

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

VIA ZOOM

Monday, September 15, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM. Present were Selectboard members Matt Lord, Rich Kuklewicz, and Marina Goldman; Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Assistant Town Administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller; CWF Superintendent Chelsey Little; Town Clerk Wendy Bogusz; and Director of Assessing Adam Tocci.

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

Approve Minutes: Selectboard Meeting of September 8, 2025 if available

Goldman makes the motion to approve the Minutes of September 8, 2025. Kuklewicz by Goldman, unanimously approved.

Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - 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

Vote on Proclamation to declare October 5th, 2025 Farren Memorial Appreciation Day

- Kuklewicz reads aloud the Proclamation to declare October 5th, 2025 Farren Memorial Appreciation Day.
- *Kuklewicz makes the motion to declare October 5th, 2025 Farren Memorial Appreciation Day. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye, Goldman - Aye*

Sewer Commission with Clean Water Facility Superintendent Chelsey Little

- **Hydroelectric Feasibility Study Findings**
Little summarizes the findings of the Hydroelectric Feasibility Study, which is made possible through a grant through the Department of Energy Resources. Little feels that it is not feasible to pursue this.
- **Screw Pump Replacement Project Update**
Little gives an update of the Screw Pump Replacement Project. Final completion will be in April.
- **Monthly Permit Summary for July 2025**
 - Everything looks great.
 - There was one issue with the *e. coli* testing early on in July, which could be attributed to the new aeration blowers. A second sample the following morning was well within the limits.

Assessing Department Business with Adam Tocci, Director of Assessing

- **Analysis of HERO Act Property Tax Exemptions for Disabled Veterans**
 - Tocci displays and summarizes the HERO Act Property Tax Exemptions for Disabled Veterans.
 - The Board agrees to consider putting the 22I and 22J Joint Adoptions onto the Fall Town Meeting Warrant.
- **Anticipated Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Agreement with Kearsarge Solar LLC for solar Projects at 248 Montague City Road and 131 Turnpike Road**
 - Tocci gives a presentation of the Kearsarge PILOT:
 - 131 Turnpike Road - Solar Field
 - 248 Millers Falls Road - Solar Field
 - Current Tax Levies (F725) - Both Sites
 - Total billed out to Kearsarge: \$50,676.61
 - Current Valuation Challenges
 - Solar ATB Cases
 - PILOT Proposal
 - FY25 PILOT vs. Current
 - Solar PILOT Agreements in Other Towns
 - Lord asks Tocci to be available for the Pre-Town Meeting to get this discussion in front of Town Meeting members early.

Personnel Board

- **Wendy Bogusz, Town Clerk**
 - **Request for Assistant Town Clerk to receive out-of-grade compensation during planned absence of Town Clerk in accordance with NAGE agreement Article 17 (\$39.29 per hour), effective 9/8/2025 through 10/11/2025**
Goldman makes the motion to provide out-of-grade compensation for the Assistant Town Clerk for the time period of 9/8/2025 through 10/11/2025 in accordance with NAGE agreement Article 17 (Grade C, Step 1 for the rate of \$1,375.15 weekly). Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

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- **Request to hire Abigail Moore as Administrative Assistant for the Town Clerk's Office, Grade H Step 2, up to 20 hours per week at \$22.66 per hour**

Kuklewicz makes the motion to appoint Abigail Moore as the Administrative Assistant for the Town Clerk's Office, Grade H Step 2, up to 20 hours per week at \$22.66 per hour, effective September 16, 2025. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **Police Chief Search Committee**

- **Report from the Police Chief Search Committee**

The Police Chief Search Committee has narrowed down the Police Chief candidates to Lieutenant Jason Haskins and Police Chief David Kachajian.

- **Establish next steps in hiring process**

- The Selectboard members will have one-on-one interviews with each of the candidates.
- After the interviews the Selectboard members will convene in open session to deliberate on their findings.

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

- **Authorize Change Order #1 with Associated Construction Company for CWF Screw Pump Project. Change Order value is \$13,265.56 to be funded with project contingency**

Goldman makes the motion to authorize Change Order #1 with Associated Construction Company for the CWF Screw Pump Project in the amount of \$13,265.56. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **Other Project Updates**

- The Strathmore Footbridge is being demolished by FirstLight this week through September 27. Second Street will be temporarily open to two-way access during this time.
- The canal drawdown is happening next week. The Fifth Street Bridge will be closed so that Mass DOT can do their inspection.
- Lord asks Nolan-Zeller to provide a mini-map illustrating these activities to Jeff Singleton for publication in the Montague Reporter.
- The Governor has announced the release of the FY26 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grants. Montague is receiving \$458,750 for a master plan of a resilient stormwater infrastructure for the Hill Neighborhood.

Town Administrator's Business

- **Authorize Council on Aging Director to execute \$5,000 FY26 Creative Experiences Grant for Spanish Language Lessons for Seniors**

Kuklewicz makes the motion to authorize the Council on Aging Director to execute the \$5,000 FY26 Creative Experiences Grant for Spanish Language Lessons for Seniors. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **Execute License Agreement with Eversource regarding access to Dry Hill Cemetery**

Kuklewicz makes the motion to execute the License Agreement with Eversource regarding access to Dry Hill Cemetery. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **Authorize Town Administrator to execute a 36-month natural gas contract for the term of 4/1/2026 - 3/30/2029 at rates to be quoted on 9/16/2025**

Lord makes the motion to authorize the Town Administrator to execute a 36-month natural gas contract for the term of 4/1/2026 - 3/30/2029 at a rate no higher than the current contract rate, which is \$.734/therm. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- **Six Town Regionalization Planning**

- Ramsey states that it turns out that a Special Town Meeting does not need to convene in order for the proposed regional school district to happen. According to the State law, open-meeting-law Towns have 30 days from the day that the regional district is proposed by the Planning Board. Montague being a representative, Town Meeting has to have between 35-50 days to have that vote.
- Ramsey, Bogusz, and Town Counsel are working on the logistics to set up a special election for November.
- We are in the process of planning information sessions for the public whereby the Six-Town Regionalization Planning Board will discuss and have some interaction with the public over the details of this proposed regional school district.
- In response to a question by Ramsey, the Selectboard members feel that this topic should not be discussed during a Selectboard meeting.

- **Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting requirements/Water Main Repair**

Regarding the First Street repair of the water main, TF Water Department has contracted with a bidder to do those repairs.

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Next Meeting:

Selectboard: Monday, September 22, 2025 at 6:30 PM via ZOOM

Lord makes the motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye