

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM  
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA  
MONDAY, April 27, 2015**

Meeting was opened at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room. Present were Selectpersons, Mark Fairbrother, Chris Boutwell, Mike Nelson; Town Administrator, Frank Abbondanzio , Executive Assistant, Wendy Bogusz

**Approve minutes of April 13, 2015 if available**

*Fairbrother makes the motion to approve the minutes of April 13, 2015. Seconded by Nelson, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye*

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

J. Reynolds: Went to a meeting regarding the pipeline, was hoping the Selectmen would get the Water District to rethink their vote to allow access to their land

Waiting to get DPW maintenance to install case on the wall for the cane

J. Golrick: Passes out handout, wants to talk about public review of employee job performance, it seems like it's an issue no one wants to address. I want to advise you the Airport does the job performance review of its manager in public according to the specifications. I think it would behoove you to read a chapter on Building Inspectors. I would be embarrassed for you if the Peter principal was enacted tonight. There are two active complaints about Mr. Jensen that this board has totally ignored. Wants job performance done in public

**Personnel Board**

**Place Angela Rovati-Leonard, Children's Librarian on FMLA leave until 6/11/15**

*Nelson makes the motion to place Angela Rovati-Leonard, Childrens Librarian on FMLA leave effective May 11, 2015 until 6/11/15. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye*

**Resignation of Tina Sulda as backup for Town Accountant effective 3/26/15**

*Nelson makes the motion to appoint Tina Sulda as backup for Town Accountant effective 3/26/15. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Nelson - Aye*

**Appoint Shari Hildreth as backup for Town Accountant, effective 4/28/15, \$27.54/hour**

*Nelson makes the motion to appoint Shari Hildreth as backup for Town Accountant effective 4/28/15, \$27.54/hour up to 50 hours per year. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye*

**Appoint Laura Aruda as IT Administrator, \$2,000 stipend/year**

*Nelson makes the motion to appoint Laura Aruda as IT Administrator at \$2,000 stipend/year effective April 28, 2015 Seconded by Fairbrother approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye*

**Suzanne LoManto, Turners Falls RiverCulture**

**Execute Contract with FirstLight Power for land usage (Unity Park waterfront and the iron bridge behind the Great Falls Discovery Center)**

**May 16, 2015 River's Song Celebration, 11:00 AM to 10 PM**

*Nelson makes the motion to authorize the contract with First Light Power between the Town, Turners Falls RiverCulture and First Light Power for use of land (Unity park waterfront and the iron bridge behind the Great Falls Discovery Center) on May 16, 2015 for the River Song Celebration event being hosted by the Turners Falls RiverCulture from 11:00 AM to 10 PM. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Nelson - Aye*

**August 1, 2015, Pocumtuck Homelands Festival, 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM**

*Nelson makes the motion to authorize the contract with First Light Power between the Town, Turners Falls RiverCulture and First Light Power for use of land behind Town Hall owned by First Light Power on August 1,*

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*2015 for the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye, Nelson - Aye*

**Donna Francis, Chair, Agriculture Committee**

**Request to authorize Montague Agriculture Commission to sponsor the 2015 season of the Great Falls Farmers Market**

Francis: This is our third year sponsoring the event and we'd like to do this again

*Nelson makes the motion to authorize the Montague Agriculture Commission to sponsor the 2015 season of the Great Falls Farmers Market beginning May 6, 2015 through the end of October 2015. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye*

**Request to place "Montague is a right to farm community" signs at the town line on certain roads.**

Francis: Last year the Agricultural Commission applied for a grant from the Mass. Assoc. of Agricultural Commissions and we received \$500 to put up signs at the entrances of Town to declare we are a right to farm community.

*Nelson makes the motion to authorize the Agricultural committee to work with Tom Bergeron to place 5 signs stating Montague is a right to farm community on route 47, at the Sunderland town line, route 63 at the town line, Avenue A at Gill Bridge, Meadow Road and on Route 63 at the Millers Falls bridge on Bridge street. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye*

**Phil Desbien, Rising Costs of Electricity**

Desbien: My electric bill has gone up approximately 150% since Eversource became my supplier of electricity. Please see the attached detailed bill. Eversource billed me \$62.18 for "Generation Service Charge and \$44.41 for "Delivery" on 437 KWH. I have done extensive research on line and there is a bunch of rhetoric at the state level but not much is being accomplished. Deregulation has cost the people of the Town of Montague a lot of money. We pay \$0.1016/KWH for Delivery and \$0.1423/KWH "Generation Service Charge". It will cost me an extra \$533 per year for "Delivery" before paying for electricity. I am on a fixed income and that \$533 will have to come from my food budget. My average KWH usage is below average Town of Montague KWH usage. The average Town of Montague customer usage is 540 KWH/ month. There are 3,844 homes in the Town of Montague.  $540 \times \$0.1016 \times 12 \times 3,844 \sim \$1,981,511$ /yr of delivery charge from, Eversource. What are we paying for? We can shop for cheaper electric rates but the "Delivery Service Charge stays at \$0.1016/KWH. The  $\$0.1423/\text{KWH} \times 540\text{KWH}/\text{mo} \times 12 \text{ mo.} \times 3,844$  customers = \$3,544,567/yr for Generation is marginally variable. As Of April 20, 2015 Delivery . \$1,981,511 Generation \$3,544,567 Total of \$5,526,078 per year of f110ney out of the pockets of Montague tax payers.

Eversource is able to charge a Delivery Service Charge because Northeast Utilities (Now Eversource) sold off all their generating facilities at the turn of the century but they retained ownership of the transmission and distribution lines. The electricity we purchase must get to our homes via Eversource transmission lines and therefore the Delivery charge will NEVER go away. We may take the option to purchase electricity from other suppliers and maybe save \$10.00/mo. But that is all we can do.

The electric customers in Massachusetts are free to purchase electricity from any source available. Our default supplier is Eversource. PUC accepted the bids for electricity supply for the past six months even though they were way out of line. They should have been in the \$0.14/KWH but the electricity generators reasoning was that the cost to generate with natural gas was going to escalate and the generators wanted to hedge their bids. Natural gas prices did not increase. The electricity generators made huge profits. My estimated Generator service charge for the customers in Massachusetts is \$2,774,895,060/yr. ( 2.77 billion dollars). Cabot station generates approximately 62 MW at a cost of approximately \$0.11/KW.  $62000 \text{ KWH} \text{ at } \$0.11 = \$6820$  generating cost per hour. Sell at  $\$0.21 \times 62000 = \$13020$ .  $\$13020 - \$6820 = \$6200$  profit per hour. Table 8.4 The generating companies made huge profits. Those profits are reflected in the share holder's stock dividends. Eversource executives probably do not have stock in Firstlight or Western Mass Electric or vice versa or, or. .... Naaa  
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(Redirected from Northeast Utilities) Eversource Energy (formerly known as Northeast Utilities) is a publicly traded, Fortune 500 energy company headquartered in Hartford, Connecticut and Boston, Massachusetts, with several regulated subsidiaries offering retail electricity and natural gas service to more than 3.6 million customers in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Following its 2012 merger with Boston-based NSTAR, NU has more than 4,270 circuit miles of electric transmission lines, 72,000 pole miles of distribution lines, and 6,459 miles of natural gas pipeline in New England. On February 2, 2015, Northeast Utilities and all its subsidiaries rebranded themselves as "Eversource Energy". The stock symbol changed on February 19, 2015 from "NU" to IIESII. Eversource has 2,708,759 customers in Massachusetts (2013 AVG. Bill-Residential)

Deregulation actually started approximately 15 years ago. Our electric bills did not escalate until November 2014. What happened? The forecast for electricity usage in Massachusetts indicated that the demand would drop by 21.73% in 2015. The CEO of Eversource would not have received a one million dollar raise if Eversource's revenue dropped by 21.73%. The CEO of Firstlight would not have received his bonus if the Firstlight revenue dropped by 21.73%. Something had to be done. A simple supply and demand curve is as follows. If supply is constant (which it is) profit may be realized by increased demand. When demand drops the price will drop. When demand increases the price will increase accordingly. Demand was forecasted to drop. The price should have gone down! We the people of Massachusetts started conserving with LED lights, compact fluorescent lights and energy efficient appliances. What is the electricity industry to do? All of the electricity generators skewed the curve by increasing prices based on some projected increase in their cost due to the projected price increase in natural gas. There was no increase in the price of natural gas. Eversource has been upgrading their transmission lines over the years. New towers, new roads to access the towers are some of the improvements. Those improvements cost money. Supply is constant. Where would they get the money? They are getting the money from us, the customers.

The people of the Town of Montague may be in a unique situation to do something about it. The Connecticut River is OUR, the people of Montague, natural resource. That ugly canal that runs through our town is stealing our natural resource. I believe The Town of Montague owns the canal. The Town of Montague should charge a delivery fee for the water to Cabot Station. I believe The Town of Montague owns the dam. We can charge a delivery fee. We have a right to quiet enjoyment of our natural resources. The pond above the power generating station is a wild life habitat and should be protected as a wetland. The rise and fall of the water level at the whim of Firstlight generation needs should be stopped immediately. The draining of the river basin during times of low river flow should be stopped immediately. Cabot Station should be shut down and turned into a museum adjoining a beautiful wetland park. Take it by eminent domain. We can come together as a Town and simply not pay any more "Delivery Charge" on our electric bills. Find a way to do it! Or just do it! We have a Town Meeting coming up.

I am not an accountant but I do know something about paying taxes and asset depreciation. Eversource owns hundreds of miles of copper wire and hundreds of tons of copper. I do not know the Town tax structure evaluation for Eversource but I do know that copper wire has value. This country has seen many large corporations buy up smaller companies and sell off the assets. The price of copper is approximately \$3.00 per pound. Copper was approximately \$0.60/lb prior to the year 2004. \$3.00/lb = \$6000/ton for copper. Cabot station has tons of copper inside the building and is owned by Firstlight. Eversource has tons of copper wire and utility poles and transformers running all through the Town of Montague. The tax valuation should be based upon their assets. They have a very accurate account of their power lines. I have a right to quiet enjoyment of my property. As I look out my window I see ugly power lines and ugly power poles and an ugly power transformer. They ruin my view. As I travel throughout the Town of Montague I see ugly power lines and ugly power poles and ugly power transformers. They ruin my view. The Town of Montague should impose an inverse view tax on Eversource. Once every month an Eversource employee comes onto my property and takes a reading from my electric company electric meter. I have a right to quiet enjoyment of my property. They are trespassers. They should make an appointment with a two hour window before they come onto my property. The Town of Montague should pass a bylaw and require prior notice for all residences. The Town of Montague maintains hundreds of miles of roads. The huge and heavy trucks of Eversource travel upon our roads and cause excessive wear and tear to our roads. Eversource should pay a tax for every foot of road they travel upon with their heavy vehicles. Occasionally the heavy and large trucks park on our streets and block traffic. What gives them the right to do so? The Town of Montague should impose a huge fine on Eversource for blocking traffic and creating a potential for traffic accidents. There was recently a great deal of cutting trees for the sole purpose of circumventing power outages caused by bent or broken branches. What gives them the right to cut my trees? The Town of Montague should file a

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class action suit against Eversource for cutting trees without owner permission. I believe there are many legal remedies for harming trees of others. There is a new licensing agreement for Firstlight river use coming up. What an opportunity The level of the Connecticut River rises and falls at the whim of the Northfield Mountain pumped storage power generating station which is owned by FirstLight. The fluctuations of the river level cause undue stress on wildlife habitat and wetlands. The fluctuations of river level are a danger to the Town of Montague citizens that use the river for recreation. The fluctuations are particularly dangerous . when there is ice on the river. What gives them the right to endanger our lives?

The Town of Montague has a unique opportunity to develop a model for fighting back against the Eversource monopoly. Some of the remedies that I have put forth in this letter may be frivolous and difficult to enforce. There may be other actions to be taken. let us as a town and as a people get creative and think outside the box. There is a solution to the unfair practices of Eversource and the electricity generators. We must find it. If you, the select persons, can accomplish a solid remedy you will be on the letterman Show. We must force Eversource to negotiate a fair and just ((Delivery service charge" or eliminate it. Tax them \$3,487,276 to be given back to the people thru property tax reductions and \$3,487,276 to be used in the town general budget. We can afford to spend a little time on this project. That will get their collective attention. JUST DO IT!

Mr. Desbien is told the Board has no control of the electricity rates

Abbondanzio: We don't own the dam, we don't own the canal we don't own the resources that are used to generate the electricity or transmit it. However, we get \$117 million in value from the utility company that is just from Firstlight. That is up from \$47 million back in 2006. The assessors are doing their job in recognizing what value is out there. Right now the utility company pays 25% of all the taxes paid in the Town of Montague, so they are our top tax payer. We are recognizing the value that is out there and we are getting every single dollar that we have coming to us. All the information you brought up tonight is true, but it is all recognized in value and it is all taxed.

**Town Administrators Report**

**Establish Search Committee to hire Director of Assessing: Town Administrator, Temporary Director of Assessing, Board of Assessors Chair, Select Board Member, Treasurer/Tax Collector, Town Accountant, and Assistant Assessor**

*Fairbrother makes the motion to establish a search committee to hire a Director of Assessing, the committee to include Town Administrator, Frank Abbondanzio; Selectmen Michael Nelson, Board of Assessors, Chair Paul Emery, Treasurer/Tax Collector Patty Dion, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen Temporary Director of Assessing, Doug McIntosh. Seconded by Nelson, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye*

**Authorize disbursement for the Senior Center Planning Study**

*Nelson makes the motion to authorize disbursement #5, Invoice #2014003-5 on behalf of the Senior Center Planning Study to Catlin + Petrovick Architects, PC in the amount of \$11,525.00. Seconded by Fairbrother, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother - Aye*

**Letter of support for appointment of David Jensen to Bureau of Building Regulations and Standards**

Jensen: This is somewhat of a process, there is an obligation for organizations to submit names to the Governor and he will pick from a list. We are unclear at this point if that has happened. I was prepared to withdraw this, but it is unclear to the organization if this has happened or not. There are only 2 organizations in the state that can submit names to the Governor. I am one of 5 names under consideration and I would like to think it is beneficial to the Town. Small Towns are poorly represented. I would like to go to this meeting with a positive indication from the Board

*Fairbrother makes the motion that the selectmen issue, through its Town Administrator a letter of support for David Jensen being appointed to the Massachusetts Federation of Building Officials (BBRS). Seconded by Nelson, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Fairbrother – Aye*

**Sign May 18, 2015 Election Warrant as attached**

