



MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, July 23rd, 2026
DRAFT

Call to Order & Attendance

S. Peisch called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Selectboard members present: Sam Peisch, Sarah Bouchard, Joe Szarejko, Walter Crandall.

Selectboard members absent: John Dunham.

Also present: Stan Wilbur, Lisa Burns, Eugenie Doyle, Jamie Schulte, Don Mannigan, Robin Kuhns, Robin Hopps, Nathan Clark, Steve Parren, Lauren Parren, Tom Kenyon, Tom Steadman, Jackie Fefee, Carroll Maxwell, Deb Mager Rickner, David Bristol, Gail Van Steamburg, Bill Van Steamburg, Stephen Meader, Sarah Meader, Nina Badger, Lynn Caulfield, Christopher Kruckel, Don Gould, Julie Gould, Brandon Hanley, Abigail Hanley, Mark Rickner, Buzz Kuhns, Stacy Jones.

Additions or Deletions from Agenda

None.

Announcements

S. Peisch thanked the Monkton road crew and the Vergennes road crew for completing line painting at Town Hall through a mutual-aid arrangement at no cost to the town.

S. Peisch announced that the Highway Department had received two grant awards: a \$24,000 grant to be discussed later in the meeting regarding road selection, and an approximately \$50,000 safety grant for guardrail work near Silver Street. He thanked J. Szarejko, S. Wilbur, and T. Currier for their work on the grant applications.

Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

Review & Approve Meeting Minutes

S. Peisch moved to approve the Monkton Selectboard minutes from July 9 as submitted. S. Bouchard seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Review & Approve Overweight Permits

No new overweight permits were presented.

Review & Approve Facility Use Requests

W. Crandall reported that the previously discussed taekwondo request had been fit into the calendar for at least the first two months and was expected to begin on Wednesday evenings.



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Review & Approve Check Warrants

*S. Peisch moved to approve Payroll Check Warrant Report #60715 in the amount of \$16,823.10. S. Bouchard seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.***

*S. Peisch moved to approve Accounts Payable Check Warrant Report #60723 in the amount of \$220,775.98. W. Crandall seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.*** Larger items include sheriff patrol costs, calcium chloride for dust control, health insurance, and a payment on the town's new road grader.

In response to questions from community members, J. Szarejko confirmed the old grader was about 20 years old.

Citizens Petition Regarding Australian Ballot

The Board heard a presentation and extensive public discussion regarding a citizens petition to consider moving budget and public-question articles from town meeting to Australian ballot.

D. Gould reported that the petition organizers were revising the petition language based on guidance from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT). He said the organizers had gathered more than 100 signatures and intended to continue gathering signatures for submission by August 13, 2026.

S. Peisch presented information received from VLCT and the Vermont Secretary of State regarding petition requirements, the relevant statute, and the distinction between annual meetings, special meetings, and Australian ballot voting. He explained that a change to Australian ballot for budget and public-question articles would need to be approved either at an annual meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose.

S. Peisch stated that a special meeting would need to be warned within 60 days after receipt of a valid petition and that approximately 94 signatures, equal to five percent of Monkton voters, would be required. He stated that the school would likely be the preferred venue due to attendance and fire-safety considerations.

C. Kruckel described the petition as an effort to expand voting access for important town issues while preserving town meeting as a discussion forum and community tradition. Public discussion covered voter access, meeting capacity, absentee ballots, amendment logistics, civic education, venue options, and timing.

S. Peisch stated that he would follow up with VLCT about whether a petition could ask for a specific date and time.

No formal action was taken.



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Fire Department Fema Grant Support Request

D. Bristol appeared on behalf of the Monkton Volunteer Fire Department to discuss possible FEMA grant support for replacement trucks. Discussion focused on whether the town could support the application through the town's FEMA access and what reporting or administrative obligations that might create.

Board members requested additional information before making any commitment. S. Peisch said he would seek feedback from the town's FEMA contact and from K. Barbour. No formal action was taken.

Highway Department

Biweekly Update

J. Szarejko reported on grading, roadside mowing, continuing work on Hardscrabble Road, and efforts to get trucks legal and back into service.

Grant-in-aid road selection

S. Peisch recommended using the newly awarded \$24,000 grant-in-aid award for work already underway on Hardscrabble Road. J. Szarejko and W. Crandall expressed support.

After discussion, the Board reached consensus to use the funds for Hardscrabble Road rather than redirect them at this time to Bennett Road.

Bennett Road concern

C. Kruckel raised concerns about erosion, drainage, ditch maintenance, and culvert conditions near the bottom of Bennett Road at Hollow Road. J. Szarejko said he would reach out to T. Currier to make sure the culverts were clear and functioning properly, and S. Peisch offered to arrange a site meeting with the resident and road officials.

Piney Woods Road Update

S. Peisch reported that the town was waiting on a physical landowner signature needed before submitting the Piney Woods Road permit materials to the state. J. Szarejko added that additional coordination with FEMA representatives and DuBois & King was ongoing.

Fall grant planning

The Board discussed additional grant opportunities, including stormwater, Better Roads, structures, recreational-path, and possible salt-shed funding. Board members expressed support for bringing back more information and priorities at a future meeting.



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Vermont Council On Rural Development Nomination

W. Crandall moved to nominate Adrienne Raphael for the Vermont Council on Rural Development leadership program. S. Bouchard seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Current Budget Review

The Board reviewed questions raised by members of the public regarding the current budget worksheet, including whether certain line items and balances added correctly and how highway revenues and expenses should be interpreted at this point in the fiscal year. T. Steadman questioned several line items and asked how highway expenditures could exceed currently shown highway revenues; in response, S. Peisch and J. Schulte explained that some of the apparent discrepancy may be due to timing of tax collections and the fiscal cycle, but S. Peisch said he would follow up with Treasurer Kim Barbour for a more complete explanation. J. Schulte suggested that a visual presentation showing when revenue comes in over the course of the year could help, and L. Burns said a monthly cash flow statement would likely be the most useful way to present the information.

2027 Budget Process Discussion

S. Peisch opened a discussion on improving the FY2027 budget process by starting earlier, increasing transparency, and inviting committees and departments to present their requests publicly so the Board and community can better understand what funding is being requested and why. He said he would like the budget document to be clearer and more readable, including reducing redundant line items where possible and improving the worksheet format so it is easier for both Board members and the public to follow. S. Bouchard asked for an overview of the current process, and S. Peisch explained that committees and departments are typically sent prior-year actuals in a template that is returned and compiled into a draft budget; he said he was not criticizing that process, but wanted more public engagement and clearer understanding of the budget

Board members and attendees generally supported beginning the process earlier, likely in November, while also emphasizing that the structure of the budget document is as important as timing. R. Kuhns suggested a standard checklist for committee and department submissions; W. Crandall and J. Szarejko supported having committees and departments appear before the Board to explain both their requests and their financial position going into 2027; and J. Schulte and L. Burns emphasized the need for a more workable spreadsheet and clearer format. S. Bouchard also noted that one of the November Selectboard meetings falls on Thanksgiving and would need to be rescheduled.

Other Business

None offered.



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Executive Session

*S. Peisch moved to find that premature general public knowledge would cause a substantial disadvantage to the public body. S. Bouchard seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.***

*S. Peisch moved to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel under 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). W. Crandall seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.*** The Board entered executive session.

*S. Peisch moved to exit executive session. S. Bouchard seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.*** The Board exited executive session.

Upon return to open session, S. Peisch stated that he and J. Szarejko would meet with a member of the road crew.

Action Items

- S. Peisch will check with VLCT regarding petition language, including whether a petition may specify a particular date and time.
- S. Peisch will contact the town's FEMA contact regarding the Fire Department's FEMA-grant request and what town support would require.
- S. Peisch and J. Szarejko will follow up on the Bennett Road erosion and flooding concern.
- S. Bouchard will notify Adrienne Raphael of the town's nomination to the Vermont Council on Rural Development leadership program.
- S. Peisch will follow up with K. Barbour regarding a cash-flow statement and/or visual budget aid.
- S. Peisch will develop a draft budget checklist and begin work on a budget spreadsheet.
- J. Szarejko will prepare additional information on potential grants, related projects, and priorities for the next meeting.

Adjourn

*S. Bouchard moved to adjourn. W. Crandall seconded. **Motion carried.*** The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Jones