

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

VIA ZOOM

Monday, October 27, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard members Matt Lord and Rich Kuklewicz; Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Health Director Ryan Paxton; and Executive Assistant Fern Smith.

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

Approve Minutes: Montague Meetings of October 20, 2025

Kuklewicz makes the motion to approve the minutes of October 6, 2025. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. 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

Follow-up to Town Meeting Apartheid-Free Resolution

- Lord reads aloud the resolution that was adopted.
- Lord emphasizes that this resolution is in reference to the crime of apartheid, and lists the defined crimes against humanity.
- In future weeks we will follow-up by sending this resolution to the Massachusetts Legislation and Governor.

Ryan Paxton, Health Director

- **Opportunity to install additional Narcan boxes in downtown**

Kuklewicz makes the motion to install additional Narcan boxes at Peskeompskut Park and the corner by the Colle Building. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (*not on agenda*)**

Paxton announces that we have officially been approved as a member of the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District. We will start receiving services from the District in FY26.

Personnel Department

Appoint Adam Williams to DPW Collection System Operator Lead, 40 hours per week, Grade E, Step 3 at \$30.00 per hour, effective November 17, 2025

Kuklewicz makes the motion to appoint Adam Williams to DPW Collection System Operator Lead, 40 hours per week, Grade E, Step 3 at \$30.00 per hour, effective November 17, 2025. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

Town Administrator's Business

- **Special Town Meeting debrief and follow-up**
 - All the financial Articles are in the works.
 - DPW Superintendent Sam Urkiel will be starting the South Street Culvert Rehab project.
 - Ramsey will be working with the Town Clerk to do the reporting to the State regarding the HERO Act Provision and the new tax for the short-term rentals.
 - The Zoning Articles need to be submitted to the State for their review by the Attorney General.
 - We need to get the revised layout of the Burek Drive Article recorded.
 - In response to a request by Lord regarding the Farren property, Ramsey states that there is a 30-90 day review time by the Attorney General of the Zoning. The Selectboard can now start moving towards developing a Request for Proposals for that parcel.
- **FY27 Budget outlook and Excess Capacity discussion**
 - Capital Article requests have been distributed to the department heads and are due back this week.
 - We are on track for doing a Rate Setting Tax Classification Hearing on December 1st.
 - The initial budget includes an initial forecast of revenues and anticipated expenses. It doesn't include new growth yet.
 - The upcoming budget is going to be impacted by increased personnel costs and health insurance.
 - Overall we are looking at a budget of a \$31.5 million, which is an 8.3 increase over the FY25 budget.
 - The budget is carrying the FY26 Excess Taxation Capacity figure.
 - At this point we are starting with a budget shortfall of \$339,000.
 - Ramsey and Town Accountant Angelica Desroches anticipate taking a close look at discretionary spending categories.
- **Discuss FY27 budget guidance to department leaders**

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- Ramsey intends to prepare budget development guidelines to go to the department heads. He intends to ask each department head for two budget scenarios: (1) a Level Services Budget, and (2) a Level Services Budget with a 2% reduction.
- Ramsey would also like to inform department heads that proposals to increase staffing will be heard by the Board, but are likely to only be considered in examples of extraordinary need.
- Lord and Kuklewicz agree with Ramsey's plan.
- **Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting requirements/Loss of SNAP benefits**
Ramsey states he received an email from Senator Comerford, who informed us that there are just over 1,000 people that benefit from SNAP in Montague who stand to have their benefits suspended. Ramsey has begun working with various social service community leaders to pull together some information as to help people figure out where they need to go for resources.

Next Meeting:

Selectboard, Monday, November 3 at 6:30 PM, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA and via ZOOM

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