MONKTON SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 22nd, 2026
DRAFT

Call to Order & Attendance

S. Peisch called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

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

Also present: Renee McGuinness, John McNerney, Tom Steadman, Kim Barbour, Lisa Burns, Larry Pike, Susan Davis, Stan Wilbur, Stacy Jones.

Additions or Deletions from Agenda

J. Dunham requested adding discussion of Town Meeting accessibility after the pay-rate discussion. The Board agreed. Overweight permits, facility-use requests, and the Tyler Bridge Road update were removed from the agenda.

Announcements

S. Peisch announced that the Town received an $8,000 Vermont Veterans Fund award toward relocating the veteran monuments near the Grange to Town Hall. The award was less than the full amount requested. He thanked the project partners for their work on the design and application.

S. Peisch also announced transportation-planning funding through the Addison County Regional Planning Commission for analysis of the Town Triangle. The work will be included in a joint request for proposals with Bristol. He thanked those involved, including S. Wilbur, S. Bouchard and T. Steadman, who presented the request to the Transportation Advisory Committee. S. Bouchard later clarified that S. Wilbur prepared the TAC grant application and thanked him for his work.

Public Comment

R. McGuinness expressed concern that exclusion from Front Porch Forum limits access to community information and discussion. She raised concerns about accusatory statements and the tone of discussion surrounding the special town meeting, and said residents should be able to question spending without being characterized as not caring about the community. She also expressed opposition to proposed state constitutional amendments, Proposals 3 and 4, and encouraged voters to review additional information.

K. Barbour requested using ACH or electronic checks for eligible vendor invoices because postal delays have resulted in late notices despite checks being mailed. She proposed including electronic payments on warrants for Board approval before processing them the following day. The Board agreed by consensus, with prior approval, appropriate documentation, and consideration of transaction fees. K. Barbour will identify vendors offering suitable options and prepare the payments for approval through the warrant process.

J. McNerney relayed a complaint about vehicles parked partly in the traveled lane near Raven's Ridge. He discussed prior signs and enforcement efforts and requested Sheriff monitoring. The Board had no objection to residents placing courteous informational notes on vehicles, provided the notes do not appear to be official notices from the Town or Selectboard. R. McGuinness identified additional concerns about parking near a curve beyond existing signs. S. Peisch will contact the Sheriff regarding enforcement.

Review & Approve Meeting Minutes

W. Crandall moved to approve the meeting minutes for September 24 and October 8, 2026. S. Peisch seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Review & Approve Overweight Permits

No overweight permits were presented.

Review & Approve Facility Use Requests

No facility use requests were presented.

Review & Approve Check Warrants

W. Crandall moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant 61022 in the amount of $33,351.68. S. Peisch seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Notable expenses included aggregate, oil, elevator maintenance, tree service, and dairy-supply expenses.

W. Crandall moved to approve Payroll Warrant Report 61021 in the amount of $15,823.65. S. Peisch seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Review & Approve Pay Rates

S. Peisch introduced updates to the 2026 pay-rate schedule, including the previously approved increase for C. Putnam and updates to other rates. L. Burns noted that the cemetery-administrator stipend was missing. K. Barbour verified the amount and added the $500 annual stipend.

J. McNerney asked why the changes were being considered outside the customary annual adjustment period. S. Wilbur and K. Barbour explained that previously approved changes, including auditor rates, had not all been reflected on the schedule. The Board briefly recessed while the information was checked.

S. Peisch moved to approve the amended pay rates as provided by K. Barbour. J. Dunham seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Town Meeting Accessibility

J. Dunham proposed a more organized childcare arrangement so parents would not need to rotate responsibility for children and miss portions of Town Meeting. He suggested volunteer or paid providers who would not have to give up their own opportunity to vote.

J. McNerney described a prior free childcare effort with limited attendance and recommended attention to cost. Participants noted that approximately 10 to 12 children attended the recent special town meeting and that some parents reported being unable to attend because of childcare responsibilities. K. Barbour suggested outreach through school newsletters and the PTO. The Board also discussed a survey to gauge demand.

J. Dunham reported briefly speaking with the school principal, who requested a description of the proposed arrangement so liability questions could be considered. W. Crandall raised concerns about difficulty hearing proceedings from the overflow room. J. Dunham emphasized that childcare and overflow-room technology are separate issues and should be addressed separately. The Board discussed dedicated childcare space and improved audio for an overflow room.

S. Peisch proposed inviting residents to develop recommendations on participation barriers, including childcare, transportation, hot food or community fundraising, and information about requesting paper ballots. He suggested outreach to justices of the peace and residents representing different perspectives.

S. Bouchard asked about the proposed group's structure. The Board discussed an advisory ad hoc committee or workgroup, with recommendations returning to the Selectboard rather than independent decision-making authority. Members also discussed reviewing what works after Town Meeting. By consensus, the Board supported seeking expressions of interest. S. Peisch will post an invitation on the Town website and other community channels, provide email and telephone contact options, and contact justices of the peace. No formal committee appointments were made.

Discuss Proposed Old Airport Road Maintenance Agreement

W. Crandall and J. Szarejko recused themselves from Selectboard consideration of Old Airport Road matters. No decision on the proposed agreement was requested or made.

J. Dunham asked whether the detailed examples in the road-damage provision were necessary and requested clearer language distinguishing landowners required to sign from those required to contribute financially. S. Peisch explained that signatories would also assume obligations concerning road character, damage, and public access, even when they are not currently required to contribute to regular maintenance costs. The Board discussed stating those distinctions explicitly rather than relying on a footnote. S. Bouchard asked how proposed household costs compare with previous arrangements.

J. McNerney described the prior 50-percent Town contribution as an interim arrangement while the effect of Town Forest access became clearer. Reporting his understanding of Town

Forest Committee discussion, he said maintenance cost sharing is a Selectboard responsibility as a landowner rather than a Committee decision. He emphasized defining who authorizes work before the Town is expected to pay a share. He also expressed concern about using the Town Forest management fund for road maintenance rather than forest-management purposes.

S. Davis stated that two prior proposed agreements should be distinguished. She raised concerns about increased road use, landowner obligations, liability, deeded access rights, and the dedication process. She requested a written Town Attorney opinion explaining why dedication is necessary and how existing deeds affect the process. She also discussed confusion caused by differing use of the terms resident, homeowner, and landowner.

S. Peisch will obtain legal guidance concerning the damage clause, liability, deed dedication, and participation and signature requirements. Discussion will continue after further information is obtained.

Review & Approve Town Share of Old Airport Road Maintenance Costs for 2025

Discussion was deferred to a future meeting because additional information was needed.

Highway Department

Biweekly Update

J. Szarejko reported completion of Hardscrabble Road work, including seeding and mulching. The crew continued grading, winter-sand hauling, and winter preparation. Trucks, plows, and sanders were reported ready for winter. Plywood had been added to the salt shed to increase usable storage.

Tree work on Monkton Road had been completed, and work near T. Steadman's property was planned for the following Monday. The crew spent two days on Piney Woods Road investigating ledge at the culvert site for DuBois & King. This was design-investigation work, not work reopening the road.

S. Davis thanked the Highway Department for the Hardscrabble Road improvements and care with property boundaries and sight lines. J. McNerney echoed her appreciation. S. Peisch thanked J. Szarejko and T. Currier for advance project letters and individual homeowner communication, including coordination concerning mailboxes.

Health Insurance Renewal

The Board discussed renewal of the current Blue Cross health-insurance plan for eligible full-time Highway Department employees. S. Peisch recommended maintaining coverage, citing employee experience and retention. J. Szarejko reported that crew members were satisfied with the plan.

By consensus, the Board agreed to renew the current plan.

Piney Woods Road

DuBois & King will analyze the test-pit and ledge information and develop a proposal for the second culvert site. The Board discussed the original FEMA-approved design, which funded one box culvert and retained the existing culvert at the other site, and the State's denial of the permit to retain that culvert. Additional investigation is needed to support a revised design and scope of work. The Town will continue providing progress updates.

Grant Discussion

RFP for VTRANS Pedestrian Grant

S. Bouchard reported awaiting a meeting with an Addison County Economic Development Corporation representative to explore funding sources for the required 20-percent local match. The Board discussed allowable in-kind contributions and the amount that may need to be included in the budget. Further discussion was deferred pending more information.

Review and Approve PACIF Safety Grant Application

The Board discussed requesting a school-zone sign package, cones, and replacement road-closure signs. Members discussed installing posts before freezing weather while waiting to display school-zone signs until the ordinance takes effect. They also discussed theft and vandalism of signs and traffic-control equipment and possible deterrents.

The Board confirmed consensus to pursue the school-zone sign package, cones, and road-closure signs. S. Peisch will obtain and circulate costs and coordinate completion and submission with S. Wilbur, J. Szarejko, and T. Currier.

Review and Approve Better Roads Application

J. Szarejko described the Boro Hill Road application, including photographs, slope information, ditching, gravel, and culvert replacement. He described a $20,000 request and a proposed $4,000 Town contribution. He also reported discussions with Lathrop about tree-removal work using a feller buncher, with costs affected by homeowner preferences for retaining firewood and handling chips.

S. Wilbur discussed the required attachments, maps, segment locations, and an estimate focused on priority work within the proposed budget rather than the whole road. Mapping assistance from M. Winslow may be sought if it can be obtained before the end-of-October deadline. J. Dunham identified a minor typo.

The Board indicated agreement to complete and submit the application. S. Peisch will correct the draft and coordinate the remaining work with J. Szarejko, S. Wilbur, and T. Currier.

Salt Shed Application

S. Peisch reported that the proposed prefabricated design could be eligible, subject to grant requirements. He identified a December 4 application deadline and explained that State guidance estimates three to four years for design, permitting, and construction—not necessarily three to four years before an award decision.

The Board discussed the difference between pursuing an 80-percent grant contribution and borrowing to build sooner without federal funding. Members noted that beginning construction before grant requirements are met could jeopardize reimbursement. They discussed current storage capacity, water intrusion, interim measures, equipment and culvert replacement needs, and the Town's overall financial priorities.

T. Steadman reported that another community's larger shed allowed summer purchase of its winter salt supply at a $2.50-per-ton saving. Members discussed comparing those potential savings with grant funding. J. Szarejko favored continuing with the grant given other major expenses. Other members expressed similar support.

The Board supported continued pursuit of the application without authorizing borrowing or construction. S. Peisch emphasized that an application does not mean the shed will be built the following year. Award timing and the full development schedule still require clarification.

Set First Cut Application Zoning Fee

The Board considered the Zoning Administrator's recommendation for a $200 First Cut application fee.

S. Peisch moved to set the First Cut application fee at $200. J. Dunham seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Other Business

No other business was presented

Action Items

S. Peisch:

- Contact the Sheriff about parking near Raven's Ridge.
- Publicize interest in a Town Meeting accessibility advisory group and contact justices of the peace.
- Ask the Town Attorney about Old Airport Road dedication, damage responsibility, liability, and signature requirements.
- Correct the Better Roads draft and coordinate submission of the PACIF and Better Roads applications with S. Wilbur, J. Szarejko, and T. Currier.

J. Szarejko:

- Follow up with T. Currier about paving sections for the next meeting and upcoming budget discussions.
- Follow up with Lathrop on proposed work and estimates.

S. Bouchard:

- Obtain additional information about pedestrian-grant matching funds and report back.

K. Barbour:

- Identify eligible vendors and implement electronic payments subject to prior warrant approval and documentation.

Adjourn

J. Dunham moved to adjourn. W. Crandall seconded. **Motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Jones