

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and VIA ZOOM

Monday, February 2, 2026 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; Executive Assistant Fern Smith; Planning Director Maureen Pollock; DPW Superintendent Sam Urkiel; Police Chief Jason Haskins; Battlefield Grant Advisory Board Chair David Brule; and Parks and Recreation Director Jon Dobosz.

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

Approve Minutes: Selectboard Meetings: 1/12/2026 & 1/26/2026, if available

Goldman makes the motion to approve the Minutes of January 12 and January 26, 2026. Seconded by Kuklewicz, 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

David Brule, Chair of Battlefield Grant Advisory Board

- **Mission wrap-up and next steps**

- The Battlefield Grant Advisory Board has finalized the Battlefield Study.
- Brule has been invited to present this information to the Middle School and High School here in Montague.
- Brule reviews the procedure the Board and the individuals involved went through.
- Funding has been received for the tribal representatives to write their own version of what happened and what the impacts were on their tribes over the generations.
- The Board has agreed to re-form a 1676 Commemoration Steering Committee.
- There are several activities planned, including the dedication of the three signs along the bike path on May 16 at 10:30 AM.

- **Request to disband the Battlefield Grant Advisory Board**

Kuklewicz makes the motion to disband the Battlefield Grant Advisory Board. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye

Personnel Board

- **Police Department**

- **Appoint Jacob Thompson to Police Officer effective 02-08-2026, Grade P, Step 4 at \$28.51/hour, 37.69 hours per week**
Candidate had to withdraw from the academy.
- **Appoint Joshua Lemay to Patrol Officer effective 02-22-2026, Grade P, Step 10 at \$36.01/hour, 37.69 hours per week**
Kuklewicz makes the motion to appoint Joshua Lemay to Patrol Officer effective 2-22-2026, Grade P, Step 10 at \$36.01/hour, 37.69 hours per week. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye
- **Appoint Olivia Parnanen to custodian effective 02-08-2026, Grade I, Step 10 at \$24.17/hour, 15-18 hours per week**
Goldman makes the motion to appointment Olivia Parnanen to custodian effective 02-08-2026, Grade I, Step 10 at \$24.17/hour, 15-18 hours per week. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **Department of Public Works**

Appoint Richard Hebert, II to Light Equipment Operator effective 02-03-26, Grade G, Step 3 at \$25.01/hour, 40 hours per week. Richard holds a Class A CDL license and will receive an additional \$1.50/hour
Kuklewicz makes the motion to appoint Richard Hebert, II to Light Equipment Operator effective 02-03-26, Grade G, Step 3 at \$25.01/hour, 40 hours per week, with the additional \$1.50/hour for his Class A CDL license. Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **Library**

Appoint Merlin Waldron from Substitute Library Assistant to Library Assistant, effective 02-07-2026, Grade I, Step 1 at \$18.07/hour
Goldman makes the motion to appoint Merlin Waldron from Substitute Library Assistant to Library Assistant, effective 02-07-2026, Grade I, Step 1 at \$18.07/hour. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

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Jon Dobosz, Parks & Recreation Director

Request Public Demonstration/Use of Public Property for Montague Soap Box Races on September 27, 2026, 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM located on First Street, Unity Park and Unity Hill

Lord makes the motion to authorize the Public Demonstration/Use of Public Property for the Montague Soap Box Races on September 27, 2026, 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM located on First Street, Unity Park and Unity Hill. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye

Maureen Pollock, Director of Planning

Planning Board Zoning Amendment Petition: Revised Section 8.5 Accessory Dwelling Units

Goldman makes the motion to refer the Petition for Zoning Amendments back to the Planning Board for a public hearing. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

- **Authorize Contract with Berkshire Design Group, Inc. for bidding and construction administration for the Avenue A Streetscape Improvements Project. Contract Value is \$30,000.00 to be funded by Community Development Block Grant**

Goldman makes the motion to authorize the execution of the Contract with Berkshire Design Group, Inc. for bidding and construction administration for the Avenue A Streetscape Improvements Project. Seconded by Kuklewicz, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **Other Project Updates**

None

Town Administrator's Business

- **Authorize DPW Superintendent Sam Urkiel to be the signatory for Collective Highway Products and Services Contracts by FRCOG for FY27**

Kuklewicz makes the motion to authorize DPW Superintendent Sam Urkiel to be the signatory for Collective Highway Products and Services Contracts by FRCOG for FY27. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye

- **FY27 Budget: Updates and discuss acceptance of 2% Budget Reduction scenarios**

- Ramsey gives the schedule of the finalization of the Budget:
 - On Monday, February 9, we will be looking for the Board to review the preliminary recommendations presented by the Town Administrator and Town Accountant.
 - On Wednesday, February 11, there will be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss the Town's overall FY27 budget picture, as well as looking at debt projects for future years.
 - On Tuesday, February 17, the Board will finalize its recommendations.
- Discussion:
 - Kuklewicz feels it makes sense to have the reductions, but there are items that are not good to make a change to (i.e., cruises for the Police Department). He believes a goal of a 2% reduction on the overall cost would be good.
 - Lord reiterates that last December, the Board determined that there were four departments whose budgets would be difficult to reduce (Council on Aging, Information Technology, the Cemetery, and the Airport); and there were several departments whose proposed budget reductions may or may not be feasible (Planning and Conservation, The Treasurer/Collector's Office, Town Clerk, Police Department, Building Department, Libraries, and Parks and Recreation).
 - Lord feels that the Town Clerk's Office would have difficulty with the 2% reduction.
 - Ramsey states that maybe next year we might need to use the Reserve Fund.
 - Kuklewicz mentions that we should look at the printer situation.
 - *Lord makes the motion to ask the Town Administrator to work with the Town Accountant to use the 2% cuts to budgets that have been proposed by department heads for the working budget for the Selectboard, Finance Committee, and others to use moving towards Town Meeting. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

- **Discussion: exploring regionalization opportunities**

- **Schools**
Special legislation has been filed by Senator Comerford relating to a vote for the Six-Town Regionalization District.
- **EMS (ambulance) Services**
The FRCOG is helping lead and facilitate a study to look at Town-wide ambulance service.
- **Police Dispatch**

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The FRCOG is supporting a study for a Regional Police Dispatch Center. In the meantime, the Town has an opportunity to look at possibly joining Shelburne Control. The Board gives Ramsey its blessing to pursue looking into regionalization opportunities and building a proposal for joining Shelburne Control.

- **Adopt revised Sustainable Project Purchasing Policy, per MassDEP Program requirements**
Kuklewicz makes the motion to execute the revised Sustainable Project Purchasing Policy, per MassDEP Program requirements. Seconded by Goldman, unanimously approved. Kuklewicz - Aye, Goldman - Aye, Lord - Aye
- **Topics not anticipated within 48 hours**
None

Other

- **Carnegie Office Hours**
Goldman discusses her office hours at the Carnegie. She has been inviting people that have shown an interest in meeting with her. The Chief will be there February 10th, and Lou Hartnett is possibly going to meet with her on February 17th. Ramsey will cover her office hours the following week. Kuklewicz suggests maybe having the Selectboard members alternate from time to time.
- **Franklin Tech Meeting**
Kuklewicz shares that Franklin Technical School is having a meeting at GCC at 6:30 PM on the 10th to discuss the new building proposal.

Next Meetings

Finance/Selectboard Meeting: FY27 School Budget Proposal:

February 5, 2026 at 5:30 PM at Gill Town Hall

Selectboard Meeting: Monday, February 9, 2026 at 6:00 PM via ZOOM

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