



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

FY 20

Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!

Department: 151 Legal Counsel Submitted by: Steven Ellis

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

The total budget for Legal Counsel remains the same as it was in FY19; however, there is substantial change within the individual lines underlying this budget. Specifically, the Town elected to consolidate its labor and general counsel services agreement under a single vendor - KP Law.

This shift, effective as of 7/1/18, reflects the Town Administrator's belief that the Town will receive equal or better quality of services in this arrangement, and realize substantial economic efficiencies by integrating labor related legal services under a single vendor that offers substantially lower rates (\$185/hour v \$220/hour) for those services.

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.

We continue to need comprehensive legal services to guide decisions and procedures, but overall have trimmed spending in comparison to two years ago. Staff has a clear understanding that counsel is accessed only following approval and is making good judgments as to when to request such support.

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.

KP Law is a comprehensive municipal law services provider and has proven to be very capable relative to meeting the goals of this budget. We continue to find there is a need for highly specialized consultation with other firms only in very specific instances. We are hopeful that we will be able to stay within FY19's budget during a contract renewal year. We are presently proportionally under-spent with bills in through November, but negotiations with 4 bargaining units begin in January 2019 and those demands will be significant.