



**Town of Montague**  
**Department, Board, Committee, Commission**  
**BUDGET NARRATIVE**

**FY 23**

*Complete this form electronically! Be clear and concise!*

Department: WPCF Submitted by: Chelsey Little

**1. Please describe and provide the rationale for any substantial changes in your FY23 line-item budget submission.**

Personnel

This line item is affected by the creation of a new Laboratory Manager position. This position is seen as critical to the skill set and consistency needed in the laboratory to maintain permit compliance. Please see attached "Staffing Request Laboratory Manager 2021" and "Draft Laboratory Manager Job Description" documents for further information.

Sludge

The current sludge cake hauling contract expires on Dec 31, 2021. Unfortunately, after only receiving two bids for cake hauling services with a new contract, the price may increase from the current \$95/wet ton to approximately \$214/wet ton. As the procurement and award has not been made official at this time, it seems appropriate to budget for the worst-case scenario. The facility is working on ways to reduce the high disposal cost of sludge, to include a composting feasibility study, and implementation of its new screw-press, which is predicted to produce a higher percent solid cake, which in turn disposes of more solids at a lower cost.

**2. To this point in FY22, has your department experienced any notable successes, such as improving or providing new programs or services, or implementing new technologies? If so, please describe.**

Facility Updates

The facility has recently re-evaluated its current SCADA software and has found an alternative that offers greater reliability and service. It also removes the costly need for annual licensing and service contracts as well as offers a remote access function, eliminating the need for third party applications such as TeamViewer.

The new dewatering press for sludge was received and installed in November. Commissioning is scheduled for January 2022. In order to save money, the facility staff acted as the general contractor for the project, installing the concrete pad, conduit, electrical, plumbing, and controls required for start-up.

Primary sludge pump #2 was installed and commissioned. In an effort to save money, staff removed the old concrete pad from the old pump and re-piped the press with stainless steel plumbing. All plumbing was done in house with our licensed plumber and support from our Lead Mechanic, who performed the welding required to complete the job.

A new camera system has been installed for added security and monitoring of both the operations and admin ends of the facility.

The facility received a \$169,000 rural development grant to replace the pumps at the Industrial Park Pump Station.

A new sign near the main entrance gate of the facility was installed, with the address and name of the facility. (There had previously been no signage.)

Composting Study: With financial assistance from the FRCOG, the facility is conducting a composting study in order to evaluate composting options for the Town.

As part of the Chlorination Conversion Project, the portable gas meters were updated. The new gas meters and their hubs provide important safety notification in the event of exposure to harmful gases such as hydrogen sulfide, LEL, chlorine gas and low levels of oxygen. Staff use these monitors every time they enter a confined space.

Mural Project: Twenty-three submittals were received for the 10' diameter mural for the Admin Building. After careful deliberation by the Selection Committee, a final design was chosen which represents water quality and the interconnectedness of our local environment.

A storm drain located near the septage receiving station and facility roll off was converted into a manhole that will pump any runoff back to treatment instead of discharging to the CT River.

#### Staffing

Patricia Holloway became the full-time Administrative Assistant. Samuel Stevens was promoted from Laborer/Operator to Wastewater Technician. Noah Diamond was hired as the Laborer/Operator.

#### Administrative Orders

As per a Clean Air Act EPA AO, the facility was able to complete phase one of the Chlorine Conversion Project, which eliminated all use of chlorine gas on site, removed all chlorine gas equipment, and installed sodium hypochlorite equipment. The facility is now working on phase two, which includes redesign of the chlorine gas storage room to accommodate sodium hypochlorite tanks. The removal of the chlorine gas system has met the recommendations of the order, which is now closed out pending final EPA review.

As per a Clean Water Act EPA AO, the facility worked with Wright-Peirce Engineering Firm to complete and implement both a High Flow Management Plan and Effluent Compliance Plan. These plans were implemented on September 30.

- 3. Are there presently challenges to your department's ability to meet its goals and objectives that are due to its FY22 operating budget? If so, offer your recommendation(s) for improving the situation.**

#### Sludge Disposal

Unfortunately, sludge disposal is an increasing problem for facilities all over the country. The facility must remove an adequate amount of sludge in order to maintain permit compliance. There is a very fine line between keeping removal as little as possible due to cost restraints and getting enough sludge out to make permit. The facility recommends developing another option available for sludge disposal, specifically composting the Town's generated sludge. This will aid in reducing the extensive hauling and disposal costs and allow for a third option for removal.

#### Critical spares/preventative maintenance

It is crucial to maintain a budget that allows for preventative maintenance, and critical spares inventory. The facility would like to move away from operating in an emergency/tertiary fashion, which leads to higher overall operating costs. By allowing for the extra room upfront for proper maintenance and planning, the facility can anticipate a decrease in expensive emergency services from contractors, vendors, parts ordering, etc.

- 4. Did you receive funding for any special articles in FY22? What is the status of those expenditures/investments? Does your department have any older special article appropriations that remain unspent?**

Special Articles

Chlorination Conversion Project: The facility was able to complete phase one of the Chlorine Conversion Project, which eliminated all use of chlorine gas on site, removed all chlorine gas equipment, and installed sodium hypochlorite equipment. The facility is now working on phase two, which includes redesign of the chlorine gas storage room to accommodate sodium hypochlorite tanks.

Sludge Dewatering Press: The new dewatering press for sludge was received and installed in November. Commissioning is scheduled for January 2022. In order to save money, the facility staff acted as the general contractor for the project, installing the concrete pad, conduit, electrical, plumbing, and controls required for start-up.

Unspent Articles

Composting study: The composting study is currently in progress and is anticipated to be completed by the end of Dec 2021.

Lab software: The facility is currently researching options for data management and reporting software.