

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

MAY 5, 2018

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Article	Article
1. Annual Reports	19. WPCF Equipment - \$20,000
2. Grants	20. WPCF Panels/Alarms - \$25,000
3. Hazmat Revolving Bylaw	21. WPCF Solar Array - \$521,000
4. Hazmat Revolving Limit	22. Senior Center Entrance - \$30,000
5. Elected Salaries	23. DPW Equipment - \$100,000
6. Appointed Salaries	24. IT Equipment - \$15,000
7. Cultural Coordinator Position	25. MC Park Master Plan - \$7,000
8. Town Operating Budget-\$9,400,018	26. Town Map Storage - \$30,000
9. WPCF Operating Budget-\$2,017,231	27. Colle Building Repairs - \$150,000
10. Colle Operating Budget - \$97,375	28. GMRSD Stabilization - \$37,811
11. Airport Operating Budget - \$51,039	29. Town General Stabilization - \$121,726
12. FCTS Assessment - \$974,338	30. Town Capital Stabilization - \$76,294
13. GMRSD Assessment - \$9,811,160	31. OPEB Trust Fund - \$50,000
14. Hillcrest Entrance - \$12,000	32. Local Option Meals Tax
15. TFHS/GFMS BMS-\$72,000	33. Colle Preservation Restriction
16. Sheffield Intercom - \$30,000	34. Board of Selectmen to Select Board
17. Hillcrest Intercom - \$25,000	35. Allow Selectmen to convey property
18. GMRSD Lease	36. Resolution: Greenhouse Emission pricing

ARTICLES 1- 2

Consent Agenda for More Routine Articles

This year the Town Moderator is continuing a practice introduced a couple of years ago, in which articles that have traditionally evoked little discussion or debate on town meeting floor will be voted as a block, without a full reading by the Town Moderator. Town meeting members will, however, be permitted to put a hold on any or all of these consent articles, in which case the article subject to the hold will be subject to a full reading and debate. The purpose of the consent agenda is to expedite consideration of routine town meeting articles. The first two articles fall into this category and allow the Town to accept reports and grants.

ARTICLE 3 – Establish Revolving Fund in Bylaws

This repeats last year's Article 3 in case the Attorney General's office requires a second vote. It allows the annual vote to authorize a revolving fund for hazardous waste cleanup to be replaced with incorporating the revolving fund in to the town bylaws. After the warrant was signed it was determined that this article is not needed, so a no vote is requested.

ARTICLE 4 – Establish Limit for HazMat Revolving Fund

The Department of Revenue now advises an annual vote for the limit, even if the fund is authorized in town bylaws, so Article 4 provides the annual limit of \$7,500 to this fund.

ARTICLE 5 - Fix the Salaries of Elected Officials.

This article appears regularly on the annual warrant. The salaries of the Town Clerk and Treasurer/Collector when the incumbent is elected are linked to those of the full time appointed officials, whose wage scale is increased 2.0% for Fiscal Year 2018. The Treasurer/Tax Collector is shown on both Schedule I and Schedule II because the position remains appointed until the annual Town Election in May of 2019.

ARTICLE 6 - Fix the Salaries of Appointed Officials.

This article appears regularly on the annual warrant. Recommended salary ranges for full-time appointed officials reflect the implementation of a 2.0% increase on the wage scale. The other requested change is the addition of an Airport Intern position.

ARTICLE 7 – Create Cultural Coordinator Position

This position replaces the former contract-based RiverCulture Director position with a Town position consistent with requirements of the Massachusetts Independent Contractor Law, MGL c. 148, § 148B.

Establishment and funding of this position will retain existing capacity associated with the RiverCulture Director position at the same relative cost. The position would no longer be funded primarily through grants, which are no longer available. This will allow the position to focus on cultural coordination throughout the entirety of our community, rather than just the village of Turners Falls.

ARTICLE 8 - Highlights of the Town Operating Budget

This information can be found in the Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 9 - Highlights of the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) Operating Budget

This information can be found in the Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 10 - Colle Building Budget

This budget is wholly supported by building lease fees. It pays for all of the normal building maintenance including utilities, a cleaning service, general repairs, and the debt service from the renovation. Debt service costs continue to decrease as the debt is paid down and will be retired at the end of Fiscal Year 2023. A separate appropriation for major building renovations is requested in Article 27.

ARTICLE 11 - Airport Budget

This budget pays for the operating costs of the Turners Falls Airport, which is run by the Airport Commission. There is a new request for a part-time intern, who will be part of the intern program of the Franklin County Technical School. Even with this increase of \$2,500 the budget shows only a \$1,114 increase from the current year.

ARTICLE 12 - Franklin County Technical School Assessment

The Tech School Assessment of \$974,388 is \$227,000 higher than the current year. The increase is due primarily to a sharp increase (from 56 to 79) in the number of Montague students attending the school. An additional \$22,883 reflects the first year of a capital assessment for paving, windows, doors and roof replacement. The increase due to our higher number of students is expected to remain in place for at least another three years, while the capital assessment will remain for another 14 years.

ARTICLE 13 - Gill-Montague Regional School District Assessment

The district's request matches the Affordable Assessment amount, which is calculated as 48.5% of available operating revenues plus excluded debt for GMRSD projects. The GMRSD has provided additional information in a separate document.

ARTICLE 14 – Hillcrest Entrance

Hillcrest's entryway is currently set up to have the buzzer system outside the exterior door with a small camera to the office. Since there are already a double set of doors, the district would like to install locks to allow for the security entrance to be between the exterior doors and the doors to the auditorium. This would provide a secure area for visitors to enter the building and then be buzzed through after speaking to the main office. Installing a window would allow the main office to see and speak to the visitor and sign them in prior to buzzing them into the rest of the building. Currently they can be viewed on the small screen, but, after being buzzed in, the district relies on the individual to stop in at the office to sign in and receive a visitor's pass. The district is investigating two options. One in which a window would be installed from the office to the enclosed foyer or a camera with a larger video screen so the office personnel can see the visitor before buzzing them in.

ARTICLE 15– GFMS/ TFHS Building Monitoring System

This project would update the network control units and related software for Building Management Systems at the Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School. These are essential to operation and maintenance of HVAC and related systems at the complex. Failure of these controllers would result in building closure. The current units are at the end of their product life cycle and are no longer made or supported. Although replacements for parts can be found, the system is on borrowed time and support for installation and troubleshooting is limited. The new software/automation servers will also enable administrators to send out alarms in the form of emails or text messages, which is not currently an option, should there be an issue with the system. This project was the top priority for funding by the GMRSD. Montague will pay for approximately 90% of the total \$80,000 cost with Gill responsible for the remainder.

ARTICLE 16– Sheffield Intercom AND

ARTICLE 17 – Hillcrest Intercom

Sheffield's Public Address system is original to the building and is not audible in many classrooms or in the Gym, Auditorium or staff room. Hillcrest's Public Address system is not audible in many areas of the building and can only be used from the main office.

These projects would replace outdated and in some places non-functioning hard wired intercom systems with new wireless intercoms throughout both buildings. In addition to the value of these projects to effective building-wide communication, the Capital Improvements Committee views these as a public safety necessity.

ARTICLE 18 – GMRSD Lease

The Town of Montague owns certain buildings and land used by the Gill-Montague Regional School District and the present 15 year lease agreement expires in August 2018. This article allows the Selectmen to negotiate and approve a new 15 year lease of the Hillcrest and Sheffield Schools. The lease will describe the GMRSD's rights to use land and facilities and identify each party's responsibilities relative to maintenance and capital improvements.

ARTICLE 19 – WPCF Equipment.

\$20,000 would be raised from Sewer User Fees to fund a WPCF vehicle and equipment account similar to the discretionary accounts in the DPW and Police Department. This fund will be used to purchase, equip and make major repairs to WPCF vehicles and equipment, including any incidental and related costs.

ARTICLE 20 – Panels/Alarms

The control panels at the Denton Street and Montague Center Pump Stations are over 35 years old. The alarms are out of date and will not tie in with the new SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) alarm system. Each control panel has failed multiple times in the last two years and the wiring is old and brittle. These pump stations run 24 hours a day, so wear and tear is quicker on these types of units which makes shut downs more common. This project would allow for replacement of the control panels and alarms at these two Pump Stations. This would allow the Town to fully implement remote monitoring of pump stations under routine conditions. This will be essential when expected staff reductions take place at the WPCF in Fiscal Year 2019.

ARTICLE 21 –WPCF Solar Array

The proposed project, to be funded through sewer borrowing and supported by a \$150,000 state grant, would result in the development of a 200 KW solar array on land adjacent to waste water treatment plant. This proposed project would reduce annual energy costs at the WPCF by between \$50,000 and \$86,000. If financed over 20 years, it would carry an annual cost of approximately \$25,000 per year.

ARTICLE 22 – Senior Center Renovations

This project includes replacement of the front entry of the Senior Center, which is currently out of code and hazardous. The project will include new foundation piers, framework, and stairs, as well as installing an adequate roof over the landing. This roof will be built so as to maintain reasonable visibility of the Turners Falls Athletic Club logo from across the street, though closer views will be obscured. Finish materials will be comprised of composite and/or PVC.

ARTICLE 23 – DPW Equipment

The purpose of this account is to enable the DPW Superintendent to fund purchases of and/or major repairs to DPW vehicles and equipment. This account addresses unforeseen expenditures where timeliness is important, it is not possible to secure town meeting appropriation, and the magnitude of such expenditures would quickly exhaust the Finance Committee reserve fund. \$100,000 was requested by the DPW. The Selectmen, Finance Committee and Capital Improvements Committee all recommend the full amount, as the current discretionary account balance is expected to be fully used by the end of June. Uses of the appropriations in FY2018 include over \$29,000 in vehicle repairs. The DPW Superintendent plans to use an additional \$50,000 for a F350 with plow and sander before the end of FY2018. Plans for the new appropriation include \$75,000 for a new one ton dump truck with plow and sander in addition to any extraordinary repairs needed. This account has been in place for several years and when unspent is rolled into the following fiscal year. The ability to roll resources ahead is an advantage of using a special article for this expense. The goal is to ensure an ongoing balance of \$100,000 at the start of each year and planned expenses suggest that a \$100,000 appropriation is needed in Fiscal Year 2019.

ARTICLE 24 – Information Technology Equipment Account

Current year expenditures include replacing 2 workstations and obtaining needed licenses, with plans to do additional server work this year. The plans for the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriation focus on replacing the main town server.

ARTICLE 25 – Montague Center Park Master Plan

The Montague Parks & Recreation Department (MRPD) is fortunate to have been able to maintain an aggressive Strategic Plan relative to park and facility improvements these last few years, and addressing the deficiencies of Montague Center Park is the next item on our priority list.

Montague Center Park is used for both structured and un-structured activities and events by the general public as well as the Parks & Recreation Department. Unfortunately, when evaluating the facility through the components of *Accessibility*, *Amenities*, and *Activities*, Montague Center Park suffers in all three areas. The lack of accessibility (getting into the park and negotiating to and from the different areas of the facility) is the most obvious deficiency. These shortcomings are magnified when looking at it through the lens of those with mobility issues. When considering the various *Amenities* within the park, while MPRD has installed new items in the playground in the last ten years, there are still some elements that need to be replaced due to age and wear. However, a "band aid" solution would simply limit the potential of this facility. A properly implemented master plan process will allow us to develop a facility that will broaden the *Activities* and functionality of the space, and appeal to more residents and a larger user-base.

The Parks & Recreation Department, with assistance from the project's planning committee, has applied to the Conway School of Landscape & Design to facilitate the master plan for 2019. Obtaining similar services through a commercial landscape architect firm would cost the town \$18 - \$20 thousand (based upon past projects). We feel that The Conway School would provide the needed services at a portion of that cost. The school's project selection process is highly competitive, and aside from having a solid groundwork of items already completed by the project committee, securing the appropriate funds will only make our application stronger.

ARTICLE 26 – Map Storage

This is a continuation of our Town records management project with King Information System. Our Town records have already been sifted through, evaluated, organized, boxed, and labeled and are contained in a precise locating system in our attic and basement. Everything is entered into a database for easy location and retrieval. It is now a priority to do the same for our Town maps. This project includes maps in Town Hall, the DPW, and the WPCF.

ARTICLE 27 – Colle Renovations

This project would use resources available in the Town's Colle Building Reserve Fund (balance = \$346,000) and a possible matching grant from the Massachusetts Historic Preservation Projects fund to make timely repairs to the masonry and windows of the Colle Building, which are subject to historic preservation restrictions. Masonry pointing is in need of improvement on as much as 1/3 of the building and all of its windows are in danger of deterioration. A delay in repair of even a couple of years would likely result in a far higher cost of repair than what is currently being contemplated.

Several first floor interior storm windows will be installed through this project with high efficiency compression units, while the interior storm windows in other locations will be resealed. The Capital Improvements Committee plans to work with the Montague Energy Committee to consider a long term interior storm window replacement program focused on improved efficiency of windows throughout the building.

Consent Agenda – A consent agenda (a single vote for multiple articles) will be requested for Articles 28-31

ARTICLE 28 – GMRSD Stabilization Fund

As part of the lease agreement with Kearsarge, the town will receive an annual lease payment for 20 years. In order to both increase operational revenue and invest in future capital needs, the Finance Committee decided to allocate 50% of this expected revenue to operating expenses. In keeping with the financial policy of sharing 48.5% of the town's general operating revenues with the GMRSD, this 50% is split with the GMRSD as part of the affordable assessment calculation. The Finance Committee recommends that the remaining 50% of the annual lease payment go into stabilization funds, with 48.5% going to the GMRSD Stabilization Fund and the remaining 51.5% going towards the Town's Capital Stabilization Fund.

ARTICLE 29 – Town General Stabilization Fund

With the creation of the Town Capital Stabilization Fund, the Town General Stabilization Fund is intended to be used only when State Aid drops significantly, leaving the Town Capital Stabilization Fund available for capital expenditures. This year's appropriation has two components. The first is \$67,510 to bring this fund up to its minimum recommended balance of just over \$900,000. The second is the Town's annual appropriation of 0.3% of the prior year's general operating revenues (PYGOR) to the Town's General Stabilization Funds, funded from taxation, as part of the Financial Management Policies and Objectives. The PYGOR includes the net tax levy less excluded debt, state aid and local receipts, and excludes one-time revenues. The general operating revenue for FY2017 was \$18,071,870, and 0.3% of that amount is \$54,216. The total of \$54,216 and \$67,510 is the \$121,726 requested in this article.

ARTICLE 30 – Town Capital Stabilization Fund

As with Article 29, the Town's Financial Management Policies and Objectives include annually appropriating 0.2% of the prior year's general operating revenues (PYGOR) to the Town's Capital Stabilization Fund as part of the operating budget funded from taxation. This year's minimum appropriation from taxation is \$36,144. The additional

\$40,150 is the town's 51.5% of the 50% of the Kearsarge lease payment set aside for future capital needs.

ARTICLE 31 – OPEB Trust Fund

Like most other communities in Massachusetts, Montague currently pays for its other post-retirement benefits (OPEB), primarily retiree health insurance, on a pay-as-you-go basis. This means we simply pay the bills as they occur, but make no provision to fund the future costs of current employees after they retire. Much like putting aside money today to pay for future retirement allowances, funding for OPEB is a big topic these days. While towns are not currently required to fund these future benefits, it's still a good idea.

The Town's OPEB obligation as of June 30, 2016 was \$5,320,000 (an increase of \$510,000 from June 30, 2015) and our annual OPEB cost was \$1,170,000 (an increase of \$30,000 from 2015). The appropriation of funds into the OPEB Trust is largely viewed as a symbolic gesture showing that the town recognizes its obligation and is beginning to address it, but having the funds set aside and invested in the State's Pension Reserves Investment Trust has the added benefit of accruing significant investment income. As of March 31, 2018, the town had contributed a total of \$355,074 since May 2, 2015, and the balance had already grown to \$388,000. The Town's long term plan is to address the OPEB unfunded liability in the same way that it is currently addressing the Town's unfunded pension liability. Once the Town's pension fund is "fully funded" (currently expected to occur in FY2030) the money currently appropriated to fund the unfunded pension liability will be freed up for use, on an annual basis, to fund the unfunded OPEB liability.

ARTICLE 32 – Local Option Meals Tax

The Town wishes to follow suite with most other comparable communities up and down the valley that have already adopted the state's Local Options Meals tax. This tax would add 0.75% to the existing 6.25% state sales tax, to which all meals would be subject. The impact on consumers will be negligible (75 cents on a \$100 meal), but is expected to generate over \$50,000 per year for the Town's General Fund. This will become part of the Estimated Receipts used annually to fund operating costs, providing additional resources to pay for needed town services.

ARTICLE 33 – Permanent Preservation Restriction for Colle

The Colle Building, located at the corner of Avenue A and 3rd Street, and occupied by the Center for Responsive Schools, is a town-owned building. The Colle is already under a permanent historic preservation restriction, but this article would allow the

Board of Selectmen to accept possible grant funds from the MA Historic Preservation Commission that would partly offset the cost of needed repairs to the building. The authority is required to allow the Town to agree to any new provisions that may be required, which would be carefully assessed prior to accepting any grant.

ARTICLE 34 – Change “Board of Selectmen” to “Select Board”

The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to recommend that the board’s name be updated to Select Board. This is intended to reflect modern sensibilities and the practical reality that women are equally as likely to serve on the board as men. The article contains language to ensure that the change does not create issues with existing statutes, regulations, or authority associated with the term Board of Selectmen.

ARTICLE 35 – Authorize Selectmen to convey property

This will allow the Selectmen to sell a 2.9 acre buildable lot on Federal Street and bring it back onto the tax rolls. The parcel was acquired by a tax title foreclosure process. The parcel is identified as Assessors Map 40 Lot 148 and is located between 517 and 507 Federal Street.

ARTICLE 36 – Resolution to Establish Greenhouse Gas Emissions Pricing to Curb Climate Change

A separate handout addresses this article.