

**Town of Monkton  
Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting  
March 6, 2012**

The legal voters of the Town of Monkton met at the Monkton Central School at 10:00 AM on March 6, 2012.

Present: Selectboard Chair John Phillips, Selectboard Vice Chair Anne Layn, Selectboard Members Leland T. "Terry" Cunningham, Peter Norris, Sr., and Stephen Pilcher, Town and School Clerk Sharon Gomez, Town and School Treasurer Charles J. Roumas

Town and School Moderator Kenneth Wheeling called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

The Moderator requested to dispense with the reading of the Annual Town Meeting Warning in its entirety, with consideration to be given to each article individually, as has been customary. No objection was stated by any audience member. The Moderator then proceeded to Article 1.

**Article 1:** To elect all Town Officers by Australian ballot.

The Moderator reminded all that the polls were open until 7:00 PM today. The following were elected as Town Officers:

<b>Town Moderator – 1 Year Term:</b>	Kenneth E. Wheeling – 494 votes
<b>School Moderator – 1 Year Term:</b>	Kenneth E. Wheeling – 488 votes
<b>Town &amp; School Clerk – 1 Year Term:</b>	Sharon G. Gomez – 479 votes
<b>Town &amp; School Treasurer – 1 Year Term:</b>	Charles J. Roumas – 474 votes
<b>Selectboard – 3 Year Term:</b>	John McNerney – 274 votes
<b>Selectboard – 2 Year Term:</b>	John Phillips – 457 votes
<b>Auditor – 3 Year Term:</b>	Jane Huizenga – 483 votes
<b>Lister – 3 Year Term:</b>	Joseph Boisse – 449 votes
<b>Constable – 1 Year Term:</b>	Charles Huizenga, Sr. - 488 votes
<b>Delinquent Tax Collector – 1 Year Term:</b>	Roderick D. Burritt – 463 votes
<b>Planning Commission – 3 Year Term:</b>	Michael Bayer – 383 votes
<b>Planning Commission – 3 Year Term:</b>	Thea Gaudette – 344 votes
<b>Monkton Elementary School Board – 3 Years:</b>	Dawn Griswold – 454 votes
<b>Monkton Elementary School Board – 1 Year:</b>	Kristin Blanchette – 414 votes
<b>Monkton Elementary School Board – 1 Year:</b>	Marikate Kelley – 369 votes
<b>Mount Abraham UHS School Board – 3 Years:</b>	Shawna Sherwin – 419 votes
<b>Russell Memorial Library Trustee – 2 Year Term:</b>	Gretchen Beaupre – 399 votes

**Article 2:** To receive and act on the Report of the Auditors as submitted.

**John True moved to accept the Report of the Auditors as submitted. Paul Whalen seconded the motion.** The Moderator solicited discussion from the audience, though none was forthcoming. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 3:** To set the date for the payment of Real Estate Taxes to be paid to the Town Treasurer.

**Joe Boisse moved to establish a Real Estate Taxes payment due date/deadline of 5:00pm, Thursday, November, 15, 2012. Henry Boisse seconded the motion. The Moderator solicited discussion from the audience, though none was forthcoming. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 4:** Shall the Town empower the Selectboard to set the Tax Rate when the Grand List is finalized?

**Thea Gaudette moved to empower the Selectboard to set the Tax Rate, as noted above. Michael Bayer seconded the motion. The Moderator solicited discussion from the audience, though none was forthcoming. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**A motion to recess at 10:06 AM was made by H. Boisse. P. Whalen seconded the motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

K. Wheeling introduced Vermont House of Representatives members Michael Fisher and David Sharpe, who represent Monkton. D. Sharpe read a resolution presented in the General Assembly of the VT House recognizing the Town of Monkton on its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. D. Sharpe commented on the extraordinarily busy legislative session, with emphasis on Hurricane Irene-related activity. D. Sharpe spoke about education taxes and the tax rate calculation. D. Sharpe encouraged residents with questions or comments to contact him, preferably by email. M. Fisher appeared, and spoke about health care coverage and payment options. M. Fisher emphasized that policy initiatives contemplate the use of existing health insurance providers. M. Bayer asked M. Fisher about the proposed health insurance exchange. M. Fisher mentioned legislation involving small group coverage, and covered some of the policy details. D. Sharpe and M. Fisher were available now for questions in the school hallway. K. Wheeling mentioned the Doyle questionnaire, and its availability for citizens to complete. Pete Aube shared details about Monkton's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, and provided contact details. Kristin Farrell, who is a member of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee, reminded the audience to vote in the school hallway on the town flag submissions. Buzz Kuhns took photographs of the audience for use with the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration.

**P. Whalen moved to suspend the recess and return to the business of the Town Meeting at 10:18 AM. Janet Dermody seconded the motion. The motion was voted in affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 5:** Shall the Voters approve the following requests by various Social Service Agencies?

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| a) Addison County Community Action Group (Hope)   | \$ 1,250.00 |
| b) Addison County Diversion & Community Justice   | \$ 550.00   |
| c) Addison County Counseling Service, Inc.        | \$ 1,500.00 |
| d) Addison County Home, Health & Hospice, Inc.    | \$ 1,946.00 |
| e) Addison County Humane Society                  | \$ 150.00   |
| f) Addison County Parent/Child Center             | \$ 1,600.00 |
| g) Addison County Readers (Imag'nLibraryLiteracy) | \$ 450.00   |
| h) Addison County Transit Resources               | \$ 850.00   |
| i) Bristol Family Center                          | \$ 250.00   |

j) Bristol Recreation Department	\$ 1,500.00
k) Bristol Rescue Squad	\$ 3,700.00
l) Champlain Valley Agency on Aging	\$ 1,100.00
m) Elderly Services	\$ 800.00
n) Green Up Vermont	\$ 150.00
o) Northern VT Resource Cons & Development Council	\$ 100.00
p) Hospice Volunteer Services	\$ 275.00
q) John W. Graham Emergency Shelter	\$ 900.00
r) Lewis Creek Association	\$ 550.00
s) Otter Creek Natural Resources Conservation District	\$ 198.00
t) Retired & Senior Volunteer Program	\$ 285.00
u) Vergennes Rescue Squad	\$ 600.00
v) Vermont Adult Learning	\$ 700.00
w) Vermont Center for Independent Living	\$ 195.00
x) Women Safe (Women in Crisis)	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>
	\$20,599.00

K. Wheeling referred the audience to pages 114 and 116-117 of the Town's 2011 Annual Report (AR) for the agency listing and condensed information about the groups seeking funding.

**Bill Martin moved that the listed Social Service Agency requests be considered as a group, and that the question be considered. The motion was seconded by J. True. There was no discussion. The motion was voted in affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

Steve Parren advised of a typographical error with item l), which appeared in error as Central Vermont Agency on Aging. **S. Parren moved to amend the preceding motion involving the listed agencies by correcting the requesting agency in item l) to Champlain Valley Agency on Aging (as indicated on page 116 of the AR); Peter Closed seconded the motion. The motion was voted in affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

The Moderator solicited further discussion from the audience, though none was forthcoming. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 6:** Shall the Voters approve the following sums of money for the listed purposes?

a) Salaries and General Expenses	\$ 354,827.64
b) Highway Expenses	\$ 721,495.27
c) Monkton Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	\$ 55,000.00
d) Russell Memorial Library	\$ 18,953.00
e) Monkton Museum and Historical Society	\$ 900.00
f) Recreation Fund	<u>\$ 4,500.00</u>
	Total: \$1,155,675.91

The Moderator solicited interest in dividing the questions for individual consideration. **M. Bayer moved to divide the questions and consider each individually. H. Boisse seconded the motion. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

1. Item 6a) **J. Boisse moved to discuss Salaries and General Expenses in detail; Wendy Sue Harper seconded the motion.** M. Bayer asked specific questions about the numbers appearing in Property Maintenance & Upgrade and Cemetery Maintenance (AR – page 37), to which J. Phillips responded. J. Phillips explained that the town has taken over a new cemetery, and also confirmed that a bid process exists to determine which firm will maintain the cemetery. M. Bayer also inquired about a deficit indicated on page 37. C. Roumas responded to the inquiry. The Moderator asked if there were other questions or comments. There were none. **The A motion was made from the floor to vote on the proposed total of \$354,827.64. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**
2. Item 6b) **M. Bayer moved to discuss the question related to Highway Expenses. The motion was seconded by Alan Finkbeiner.** M. Bayer sought an explanation of the reduction in health care expense (AR – page 40). J. Phillips responded that new health insurance coverage was needed, following the cessation of business in Vermont by the prior health insurer available through the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. J. Phillips confirmed that the new plan contains a higher deductible. W. Harper asked about the Town's paving plan for 2012. In response, Wayne Preston, Road Commissioner, advised that no gravel roads will be paved this year. W. Preston also commented that the sand and salt budget was used, as normal. J. Dermody praised the work of the road crew, leading to a sustained round of applause. The Moderator asked if the audience had any other questions or comments. **With discussion concluded, the motion to approve \$721,495.27 in Highway Expenses was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**
3. Item 6c) **P. Whalen moved to discuss the question. H. Boisse seconded the motion.** There was no discussion. **A motion was made to vote on the proposed total of \$55,000.00. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**
4. Item 6d) **W. Harper moved to consider the question. The motion was seconded by Lauren Parren.** The Moderator asked if the audience wished to discuss any aspect of the question. There were no questions or comments. **A motion was made to vote on the proposed total of \$18,953.00. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**
5. Item 6e) **M. Bayer made a motion to consider the question. John Lind seconded the motion.** The Moderator inquired if any discussion would be forthcoming. There was no discussion. **A motion was made to vote on the proposed total of \$900.00. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator**
6. Item 6f) **H. Boisse moved to consider the question. The motion was seconded by David Williams.** There was no discussion. **A motion was made to vote on the proposed total of \$4,500.00. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 7:** Shall the voters of the Town of Monkton authorize the expenditure of up to \$225,000.00 to replace a culvert on the Monkton – Vergennes Road and to borrow up to \$225,000.00 less any grants from the State of Vermont, to pay for the project?

**H. Boisse moved to discuss the question. The motion was seconded by S. Parren. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.** A lengthy discussion followed. H. Boisse requested an explanation from W. Preston about the need for the culvert. W. Preston commented on the history of the culvert, and the technical requirements for its replacement. W. Preston mentioned the effort of J. Phillips to secure grant money. J. Phillips reported that a bid process has commenced, with the expectation of a lower bid (<\$225,000.00). As per J. Phillips, no exact figures are available now, but a wide range of quotes have been received already. J. Phillips confirmed that the town is responsible to match 10% of any grant received. J. Phillips asked if anyone had comments about closing the Monkton – Vergennes Road for approximately 6 days, or whether one-way traffic would be preferred. The Selectboard prefers to leave the road open, but wishes to receive public comment. Mary Gerdt asked a question about the dollar amount and the wording of the article. H. Boisse asked for a confirmation of how much expense Monkton taxpayers will have to assume. J. Phillips estimates \$25,000. Mike Hurlburt inquired if the Town's road crew has sufficient equipment and expertise to complete the project. W. Preston explained why that would not be possible. M. Bayer asked if the proposed culvert can withstand the weight of large trucks filled with gravel. W. Preston shared his opinion, but was unable to confirm the load rating of the proposed culvert. Charlie Huizenga, who owns property adjacent to the culvert, commented that the State of Vermont wishes to dam the brook while the culvert is being replaced. Peter Close asked about the "critter crossing," representatives for which have spoken with W. Preston. W. Preston advised that construction/timing coordination with the conservation crossing highly unlikely. John Zykowski asked if the grant has a deadline. J. Phillips expressed concern about a failure of the existing culvert. A. Finkbeiner asked if increased traffic through Monkton is expected if a new exit is built off I-89 in South Burlington. J. Phillips replied that hearings have been held, with more to follow. No specific details are available today, per J. Phillips. **J. Boisse moved to end discussion and consider the question. T. Gaudette seconded the motion. A motion was made to vote on the proposed total of up to \$225,000.00 to replace a culvert on the Monkton – Vergennes Road, as noted above. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 8:** Shall the voters instruct the Monkton Selectboard to urge the Vermont congressional delegation and the U.S. Congress to propose a U.S. Constitutional amendment which provides that money is not speech and that corporations, along with other entities, established by laws of any state, the United States, or any foreign state, are not persons under the U.S. Constitution; urge the General Assembly of the State of Vermont to pass a similar resolution; and send this resolution to Vermont State and Federal representatives within thirty days of passage?

**H. Boisse moved to consider the question. J. Dermody seconded the motion.** Roger Wallace commented on the motion, provided some historical perspective, and made a distinction between natural persons and corporations. W. Preston asked about the Selectboard's view, and how the motion might be translated in Montpelier. J. Phillips commented. M. Bayer commented on the Citizens United case, and made reference to future elections. M. Bayer urged approval of the motion. Debra Rickner asked for a definition of "other entities." K. Farrell commented on the legislative process. A. Finkbeiner asked if the motion was that individuals can make donations, and not corporations. R. Wallace responded, and explained that a revamped election process is a long term goal. **W. Harper moved to propose a 'friendly' amendment to strike "along with other entities" language from the article; seconded by Robin Hopps.** M. Bayer spoke about

non-profits, and the resulting need to retain the “other entities” language. Susan Desimone spoke of people as the voice, and not larger entities, such as corporations. M. Gerdt asked why article 8 could be changed, when article 7 could seemingly not be changed. The Moderator explained how Roberts’ Rules of Order applies. **J. Boisse moved to cease further discussion, by calling the question. Marilyn Cargill seconded the motion.** There was no dissent to calling the question. **The ‘Harper’ motion was voted in the negative and defeated by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.** J. Boisse commented on the language and intent of the article, which he favors. **H. Boisse moved to end discussion and consider the question. W. Preston seconded the motion, involving action by the Monkton Selectboard as detailed in Article 8. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 9:** Shall Monkton establish a town-wide PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) District and authorize the Selectboard to enter into an agreement with Efficiency Vermont to operate the PACE home energy improvements program for interested homeowners as provided by 24 V.S.A. Ch. 87 §3261 et seq.)?

**T. Gaudette moved to consider the question. The motion was seconded by S. Parren.** W. Harper mentioned the town’s Energy Committee, and identified its members. W. Harper explained how the PACE program is envisioned to work. The program can only occur in a PACE district, which must be realized by a town-wide vote. W. Harper provided details about available loans, which could include a 20 year payment schedule. Fred Rotax asked how the program would be funded. B. Martin explained that banks would finance the loans, with a guarantee from the State of Vermont. J. Phillips advised that final details are pending, and the article, if passed, only empowers the town to act. R. Wallace asked about the design of the program. M. Bayer inquired if local banks are required to be involved. (“No,” per W. Harper). C. Huizenga commented that a licensed contractor must provide a bid on individual homes. P. Whalen reread content of the motion, confirming the Selectboard’s role. M. Bayer asked if public input would be involved in the process. (“Yes,” per J. Phillips). A public meeting seeking comments would be scheduled. The Moderator asked if the audience wished to discuss the question further. There was no interest in more discussion. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 10:** Shall the Voters approve a sum not to exceed \$190,000 for the purchase of a new Tandem truck and plow setup?

**W. Harper made a motion to consider the question. P. Whalen seconded the motion.** M. Bayer asked for an explanation of the need for the new truck. Road Commissioner W. Preston referenced the 2012 Capital Equipment Replacement Plan (AR – page 44). W. Preston explained why the truck is needed, and mentioned dependability, enhanced capability, and a cleaner burning diesel engine. W. Preston urged passage of the article. There were no other comments or questions. **The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

**Article 11:** Shall the town authorize the relocation of the existing Town Hall, and the renovation/construction of a new town hall and library; and borrow, by issuance of bonds, a sum

not to exceed \$1,500,000.00 to be financed over a period not in excess of twenty (20) years for payment of all expenses related to or associated with its construction? **(For discussion only – TO BE VOTED ON BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT).**

A lengthy discussion followed. J. Dermody expressed concern that the article does not contain language referencing possible “grants from the State of Vermont.” R. Hopps, a member of the Building Committee, explained that was intentional, since no grant consideration can happen until after the article passes. Peter Norris, Sr., addressed the audience (as an individual and not in his capacity as a Selectboard member) and spoke against the relocation and renovation as presented, due to the projected costs. P. Norris suggested other less expensive alternatives to consider. J. Dermody spoke in favor of the relocation, and wants to ensure that grants are pursued aggressively. J. Dermody commented that home values have been maintained, for the most part, in Monkton, and the population is growing. J. Dermody does not believe the costs to be excessive over time. M. Bayer urged consideration of language that would explicitly include grant monies for the overall project. Marcel Cousino mentioned the building of a new town hall nearby for approximately \$500,000. M. Cousino wondered if the project as proposed is affordable at this time. J. Phillips explained the differences in the current project from that proposed 2 years earlier. J. Phillips mentioned the likely availability of grants, in kind contributions, and other donations. Liz Pecor asked if relocation costs are included (“Yes,” per J. Phillips). Barbara Deal spoke in favor of the project. Sue Many mentioned the long term impact of today’s choice, and expressed her faith in the Selectboard to get an affordable project completed. Rebecca Gould commented on the importance of the library. Pete Sutherland spoke in favor of the project, and mentioned the new building as a great site for public interaction. Nina Badger inquired about what the hours of operation might be. Library Trustee Kathy Malzac confirmed the library’s current hours, and the shortcomings of current building. K. Malzac believes that expanded hours will result if the project goes forward. John McNerney asked about financing, issuing a 20 year bond, and applying a hypothetical 4.0% interest rate. Town Treasurer C. Roumas shared hypothetical details: estimated annual payments would include \$75,000 in principal, and \$60,000 in interest. J. Boisse questioned how firm we can be with projected numbers, given how the Grand List applies annually. M. Gerdt asked for confirmation of Town Hall office hours – would they increase - if the project goes forward? Town Clerk S. Gomez advised that no determination has been made at this time. Anne Dendler asked what will happen with the current library and Town Hall. J. Phillips explained that future disposition has yet to be determined. J. Phillips mentioned a potential use of the library as a new post office. J. Boisse commented on the deed for the existing library building. Attorney Kevin Brennan responded that no use restriction exists in the deed, based upon his preliminary research. K. Wheeling commented on his understanding of the transaction, which occurred many years ago. W. Preston expressed reservations about moving the current post office, given the drive by the USPS to eliminate some rural post offices to save money. Delores Norris commented on the Grand List and how the town’s budget has not seemingly been impacted. J. Phillips referenced a 4 year history of tax rates, assisted by C. Roumas. Steve Pilcher commented on tax rates. M. Hurlburt asked a question about the Report of the Listers (AR – page 50). J. Boisse responded that several parcels in Monkton are unique, and have inconsistent tax rates applied. T. Cunningham (as an individual, not on behalf of the Selectboard, of which he is a member) spoke against the article, due to the expense and increased taxes that would result. T. Cunningham compared the projected Town Hall relocation and renovation expenses to the priority of contemplated repair and potential renovation expenses at Monkton Central School. D. Rickner expressed support for the building of the new Town Hall. Julia Bushey asked if fixed costs are being considered. Anne Layn mentioned

maintenance costs. Candace Pozella asked if total costs have been included (such as electricity, heat, well, etc...). ("Yes," per J. Phillips). L. Parren expressed support of the project.

J. Phillips explained why no article appears this year authorizing the Selectboard to borrow money from time to time... etc., as has been true in prior years: the authority to take such action during any given year is inherent in the job of the Select Board.

M. Gerdt commented that a map showing Cemetery Road is in error. There was no further discussion.

Bonnie Brennan expressed her appreciation of all townspeople who dedicate their time and energy to the many positions and departments that make the town function well though out the year.

**P. Aube moved to adjourn at 12:23 PM. The motion was seconded by J. Boisse. The motion was voted in the affirmative by voice vote, and so declared by the Moderator.**

Minutes submitted by  
Bill Joos