MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
VIA ZOOM
Monday, October 26, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Marina Goldman, and Nate Card; Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Assistant town Administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller; and DPW Superintendent Sam Urkiel.

Approve Minutes: October 19, 2026, if available
Goldman makes the motion to approve the Minutes for October 19, 2026. 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

Personnel Board
Appoint Adam Dennis as DWF Laborer/Operator, Grade H, Step 1 at $22.56/hour, 40 hours per week, effective 11/9/2026
Goldman makes the motion to appoint Adam Dennis as DWF Laborer/Operator, Grade H, Step 1 at $22.56/hour, 40 hours per week, effective 11/9/2026. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Department of Public Works Business with Director Sam Urkiel

- **Department Updates**
  - Summer paving projects are complete.
  - Second Street Alley and Marsdens Way*(4:51)* Alley projects are complete.
  - The work on the basketball court in Montague Center has begun.
- **Authorize 10-year contract extension with Dept of Transportation governing Chapter 90 Funds**
  Goldman makes the motion to authorize a 10-year contract extension with Dept of Transportation governing Chapter 90 Funds. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Review of Tree Warden Operating Protocols**
  The Selectboard members have reviewed the draft of the Tree Warden Operating Protocols and have no questions about it.
- **Other *(not on agenda)***
  - Tree Advisory Committee liaison Nate Card expressed his wish that the committee would meet again soon and regularly.
  - Card reads aloud a petition that 106 members of the community signed. This will be discussed in a future agenda.
- **Proposed 2-year trash hauling contract extension with Cassella effective 7/1/2027-6/30/2029**
  - Cassella is proposing a 2-year trash hauling contract extension.
  - Urkiel estimates the total increase to the Town will be approximately $150,000.
  - Ramsey states that the Board would need to make a strategic decision whether to proceed with the extension or go out to bid (which he does not recommend).

Town Administrator's Business

- **First Review of FY28 General Fund revenue and expense projections**
  Ramsey reviews the preliminary projections for next year:
  - For the Operating Budget, we are looking at a similar position as we were in last year. We are looking at about a $573,000 shortfall (if we decide to keep the Excess Taxation Capacity at the same level as last year).
  - Benefits keep increasing.
  - Education costs are up.
  - Public works is seeing a big increase because of the solid waste hauling.
  - We are not going to be in a good position to look at expanding services or adding staff.
- **Solid Waste Collection budget impacts and curbside pickup sticker review: recommendation to increase trash fees starting January 1, 2027**
  Ramsey states that when we shift things to Taxation, we would also have to account for an additional expenses for the Affordable Assessment to the schools. With regard to trash stickers, he recommends going to $5 per bag or $260 per barrel over the course of the year.
- **Proposed FY28 Budget Development Schedule**
  - Ramsey will be issuing departmental guidance to department heads next week.
  - Ramsey is looking at asking for a level funding scenario, as well as a scenario where there are some cost reductions in the budget.
  - In response to a question by Card, Ramsey states he would be asking all departments for cost reductions.

- In response to a question by Card regarding the process, Ramsey states that they can have a conversation to discuss the process.
- Ramsey is suggesting doing a financial summit with the Selectboard, the Fin Com, and the CIC in March.
- Card requests a date and a place to hold public engagement around this issue. Ramsey agrees.

- **Debt Projection Memorandum *(not on agenda)***
  At the Pre-Town Meeting, Ramsey was requested to provide the Debt Projection graph to Town Meeting members. He has included informational context for the members and will be sending this out tomorrow.

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

- **Request authorization to apply for Clean Energy and Environmental Legacy Transition (CELT) Municipal Fellowship program for assistance with energy-related grant reporting and decarbonization planning**
  Goldman makes the motion to authorize the Town to apply for the Clean Energy and Environmental Legacy Transition (CELT) Municipal Fellowship program for assistance with energy-related grant reporting and decarbonization planning. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Saturday, Oct. 31 - Rag Shag Parade - rain or shine; costume judging starts at 4:30 PM at Peskeompskut Park; parade starts at the park @ 5:00 and proceeds down Avenue A to 2nd St. lot**
  Nolan-Zeller states that the Rag Shag Parade will take place on Saturday, October 31.
- **Sunday, Nov. 1 - Montague Soapbox Races - weather permitting; races begin at noon and go until approximately 3:00 PM**
  Nolan-Zeller states that the Montague Soapbox Races will take place on Sunday, November 1st.
- **Topics not anticipated within 48-hour posting requirements/Update on Unity Park Playground**
  The Unity Park Playground improvements are almost complete. The were two incidences of residents breaching the construction fence, which has been addressed by the contractor.

Next Meeting(s):

<u>Fall Special Town Meeting:</u> Wednesday, October 28th, 2026 at 6:30 PM to be held at Turners Falls High School Theater

<u>Selectboard Meeting:</u> Monday, November 2, 2026 at 6:30 PM - HYBRID

Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the New England Police Development Union Local 183 (Patrol and Detectives) as the Chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Town's bargaining position, and not to reconvene in open session. Continued from 10/19/2026

- The Chair declares that holding this discussion in open meeting would be detrimental to the Town's bargaining position.
- *Goldman make the motion to go into Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the New England Police Development Union Local 183 (Patrol and Detectives), continued from 10/19/2026. Seconded by Card, unanimously approved. Goldman - Aye, Card - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*