



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

FY 23

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: Treasurer/Tax Collector Submitted by: Eileen Seymour

1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any substantial changes in your FY23 line-item budget submission.

I have made the decision to remove the part-time clerk position from my office. This decision has not come lightly and has culminated over a period of about 18 months. The reason for the decrease is that some of our operations have been streamlined due to the new tax bill format, however, mostly it is because of the focus and commitment of my current staff and myself to keep things that need to be done current and prioritized. We have changed the timing of certain processes, i.e., the Assistant Treasurer now does turnovers from the tax collector to the treasurer more often (used to be once a month other than tax season) which has helped cut down on resolving any differences that arise. The full-time clerk has taken on the role of balancing the receivables to the accountant each month to ensure we catch any errors between the two offices in a timely manner. We have also seen a shift in traffic patterns since the pandemic as more people have become comfortable with using drop boxes, paying online, or mailing in their payments. Of course, those patterns could change but that is what we have seen even during fully open times. The main issue continues to be the amount of time spent on HR items which has increased significantly in the past year. I would respectfully recommend a stipend for the person doing that job, whether it is my office or another person (if they were not hired specifically for that position). It is not just a matter of just handing out a new hire kit. It is much more involved and should be dealt with in a professional manner as that is a new employee's first impression of the Town. It is not just new hires that take up time, but also retirees and the paperwork involved in transitioning them over to the retirement platform as well as open enrollment activities etc.

I cannot reiterate enough that I can only go on what has been the case over the last 18 months, and of course, things change quickly as we have experienced through the pandemic. Accordingly, I cannot guarantee that I won't come before the board asking for more hours in future budget cycles, however, what I know right now is that we have been through a full year tax cycle and managed with the staff we have. To be fair to the Town, I don't want to keep this position on the books with no intention of filling it for another fiscal year, so I will eliminate the position.

2. To this point in FY22, has your department experienced any notable successes, such as improving or providing new programs or services, or implementing new technologies? If so, please describe.

My department led the charge to get a payment drop box for the back of the building that has been successfully installed and is used on a regular basis. Most of the time it is used for my department, however, other documents have been put in it for other departments especially during the rise in COVID cases. We also started having two local businesses sell town barrel stickers as a convenience to taxpayers that could not get into the office or wanted to purchase them outside of our business hours. Previously they were only sold at Town Hall and are now sold at Scotty's and the Montague Village Store.

3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and objectives that are due to its FY22 operating budget? If so, offer your recommendation(s) for improving the situation.

The only challenge I may have would be in my supplies budget as I unexpectedly had to purchase a new printer for my office. This was unanticipated; however, this is the printer where all tax bills are printed so it was critical. Also, supply prices for toner and tax bill paper have increased more than I had anticipated. The other issue could be that we need to purchase a new fax machine. The machine we have was purchased in 2008 and the numbers are fading on the display and at times there are no numbers, so we don't know what we are dialing. I am looking at alternatives with our IT vendor to see if we have options with any of our current equipment in order to avoid spending money on a new machine.

- 4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY22? What is the status of those expenditures/investments? Does your department have any older special article appropriations that remain unspent?**

N/A