ADJOURNMENT

*S. Peisch moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:28 pm. J. Szarejko seconded. **The vote passed 3-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Jones