



Town of Montague
Department, Board, Committee, Commission
BUDGET NARRATIVE

FY 20

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Treasurer/Collector Submitted by: Eileen Seymour

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any substantial changes in your FY20 line item budget submission.

The only substantial changes in my budget this year are in the salary line and the tax title line item.

I am respectfully requesting an increase in the Steps on the wage scale for myself. When I was hired, I did not have municipal experience, but rather an extensive background in finance. Due to the lack of municipal experience, I was hired at a Grade G Step 1. I am currently an appointed official up until the next Town election in May of 2019 and I do not fall under any union contract or other guidelines.

I feel that I have earned an increase in salary over the last 2+ years and I hope that the Finance Committee and Selectboard would agree. The impact to my budget would be an additional \$4,498 for the fiscal year, and would move me from a G4 to a G7.

While I certainly have more to learn, I do feel that I have successfully learned the mechanics of my job as Treasurer/Collector as well as the dynamics of the municipal environment. Some of the accomplishments I am most proud of include the following:

1. Applied for and received a Community Compact IT Grant for \$34,945 for upgrading my tax software. This was my first ever grant application and I was very excited to be awarded this amount. The invitations to bid are currently out as of this writing and I await responses in order to move forward.
2. Successfully launched the Town employee credit card program which has been well received by employees so that they don't have to use their personal funds and get reimbursed.
3. Through due diligence and follow up from my office, this year was the first in more than 10 years that no taxpayers were put into tax title, meaning that anyone who was in danger of tax title paid before that happened. Also, many payment agreements in place have very consistent payments being made.
4. One notable collection is a personal property account that has been outstanding for the years 2016 and 2017. Personal property cannot be lienied in any way so collection can be very difficult and on this account may have resulted in having to take the party to court as the amount was over \$154,000. That amount is now down to about \$35,000 and is on track to be paid off in 3 months. There has been a lot of follow up and persistence needed for this collection.

I am eager to learn and take many classes both in the summer at UMASS for Treasurer/Collector's, but also I seek out any one off classes that may be offered by the State that would be applicable to not only my position but to my understanding of policy and procedure.

With this in mind, I appreciate your consideration and endorsement of this increase.

The other line item, which is my tax title account, has a decrease of \$4,000 in the FY20 budget request. After averaging the past two years, and looking at my PTD through 12/31/18, I feel a reduction is warranted at this time. This account has to be monitored every year based on volume, but I do feel I can safely reduce it for FY20.

ADDENDUM

Dear Finance Committee members,

I realized after listening to the committee meeting from 1/9/19 that I did not do a good job of explaining the “why” behind my request for a Step increase. This request was not an easy one for me to make as I don’t like to ask for anything for myself, but the reality is that I have to look out for myself.

When I was hired, I was hired in at Step 1 of my grade, which looking back has not been the case with other recent department head hiring’s. I understand I had no municipal experience, and that some did, but I did have 30 years of finance in my background. I take full responsibility for my lack of negotiating my salary but honestly I was very happy to get the job and didn’t want to jeopardize it.

Jump forward 2+ years and I feel I have a very good grasp on the job and this request is purely to try to bring me more in line with other department heads. I am in no way proposing that I should be at the top of any grade, I have to earn that over time and I am fully prepared to do that. I also in no way expect any kind of special treatment; this is just an attempt to bring me closer to my peers.

Full disclosure: I did go to Steve prior to this request; however he is concerned that it may set a precedent. He did tell me that he would support an increase for me, however, feels that the process could cause some problems down the road. I respect that opinion, however, I feel that if someone else feels this way, they also have every right to state their case and go through the same process.

I hope this explains better why I am requesting this Step increase. I will be at the meeting 1/16/19 but sometimes find it easier to explain in writing than in person. Again, I appreciate your consideration of this request.

2. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY19? What is the status of those expenditures/investments?

N/A

3. Did you receive funding for a discretionary account in FY19? What have you purchased to date, at what cost? Looking forward in FY19, what do you expect to purchase at what cost?

N/A

4. To-date in FY19, has your department experienced any notable successes, such as improving or providing new programs or services, or implementing new technologies? If so, please describe.

I anticipate new technology in the Tax Collector’s office by the end of FY19.

5. Are there challenges to your department’s ability to meet its goals and objectives that are due to its FY19 operating budget? If so, offer your recommendation(s) for improving the situation.

N/A