

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

VIA ZOOM

Monday, December 15, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard members Matt Lord, Rich Kuklewicz, and Marina Goldman; Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Assistant Town Administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller; and Executive Assistant Fern Smith.

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

Approve Minutes: Selectboard Meeting December 8, 2025, if available

Postponed

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

Kuklewicz asks Ramsey and Nolan-Zeller if we can send more correspondence to the owner of 42 Canal regarding the fence around the sink hole which is no longer effectively providing a safe barrier. Ramsey agrees to follow-up tomorrow.

2026 Applications and Licenses for Businesses/Special Requests (Executive Assistant)

- **Approve 2026 Annual Permit Applications and License as set forth in the attached listing**
 - *Lord makes the motion to approve the Brewer/Winder Pouring Permits for Element Brewing Company DBA Element Brewing Co., LLC at 16 Bridge St., Millers Falls. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye*
 - *Lord makes the motion to authorize execution of the necessary correspondence with ABCC to notify them that Pioneer Valley Brewery, LLC is not renewing their Liquor License in Montague. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
 - *Lord makes the motion to authorize the following businesses for their 2026 License renewals as presented in the agenda material specifically titled Agenda Renewal License List 2026 Corrected.v1:*
 - *Club, All Alcohol at \$725.00 each: Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Inc. at 201R Turners Falls Rd., Turners Falls; Montague BPO Elks Lodge 2521 at 1 Elk Ave., Turners Falls; St. Kazimierz Society DBA at St. Kazimierz Society, 197 Avenue A, Turners Falls; St. Stanislaus B and M Society, Inc. at 6 K St., Turners Falls; and Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club, Inc. at 15 Deep Hole Road, Turners Falls*
 - *General On Premises - Wines & Malt at \$580.00 each: Sow Loud, LLC, DBA The Upper Bend at 112 Avenue A, Turners Falls*
 - *Package Store, All Alcohol at \$975.00 each: Bryan Call DBA Crestview Liquors at 68 Unity St., Turners Falls; Slow Village Ahead DBA Montague Village Store at 60 Main St., Montague; Purple Meadow Ventures, Inc. DBA Connecticut River Liquor & Wine at 123 Avenue A, Turners Falls; and Om Shiv Shambhu, Inc. DBA Carroll's Market at 33 East Main St., Millers Falls*
 - *Package Store, Wines and Malt at \$550.00 each: Crooked River Corp. DBA Food City at 250 Avenue A, Turners Falls; and Sow Loud, LLC DBA Avenue A Market at 106 Avenue A, Turners Falls*
 - *Restaurant, All Alcohol at \$1,050.00 each: Cocina Lupita, LLC DBA Cocina Lupita at 12 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Crystal Spring Investments, LLC DBA Milles Pub at 29 East Main St., Millers Falls; Dreamhouse Foods, Inc. DBA Dreamhouse at 37 Third Street, Turners Falls; El Nopalito, LLC DBA El Nopalito at 196 Turners Falls Road, Montague; Hole Pie, Inc. DBA Harvey's at 166 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Rocket Science, LLC DBA The Rendezvous at 78 Third Street, Turners Falls; Secondhand Smoke, Inc. DBA North Village Smokehouse at 32 Federal St., Millers Falls; and TMGC, LLC DBA Thomas Memorial at 30 County Club Ln., Turners Falls*
 - *Restaurant, Wines and Malt at \$580.00 each: CVB Harvest, LLC DBA Great Falls Harvest at 50 Third St., Turners Falls; and Lady Killigrew Café, Inc. at 444 Greenfield Rd., Montague*
 - *Automatic Amusement at \$45.00 each device: Crystal Spring Investments, LLC DBA Millers Pub at 29 East Main St., Millers Falls; Milles Falls Rod & Gun Club, Inc. at 201R Turners Falls Rd., Turners Falls; Montague BPO Elks #2521 at 1 Elk Avenue A, Turners Falls; St. Kazimierz Society at 197 Avenue A, Turners Falls; St. Stanislaus B and M Society, Inc. at 6 K St., Turners Falls; and Crooked River Corp. DBA Food City at 250 Avenue A, Turners Falls*
 - *Entertainment at \$55.00 each: Great Falls Harvest at 50 Third St., Turners Falls; Element Brewing Company at 16 Bridge St., Millers Falls; Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Inc. at 201 R Turners Falls Rd., Turners Falls; Crystal Springs Investments, LLC DBA Millers Pub at 29 East Main St., Millers Falls; Montague Elks #2521 at 1 Elk Ave., Turners Falls; Rocket Science, LLC DBA The Rendezvous at 78 Third St., Turners Falls; St., Kazimierz Society at 197 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Secondhand Smoke, Inc. DBA North Village Smokehouse at 32 Federal St., Millers Falls; St. Stanislaus B and M Society, Inc., at 6 K St.,*

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Turners Falls; TMGC, LLC DBA Thomas Memorial at 30 County Club Ln., Turners Falls; and Turners Rod and Gun Club at 15 Deep Hole Road, Turners Falls

- *Common Victualler at \$40 each: Cocina Lupita, LLC DBA Cocina Lupita at 125 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Crystal Springs Investments, LLC DBA Millers Pub at 29 East Main St., Millers Falls; CVB Harvest, LLC DBA Great Falls Harvest at 50 Third St., Turners Falls; Dreamhouse Foods, Inc. DBA Dreamhouse at 37 Third Street, Turners Falls; El Nopalito, LLC DBA El Nopalito at 196 Turners Falls Road, Montague; Element Brewing Company DBA Element Brewing Co., LLC at 16 Bridge St., Millers Falls; Hole Pie, Inc. DBA Harvey's at 166 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Lady Killigrew Café, Inc. at 444 Greenfield Rd., Montague; Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club, Inc. at 201R Turners Falls Road, Turners Falls; Montague BPO Elks Lodge 2521 at 1 Elk Ave., Turners Falls; Om Shiv Shambhu, Inc. DBA Carroll's Market at 33 East Main St., Millers Falls; Rocket Science, LLC DBA The Rendezvous at 78 Third Street, Turners Falls; St. Kazimierz Society DBA at St. Kazimierz Society, 197 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Secondhand Smoke, Inc. DBA North Village Smokehouse at 32 Federal St., Millers Falls; Shady Glen, Inc. DBA Shady Glen, Inc. at 7 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Sow Loud, LLC, DBA The Upper Bend at 112 Avenue A, Turners Falls; St. Stanislaus B and M Society, Inc. at 6 K St. Turners Falls; TMGC, LLC DBA Thomas Memorial - Dining Room at 30 County Club Ln., Turners Falls; TMGC, LLC DBA Thomas Memorial - Clubhouse at 30 County Club Ln., Turners Falls; Turners Falls Rod & Gun Club, Inc. at 15 Deep Hole Road, Turners Falls; and Common Variety Café & Market at 485 Federal St., Montague*
- *Lodging House at \$40.00 each: F. C. Housing Authority (Moltenbrey Apartments) at 76 Avenue A, Turners Falls*
- *Class II - Used Cars at \$110.00 each: Bob's Auto at 303 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Koch's Auto Sales at 98 Turners Falls Rd., Turners Falls; Mark's Auto at 484 Federal St., Montague; Rau's Sunoco at 531 Turners Falls Rd., Montague; Semaski General Contractor & Equipment Sales at 186 Turners Falls Rd., Montague; and Zak's Auto Sales and Repair at 221 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls*
- *Class III - Junk at \$110.00 each: Bob's Auto at 303 Avenue A, Turners Falls; and Rau's Sunoco at 531 Turners Falls Rd., Montague*
- *Common Victualler at \$40 each: Ce Ce's Chinese Restaurant at 57 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Country Creemee at 52 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Scotty's at 66 Unity St., Turners Falls; Nouria 132 Third Street DBA Nouria Energy Corporation at 132 Third St., Turners Falls; CK Sandwiches DBA Subway at 57 Avenue A, Turners Falls; Argy Pizza, Inc. DBA Turners Falls Pizza At 119 Avenue A, Turners Falls; and Common Variety Café & Market at 485 Federal St., Montague*

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

- *Lord makes the motion to approve the Restaurant All Alcohol License for Shea Theater Arts Center, Inc. at 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls; and the Entertainment License for Shea Theater Arts Center, Inc. at 71 Avenue A, Turners Falls. Seconded by Kuklewicz, approved. Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Abstain*
- *Lord makes the motion to approve the Automatic Amusement License for Scotty's at 66 Unity St., Turners Falls. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, and Goldman - Aye*

- **Evelyn Wulfskuhl, Hole Pie Inc., DBA Harvey's located at 166 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA: New Entertainment License DJ & Dancing events**

Kuklewicz makes a motion to approve the application for an Entertainment License for Hole Pie Inc., DBA Harvey's.

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

- **Request by Mark Wisnewski, from the Rendezvous to remain open until 2:00 AM on New Year's Eve**

Lord makes the motion to extend closing for all establishments that include All Alcohol Licenses on January 1, 2026 to 2:00 AM provided that they give notice to the Selectboard that they intend to extend their hours to 2:00 AM by Tuesday, December 30, 2025. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye

Public Emergency Communications System Vendor Contract (Executive Assistant)

Authorize new Contract for Public Emergency Communications System software with Rave Alerts for a term of 18 months for a total fee of \$5,000.00

Kuklewicz makes the motion to approve the new Contract for Public Emergency Communications System software with Rave Alerts for a term of 18 months for a total fee of \$5,000.00. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye

Fiscal Year 2027 Municipal Budget Workshop (Town Administrator)

- **Budget Development status and overview**

Ramsey gives an overview of the Budget Development status:

- *If we look at the Level Services request, we are running a budget shortfall of between \$430,000 and \$431,000.*

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- If we look at the 2% reduction, we are able to reduce expenses by about \$157,000 (without having to do any staffing reductions).
- The major variable in our budget is the health insurance increase. We are holding a place for another 18% to 20% increase (\$582,000).
- We will dig more into this budget in January.
- We will need to consider how much Excess Capacity the Town wants to use. There is currently \$1.1 million in Excess Levy Capacity.
- Another way to help reduce the budget gap is to reconsider our reserve funding policies per financial policies.
- There are no personnel expansion proposals.
- **Consider Level Services vs. 2% Reductions Budget presented by Departments Review budget calendar and set SB schedule for review and recommendations**
 - Kuklewicz states he would like to follow-up with the schools, the Police Department, the Airport, the Clean Water Facility, and the DPW budgets.
 - Lord suggests taking a couple of weeks to review where each department is proposing reductions.
 - Gill-Montague Regional School District has volunteered to host their Annual Budget meeting on Thursday, February 5 at the Gill Town Hall.

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

- **Authorize Amendment No. 1 to Owner-Engineer Agreement with Wright-Pierce for Clean Water Facility Screw Pump Station Upgrade. Amendment value is \$25,000 to be funded with project contingency**
Kuklewicz makes the motion to authorize Amendment No. 1 to Owner-Engineer Agreement with Wright-Pierce for Clean Water Facility Screw Pump Station Upgrade in the amount of \$25,000 as presented. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye
- **Other Updates**
None

Town Administrator's Business

- **Gill-Montague Sheffield School MSBA program updates**
Ramsey states that the Massachusetts School Building Authority voted to include the Gill-Montague School District's proposed elementary school consolidation into the MSBA eligibility phase.
- **Director of Public Health hiring process updates**
 - We received ten applications for the Director of Public Health position. BOH Chair Melanie Zamojski and Ramsey did interviews with four of the applicants and recommended two finalists to the BOH last week. The BOH is recommending their top candidate.
 - *Lord makes the motion to appoint Marina Goldman to work with Walter Ramsey to come to an agreement with the potential new Board of Health Director. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye*
- **Consider whether meeting is needed on 12/22/2025**
The Board agrees to have a meeting on 12/22/2025 contingent on whether the agreement with the potential new Board of Health Director is ready.
- **Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting requirements**
None

Next Meeting:

Selectboard: Monday, January 5, 2-26 at 6:30 PM, 1 Avenue Turners Falls, MA & via ZOOM

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