

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

VIA ZOOM

Monday, March 24, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Matt Lord, and Chris Boutwell; Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz; Assistant Town Administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller; Parks and Recreation Director Jon Dobosz; Treasurer/Collector Eileen Seymour; and Airport Director Bryan Camden.

Selectboard Chair opens the meeting, including announcing that the meeting is being recorded and roll call taken

Approve Minutes: Selectboard Meeting March 10 and 17, 2025 if available

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Selectboard Minutes of March 10 and March 17, 2025 as presented.

Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Public Comment Period: Individuals will be limited to two (2) minutes each and the Selectboard will strictly adhere to time allotted for public comment

None

Jon Dobosz, Parks & Recreation Director

Request for Special Entertainment Permit for amplified music/announcements at Unity Park for Peter Cottontail's Eggstravaganza on April 19, 2025 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Special Entertainment Permit for amplified music/announcements at Unity Park for Peter Cottontail's Eggstravaganza on April 19, 2025 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Vote Recommendations for FY26 Budget

A. Schedules for Elected and Appointed Officials

1. Schedule I - Elected Officials

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend Schedule I - Elected Officials salaries as presented.

Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

2. Schedule II - Appointed Officials

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend Schedule II - Appointed Officials salaries as presented.

Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Abstain, Kuklewicz - Aye

B. FY26 Operating Budget

1. Town Operating Budget - \$12,747,055

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend the Town Operating Budget in the amount of \$12,747,055 with \$12,747,055 to be raised from Taxation. Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Abstain, Kuklewicz - Aye

2. Clean Water Facility Operating Budget - \$3,221,303

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend the Clean Water Facility Operating Budget of \$3,221,303, with \$406,188 to be raised from Taxation and \$2,815,115 to be raised from Sewer Revenues.

Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

3. Airport Operating Budget - \$4,25,732

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend an Airport Operating Budget of \$425,732, with \$23,372 to be raised from Town Sale of Real Estate; \$99,396 to be raised from Taxation; and \$302,964 to be raised from Airport Revenues. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

4. Colle Operating Budget - \$52,250

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend a Colle Operating Budget of \$52,250, said sum to be raised from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

5. Gill-Montague School District Assessment - \$12,663,178

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend a GMRSD Assessment of \$12,663,178, said sum to be raised from Taxation. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

6. Franklin County Tech School Assessment - \$841,660

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Boutwell makes the motion to recommend a FCTS Assessment of \$841,660, said sum to be raised from Taxation. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

C. Special Articles

1. Smith Vocational Tuition and Transportation - \$59,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend appropriating \$59,000 for Tuition and Transportation for a Montague resident attending Smith Vocational Technical High School, to be raised from Taxation. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

2. Transfer to Reserves - \$230,608

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend appropriating \$50,000 to the OPEB Trust Fund; \$38,718 to the GMRSD Stabilization Fund; \$131,890 to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund; and \$10,000 to the Henry Waidlich Conservation Trust Fund; said sum to be raised from Taxation. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

3. Library Accessibility Upgrades - \$10,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$10,000 for Library Accessibility and Upgrades, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

D. Capital Requests

1. Clean Water Facility Used Mini-Excavator - \$60,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$60,000 for the purchase of a Used Mini Excavator, to be raised from CWF retained earnings. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

2. Clean Water Facility Lake Pleasant & Emergency Generators - \$67,800

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$67,800 for the CWF Portable Emergency Generator and Lake Pleasant Station Generator, to be raised from CWF retained earnings. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

3. Clean Water Facility Thickened Sludge Pump Replacement - \$104,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$104,000 for the CWF Thickened Sludge Pump Replacement, to be raised from CWF retained earnings. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

4. Sewer Collection System Rehab Phase II - \$3,000,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$3,000,000 for the Phase 2 - Sewer Collection System Rehabilitation, to be raised from long-term debt. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

5. DPW 10-Wheel Dump Truck for \$365,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$365,000 to purchase and equip a 10-Wheel Dump Truck, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

6. DPW Dump Truck for \$325,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$325,000 to purchase and equip a Dump Truck, to be raised from Town Capital Stabilization Fund. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

7. DPW Camera Van - \$70,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$70,000 to purchase and equip a Camera Van, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

8. DPW Pickup - \$65,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$65,000 to purchase and equip a Pickup, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

9. Oakman Street Slope Stabilization - \$60,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$60,000 for the engineering and supplies needed for the Stabilization of the Oakman Street Slope, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

10. Alley and Non-Chapter 90 Pavings - \$30,000

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Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$30,000 for the Paving of Alleys and other non-chapter 90 eligible roadways, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

11. Meadow Road Guardrail - \$200,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$200,000 for the replacement of Guardrails on Meadow Road, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Nay, Kuklewicz - Aye

12. DPW Discretionary Account for \$36,470

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$36,470 for the DPW Discretionary Account, to be raised from Taxation. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

13. Millers Falls Library Storefront Renovation - \$39,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$39,000 for the renovation of the Millers Falls Library's storefront, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

14. Unity Park Playground Maintenance - \$125,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$125,000 for the replacement of the Ground Covering and Slide at Unity Park, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

15. Montague Center Complete Streets Design - \$91,200

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$91,200 for the Design Work for Complete Streets approved project at Montague Center, to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

16. FRTA Bus Stop Improvements- \$60,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$60,000 for improvements to the FRTA Bus Stop at Industrial Boulevard and Millers Falls Road, to be raised from Cannabis Impact Fee Stabilization. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

17. Keith Footbridge Abatement - \$67,900

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend \$67,900 for the abating and removing utilities from the Keith Footbridge over the canal, to be funded by the Canal District Stabilization Fund. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

E. Other

1. Increase Limit of Airport Fuel Revolving Fund to \$200,000

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend amending Section 7 of Article II of the Town of Montague General Bylaws, pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½, by establishing a new annual spending limit of \$200,000 for the Airport Fuel Revolving Fund. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Review and vote recommendations for non-financial Articles for May 7, 2025 Annual Town Meeting

1. Selectboard and Assessors to enter into a 10-year Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Agreement with FirstLight Hydro Generating Company

Boutwell makes the motion to see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectboard and Board of Assessors to negotiate, enter into and approve a Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement known as a "PILOT" of "Tax Agreement" pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59 Section 38H(b), or any other enabling authority, between the Town of Montague and FirstLight Hydro Generating Co., its successors, assignees or affiliates, on such terms and conditions and for such period of time as negotiated by the Selectboard and the Board of Assessors, for payment in lieu of taxes related to personal and/or real property associated with an electric generation facility, all as set forth in said PILOT; and further to authorize the Selectboard and the Board of Assessors to take such action as may be necessary to carry out the vote taken hereunder, or to pass any vote or votes in relation thereto. Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Nay, Kuklewicz - Aye

2. Increase personal property taxation thresholds from \$1,000 to \$10,000

Boutwell makes the motion to see if the Town will vote to modify and increase personal property taxation thresholds from \$1,000 to \$10,000 subject to taxation for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2025 or

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pass any other vote or votes in relation thereto pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 54. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

3. **Authorize Treasurer to enter into tax title payment agreements in accordance with new State law**
Boutwell makes the motion to see if the Town will vote to adopt Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024 as they pertain to the tax title accounts, in addition, to amend local option statute G.L. c. 60 §62A (Section 89-91, Tax Title Payment Agreements) to allow the Treasurer to enter into tax title payment agreements for residential or commercial properties for up to 10 years, pay at least 10% of total amount needed to redeem at that time and to waive interest up to 50% or pass any other vote or votes in relation thereto. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
4. **Unclaimed property**
Boutwell makes the motion to see if the Town will vote to adopt Chapter 200A §9A of M.G.L. as it pertains to unclaimed property or pass any other vote or votes in relation thereto. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
5. **Authorize Selectboard to enter into a 10-year lease of the Shea Theater (71 Avenue A)**
Boutwell makes the motion to see if the Town will vote in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30B Section 12(b), to authorize the Selectboard to enter into a lease not to exceed ten (10) years for the purpose of permitting use of the property known as the Shea Theater, located at 71 Avenue A, on terms and conditions and for such consideration as the Selectboard deems in the best interests of the Town, or pass any other vote or votes in relation thereto. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
6. **Franklin Regional Council of Governments charter amendments**
Boutwell makes the motion to approve inclusion of the FRCOG Charter amendment changes on the Town Meeting Warrant. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

- **Authorize Contract with Innes Associates Ltd. for technical assistance for Montague City Village re-zoning. Contract value is \$60,000 to be funded by Community Planning Grant from Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)**
Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Contract with Innes Associates Ltd. for technical assistance for Montague City Village re-zoning, and authorize the Chair to sign it; contract value is \$60,000 to be funded by Community Planning Grant from Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Other Updates**
 - Avenue A Sidewalk construction will begin this week.
 - The Senior Center will be closed on April 11 due to electrical upgrades and a bathroom floor replacement.
 - According to the Library Building Steering Committee the responses for an Owner's Project Manager services are due this Wednesday.

Town Administrator's Business

- **Rescind and revoke CDBG signatory authorization from 3/17/2025**
Boutwell makes the motion to rescind the vote from 3/17/2025 authorizing Walter Ramsey as the CDBG signatory, and to authorize the Selectboard Chair as the CDBG signatory. Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Abstain, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Planning for a Pre-Town Meeting session**
Ramsey suggests having a Pre-Town Meeting session the week before Town Meeting, on Tuesday or Wednesday at 6:00 PM via ZOOM.
- **Electricity purchase contracts up for renewal December 2025**
Ramsey states that the Townwide electricity purchase contracts are up for renewal on December 2025. He will be engaging with some energy brokers and start looking at pricing in the market.
- **Consider lift of Townwide Parking Ban**
Boutwell makes the motion to lift the Townwide Parking Ban effective immediately. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting requirements**
None

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Executive Sessions:

- **Executive Session in accordance G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(1) to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member of individual, if the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body**
 - The Chair deems that holding this discussion in open meeting would be detrimental to the Town's position.
 - *Boutwell makes the motion to go into Executive Session in accordance G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(1) to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member of individual. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- **Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining relating to the 2024 Pay and Classification Study, if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the Chair so declares.**
 - The Chair deems that holding this discussion in open meeting would be detrimental to the Town's position.
 - *Boutwell makes the motion to go into Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining relating to the 2024 Pay and Classification Study. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Next Meeting:

- **Finance Committee, March 26, 2025 at 6:00 PM via ZOOM**
- **Selectboard, Monday, March 31, 2025 at 6:30 PM via ZOOM**