

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and VIA ZOOM

Monday, October 5, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Marina Goldman, and Nate Card; Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Assistant town Administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller; Executive Assistant Fern Smith; Board of Health Director Ashley Gough; and School Building Committee members Steve Ellis, Greg Garrison, Tari Thomas, and Kerry Heathwaite.

Approve Minutes: September 28, 2026, if available

Goldman makes the motion to approve the Minutes for September 28, 2026. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Ratify vote to hold emergency Executive Session on 09/29/2026 5:00 PM pursuant to G.L. c. 30a, §21(a)(3) to discuss litigation strategy in the case of Snow, Deborah et a. vs. Town of Montague, Franklin Superior Court, CA No. 2678CV00056

Goldman makes the motion to ratify the vote to hold emergency Executive Session on 09/29/2026 5:00 PM pursuant to G.L. c. 30a, §21(a)(3) to discuss litigation strategy in the case of Snow, Deborah et a. vs. Town of Montague, Franklin Superior Court, CA No. 2678CV00056. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - 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

Health Director Ashley Gough and the Hearting Center

- **Overview of public health implications of domestic violence and prevention efforts by Heartwing Center**
 - Gough discusses domestic violence and the impact on victims.
 - The Heartwing Center seeks to prevent domestic violence and provide support for survivors and their families.
- **Request to execute a Domestic Violence Prevention Proclamation to recognize October as Domestic Violence Prevention Month**
 - Goldman reads aloud the Domestic Violence Awareness Proclamation.
 - *Goldman makes the motion to accept the Proclamation of Domestic Violence Awareness month as amended. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
 - *Goldman makes the motion to authorize the following: (1) posting the proclamation on-line, (2) doing a press release, and (3) having the Board re-read it every October, (4) putting up purple lights outside of Town Hall for the month of October. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Personnel Board

- **Police Department**
 - **Execute Employment Agreement for Deputy Chief Joshua Hoffman as Deputy Chief of Police effective October 11, 2026, 40 hours per week, Grade C, Step 8 with an annual salary of \$103,001**
Goldman makes the motion to execute the Employment Agreement for Deputy Chief Joshua Hoffman as Deputy Chief of Police effective October 11, 2026, 40 hours per week, Grade C, Step 8 with an annual salary of \$103,001. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
 - **Appoint Joshua Lemay to Full-time Police Detective effective October 11, 2026, Grade D, Step 9 at \$38.54/hour**
Goldman makes the motion to appoint Joshua Lemay to Full-time Police Detective effective October 11, 2026, Grade D, Step 9 at \$38.54/hour. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
 - **Appoint Jacob Sak to Full-time Police Patrol Officer effective October 18, 2026, Grade P, Step 4 at \$28.51.hour**
Goldman makes the motion to appoint Jacob Sak to Full-time Police Patrol Officer effective October 18, 2026, Grade P, Step 4 at \$28.51.hour. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Library**
 - **Approve increase in hours for Colleen Rauch, Library Assistant from 26 to 28 hours per week, effective October 6, 2026. No change in Grade or Step**
 - **Approve increase in hours for Scott Schmith, Library Assistant from 27.5 to 28 hours per week, effective October 6, 2026. No change in Grade or Step**
 - *Goldman makes the motion to approve the two increases in hours for Colleen Rauch and Scott Schmith as described. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- **Airport**

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Memorandum of Agreement with the Airport Commission to provide temporary administrative support for the Turners Falls Municipal Airport

Postponed

- **Parks & Recreation**

- **Resignation of Barbara Kuklewicz, Resignation from Parks & Rec Commission effective 10/01/2026**

Goldman makes the motion to accept the Resignation of Barbara Kuklewicz from the Parks & Rec Commission effective 10/01/2026. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- **Solicitation for statements interest to fill vacant seat on Parks & Rec Commission on an interim basis until the next annual election**

Anyone interested in filling the vacant seat on the Parks and Rec Commission can contact Ramsey or Parks and Rec Director John Dobosz.

- **Historical Commission**

Reappoint David Brule to Historical Commission, effective 10/6/26 for the remainder of term to expire 06/30/2027

Goldman makes the motion to reappoint David Brule to the Historical Commission, effective 10/6/26 for the remainder of term to expire 06/30/2027. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Sheffield and Hillcrest Elementary School Building Committee

Committee update and discussion of feasibility study Article request

Sheffield and Hillcrest Elementary School Building Committee Chair Steve Ellis gives an update on the feasibility study Article request:

- The Town is eligible for funding through the MSBA for the feasibility study phase.
- The committee is trying to get to the best and most cost-effective solution to ensure educational programming is provided in appropriate physical spaces in our buildings.
- The opportunity now is to receive 75% reimbursement for the study.
- The \$1.75 million cost of this study is for the architect and design team, the required engagement of the Owner's Project Manager, an environmental site analysis, and a small amount of contingency.
- Committee member Greg Garrison states that this study not only addresses the physical building, but will also help us understand what the schools and the community needs. He is concerned because we are on a timeline; if Town Meeting doesn't pass this Article, we would fail to meet one of the requirements. He suggests that if we don't have the time to make it through this Town Meeting without fully understanding it and getting all the information out, then maybe we should look at a later date to have a Town Meeting.
- Committee member Tari Thomas states that she sees the feasibility study as something that buys us 12-18 months of expert architectural and engineering data to evaluate all the options, and would help us start thinking about a vision for what we want teaching and learning environments to be for our kids for the next many decades.
- Committee member Kerry Heathwaite agrees with Thomas. She also feels that this study would give Sheffield and Hillcrest the opportunity to really become one team (i.e., to partner with each other).
- In response to a question by Jeff Singleton, Ellis states that the core focus is on grades 2-5 at Sheffield with an acknowledgement that the absorption of Pre-K to 2 at Hillcrest would be a part of a focal point of the study. He discusses different scenarios regarding the two buildings.
- Each of the Selectmen gives reasons for their approval of the study.
- In response to a question by Card, Ellis states that we would not get a reuse study of the Hillcrest Elementary School if that school were "mothballed." The Town would make a determination as to how we want to proceed with that building.
- Other issues discussed include the risk of trying to aim for a lower figure, the Owner's Project Manager budget, engagement with other stakeholders, and the MSBA process.
- Ellis states that all of the committee's meetings are posted.

Special Town Meeting October 28th, 2026

- **Vote Selectboard recommendations to Town Meeting on Warrant Articles**

- *Goldman makes the motion to endorse Article 1 as presented. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Goldman makes the motion to recommend Article 2 as presented. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Goldman makes the motion to endorse Article 3 as discussed. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Goldman makes the motion to endorse Article 4 as discussed. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

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- Goldman makes the motion to endorse Article 5 as presented. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- Goldman makes the motion to endorse Article 6 as presented. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- Goldman makes the motion to endorse Article 7 as presented. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- Goldman makes the motion to endorse Article 8 as presented. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- Goldman makes the motion to endorse Article 9 as presented. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Approve and execute the Warrant for October 28th, 2026 as attached hereto**
Goldman makes the motion to approve and execute Warrant for October 28th, 2026. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

- **Authorize Contract with Skanska USA Building Inc. for Owner's Project Manager (OPM) services on the Strathmore Mill Cleanup Project. Contract value is not-to-exceed \$399,440.00 to be funded with State earmark and EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant.**
Goldman makes the motion to authorize the Contract with Skanska USA Building Inc. for Owner's Project Manager (OPM) services on the Strathmore Mill Cleanup Project; Contract value is not-to-exceed \$399,440.00 to be funded with State earmark and EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Authorize Contract with Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. for Oakman Street erosion mitigation (30% design plans). Contract value is \$60,000.00 to be funded with Town Meeting appropriation.**
Goldman makes the motion to authorize the Contract with Fuss & O'Neill, Inc. for Oakman Street erosion mitigation (30% design plans). Contract value is \$60,000.00 to be funded with Town Meeting appropriation. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Authorize Change Order #1 with Omasta Landscaping, Inc. for required footprint expansion on Unity Park Playground Improvements Project.**
 - Goldman makes the motion to authorize the Change Order #1 with Omasta Landscaping, Inc. for required footprint expansion on Unity Park Playground Improvements Project. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
 - Goldman makes the motion to approve the authorization to spend \$1,698.00 from Project/Bid Overrun Account No. 001-5-950-5122-032. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Execution of United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD) forms for Phase 2 Sewer Collection System Upgrades loan/grant letter (Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions, Request for Obligation of Funds, Eligibility Certification, Grant Agreement).**
Goldman makes the motion to execute the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD) forms for Phase 2 Sewer Collection System Upgrades loan/grant letter. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Authorize Notice to Proceed with Crowley & Associates for appraisal services reviewing easements associated with the North Leverett Road over Sawmill River Bridge Replacement Project. Contract value is \$9,900.00 to be funded with Unexpected Engineering Account.**
 - Goldman makes the motion to authorize the Notice to Proceed with Crowley & Associates for appraisal services reviewing easements associated with the North Leverett Road over Sawmill River Bridge Replacement Project. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
 - Goldman makes the motion to approve the expenditure of \$9,900.00 from the Unexpected Engineering Account No. 001-5-950-5175-010. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Other Project Updates**
 - We are nearing the final stretch for the Montague City Construction.
 - We received three grants from the Community One Stop Program: (1) \$456,000 from the Site Readiness Program, and (2) \$209,000 from the Mass Downtown Initiative Capital Fund, and (3) \$40,000 from the Mass Downtown Initiative Capital Fund.

Town Administrator's Business

- **Standard planning communication from Town's Auditors regarding FY26 Audit**
Ramsey states that we received the standard planning communication from Town's Auditors regarding FY26 Audit.

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- **Farren redevelopment updates**
 - We are about ready to announce the Request for Proposals for the Farren Redevelopment.
 - The Secretary of Housing and Economic Development is going to be visiting Town tomorrow to announce the grant we received, as well as to visit the Farren site.
- **Topics not anticipated within 48-hour posting requirement**
None

Next Meeting

Selectboard Meeting: Monday, October 19 at 6:00 PM via ZOOM

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