

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

VIA ZOOM

Monday, March 31, 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; RiverCulture Director Suzanne LoManto; Children's Librarian Angela Rovatti-Leonard; and Town Planner Maureen Pollock.

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

Approve Minutes: Selectboard Meeting March 24, 2025 if available

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Minutes of March 24, 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

Suzanne LoManto, RiverCulture Program Director

- **RiverCulture seeks permission for the Montague Center May Day event, Sunday May 4, 2025, in partnership with community representative Will Quale. Activities include a short parade from the post office, and entertainment on the Montague Center Common.**

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Montague Center May Day event, Sunday May 4, 2025. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- **RiverCulture seeks permission for Northeast Unity Car Show including street closure on First Street and permission to use public parking lots around Town Hall and First Street on Sunday, September 21, 2025 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.**

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the RiverCulture-sponsored event, the Northeast Unity Car Show including street closure on First Street and permission and use of public parking lots around Town Hall and First Street on Sunday, September 21, 2025 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- **RiverCulture gives an update of Montague Wheat Paste Mural Project: three winners announced**

- Three artists have been selected for the Montague Wheat Paste Mural Project:
 - 1) Aaron Meshon from Great Barrington will be doing two murals in Downtown Turners Falls.
 - 2) Sophie Foulkes from Amherst will be doing two murals in along the rail trail.
 - 3) Ponnapa Prakkamakul from Thailand will be doing the Millers Falls murals.
- The murals will be up for three to five months.
- In the upcoming weeks, there will be community input sessions.
- LoManto will be bringing the contracts to the Selectboard soon.

Angela Rovatti-Leonard, Children's Librarian

- **Montague Public Libraries requests an Entertainment License for the Montague Community Fair at Unity Park being held on 9/27/2025 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM**

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the request by Montague Public Libraries for an Entertainment License for the Montague Community Fair at Unity Park being held on 9/27/2025 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- **Montague Public Libraries, Summer Reading Program, request Use of Peskeompskut for a dog event being held on July 19, 2025 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM**

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the request by Montague Public Libraries for the Use of Peskeompskut for "The Dog Days of Summer" Event on July 19, 2025 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Phillip Malone, Jr., Newt Guilbault Community Baseball

Use of Public Property: Newt Guilbault Baseball League Opening Day Parade, April 27, 2025 (rain date: 5/4/2025), 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, beginning at TFHS down Turnpike Road, right onto Montague Street, then right on Crocker Avenue. Approximately 130 people in attendance and 5 vehicles expected to participate

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Use of Public Property for the Newt Guilbault Baseball League Opening Day Parade, April 27, 2025 (rain date: 5/4/2025), 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, beginning at TFHS down Turnpike Road, right onto Montague Street, then right on Crocker Avenue; approximately 130 people in attendance and 5 vehicles expected to participate. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

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Ann Fisk, Use of Montague Center Town Common

- **Montague Center Fire Fighters Association, Memorial Day Service, May 25, 2025, 10:00 AM to 12:15 PM**
Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Use of Montague Center Town Common for the Montague Center Fire Fighters Association's Memorial Day Service, May 25, 2025, 10:00 AM to 12:15 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **First Congregational Church of Montague, Road Race, August 16, 2025, 6:30 AM to Noon**
Boutwell makes the motion to approve the First Congregational Church of Montague's Road Race on August 16, 2025, 6:30 AM to Noon. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

William McKerchie, The Upper Bend, 112 Avenue A, Turners Falls

Request to place 7 tables with chairs in front of 112 Avenue A

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the request by the Upper Bend, 112 Avenue A, Turners Falls to place 7 tables with chairs in front of 112 Avenue A between April 1st and November 1st, 2025. Seconded by Lord unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Emily Innes, Innes Associations Ltd.

Montague City Zoning Studies - Selectboard Update #1

- Innes goes through a PowerPoint presentation (Who's Who, Projects, Timeline, Zoning 101, Current Zoning, Past Plans, Scenarios, For Analysis, Future Zoning, and Next Steps).
- There will be a Public Workshop on April 17.
- In response to a question by Lord, Innes states that a firm decision has not yet been made with regard to different strategies. There are different possibilities; they will know more after the public meeting.
- Pollock states that a Project Page will be created to help residents stay engaged throughout the process.
- In response to a question by Jeff Singleton, Innes states that for the public meeting, her team will break the concepts down into the things that people understand about their experience in the community, then will break it down into components that make a difference to that experience.
- In response to a question by Singleton, Innes states that the zoning is what permits or does not permit what can actually happen on the site. Her team will be narrowing down what has been seen into something that someone can prepare an application for.
- Pollock states that last year's planning project had to do with "What is the re-vision for this property?" Great information was gleaned from public meetings and focus group meetings about different uses and activities (i.e., housing, retail, community spaces, daycare services, better bike path connections). The residents felt that they want the area to be walkable.

Maureen Pollock, Planning Director

Authorization to extend (and sign) Contract to complete MVP 2.0 Pilot Grant until June 30, 2026

Boutwell makes the motion to extend the Contract to complete MVP 2.0 Pilot Grant until June 30, 2026; and authorize the Chair to sign it. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Vote recommendations for FY26 Budget and May 7 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

A. Special Articles

- **Implement collective bargaining agreements with United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Works of America and the National Association of Government Employees - \$125,154**

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend appropriation of \$125,154 for the implementation of Pay and Class Study and Collective Bargaining Agreements with United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Works of America and the National Association of Government Employees, with \$98,892 to be raised from Taxation and \$26,262 to be raised from Sewer Revenues. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- **Appropriate \$200,000 to Reserves from Free Cash**

- **\$100,000 to Town Capital Stabilization**
- **\$50,000 to GMRSD Capital Stabilization**
- **\$50,000 to OPEB Trust Fund**

Boutwell makes the motion to recommend appropriating \$100,000 to Town Capital Stabilization, \$50,000 to GMRSD Capital Stabilization, and \$50,000 to OPEB Trust Fund, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

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Personnel Board

- **Appoint Oliver Beane, Interim Director of Assessing, Grade G1, Step 1, \$67,277 (old rate: Grade B, Step 1, \$22,37/hour) effective 3/17/25**
Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Oliver Beane as the Interim Director of Assessing, Grade G1, Step 1, \$36.80/hour (old rate: Grade B, Step 1, \$22.37/hour) effective 3/17/25. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Appoint Karen Tonelli, Board of Assessors Consultant, \$45.06/hour up to 10 hours per week through June 30, 2025**
Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Karen Tonelli as the Board of Assessors Consultant, \$45.06/hour up to 10 hours per week through June 30, 2025. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Review compliance of "Violation of Nuisance Dog" Order issued November 7, 2023 to Kim James-Caron, 20 N. Street, Turners Falls

- Ramsey reviews history of Nuisance Dog Order issued November 7, 2023 to Kim James-Caron, 20 N. Street, Turners Falls.
- This past January the Town received a complaint that there is a new dog at the property. The Animal Control Officer investigated, but found no evidence of the dog. The complainant provided photographic proof.
- On March 20, the Animal Control Officer made contact with Ms. Caron, who produced a note from a nurse practitioner stating that the dog is a service animal. There are no records of a dog being registered at that address.
- Ramsey, as the ADA Coordinator, advises the Board to proceed with caution in light of the assertion that the dog is a service animal.
- Ramsey recommends that the Town allow Ms. Caron to have the service animal, but she must (1) provide to the Animal Control Officer within 48 hours written notice confirming that the dog is a service animal and describing specifically what work or tasks the dog has been trained to perform are; (2) provide within 48 hours to one week proof that the dog has been properly licensed and vaccinated; (3) allow the Animal Control Officer to photograph the dog so it can be identified and documented; (4) limit it to one dog; and (5) comply with all other requirements of the previous Selectboard orders (i.e., insurance, vaccination records, securing the property).
- *Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Chair to sign a letter that outlines the concerns that the Town Administrator just expressed and send it to Kim James-Caron. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- Lord suggests contacting the nurse practitioner to verify that she wrote the letter stating that the dog is a service animal.

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

- **Execution of Payment Requisition to Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Water Resources for Asset Management Grant. Requisition value is \$74,077 for Wastewater Asset Vulnerability Inventory**
Boutwell makes the motion to execute a Payment Requisition to the Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Water Resources for Asset Management Grant, and authorize the Chair to sign it; requisition value is \$74,077 for Wastewater Asset Vulnerability Inventory. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Authorization to apply for Green Communities Competitive Grant for Weatherization and Insulation Improvements at Unity Park Fieldhouse**
Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Assistant Town Administrator to apply for the Green Communities Competitive Grant for Weatherization and Insulation Improvements at Unity Park Fieldhouse. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Other Updates**
 - The construction for the Annex Solar Project will start next month.
 - Construction on Avenue A has started.
 - In the near future, we will be looking at repaving the Town Hall Parking Lot.

Town Administrator's Business

- **First Street Housing Development Updates and Request to Extend Habitat for Humanity Purchase and Sale Agreement through June 30, 2026**
 - Habitat for Humanity has requested a third extension in the Purchase and Sale Agreement timeline. The holdup has been that the Town had done some environmental assessments and found some soils that are above reportable concentrations to DEP.
 - At this point we have a remediation strategy and cost estimate for what it would take to clean up the soils. The cost range is estimated at \$150,000 to just over \$300,000.
 - The Town is actively talking with both Mass DEP and Mass Development to assist in funding the clean-up.

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- *Boutwell makes the motion to extend the Agreement with Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, with a change of the closing date to June 30, 2026. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- **Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting**
 - Ramsey shares that the Remote Meeting Law has been extended through 2027. All COVID-era rules are still in effect.
 - Next week the Board will be taking a look at the Town Meeting Warrant.

Executive Session in accordance with 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 or 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 session 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)(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 or individual. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Next Meeting:

Selectboard, Monday, April 7, 2025, at 6:30 PM, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and via ZOOM