TOWN OF MONTAGUE

FY2020

ANNUAL BUDGET

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT TO
TOWN MEETING
MONTAGUE, MASSACHUSETTS

May 4, 2019, 8:30 AM

TURNERS FALLS HIGH SCHOOL THEATER

TOWN OF MONTAGUE
Finance Committee
One Avenue A
Turners Falls, Massachusetts 01376
413 863-3200

April 18, 2019

To Town Meeting Members:

The following report provides context for the budget. This year, we have made some adjustments to how it is organized, and we welcome your feedback about those changes. In the opening section, we provide an overview of the Town of Montague's funding goals, revenue sources, and major expenditure categories. Then, in the motions that follow, each motion that will be considered at Annual Town Meeting is presented and accompanied by information about each request. This background and commentary are drawn from discussions with Town staff, the school districts, the Selectboard, and the Capital Improvements Committee.

Budget development for Fiscal Year 2020 started in the autumn of 2018 with a preliminary estimate of revenue for the upcoming year. In December, the Town Administrator provided department heads with instructions in the "FY20 Budget Message" and the Selectboard and Finance Committee with a "FY19 Budget Review and FY20 Revenue Projections." (Those documents and others documenting the budget development process are available at the Finance Committee's page on **www.montague-ma.gov.)**

Departments were asked to submit budgets and special article requests by January 3, 2019. The Finance Committee and Selectboard reviewed their requests as well as budgets from the Gill-Montague Regional School District and the Franklin County Technical School. This review included written requests to department heads for additional information and formal hearings for several departments. The Capital Improvements Committee evaluated sixteen of the special article requests, and offered their recommendations in March. (Their full report and the records of our deliberations are available on the Town's website.) We are grateful to the many staff members and citizens who have worked with us through this annual budget season in preparation for this year's Town Meeting; our Town and its residents benefit from their diligence and care.

Respectfully, your Finance Committee:

John Hanold, Chair
Gregory Garrison
Richard Widmer
Jennifer Audley
Christopher Menegoni
Frederic Bowman
Michael Naughton

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT TO TOWN MEETING
Fiscal Year 2020

The Montague Finance Committee proposes a balanced budget of $24,500,568 to provide municipal services during Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20). In accordance with the bylaws of the Town, we have investigated the cost of maintenance and expenditures of the different departments of the Town and here recommend in detail the amounts to be appropriated for each department for the ensuing year. We have also considered articles in Town warrants requiring the appropriation of money. The Motions in this report provide figures by major category and operating department. Further detail is available on the Town's website at **www.montague-ma.gov**, where, along with this report, you can find a glossary of the terms that are bold-faced, revenue estimates for FY20, details of compliance with Montague's Financial Management Policies, line item budgets for all Town departments, the Capital Improvements Committee's annual report, and many other resources.

INTRODUCTION

This budget strives to provide effective municipal programs and services to Montague's residents while assuring a financially sustainable future. Our **Revenue** estimates reflect our expectations for tax collections, local receipts, and state aid in various forms. In recent years, larger than normal figures for **New Growth**, along with the beginning of lease payments for the Kearsarge solar facility, caused expected revenues to grow at a higher than normal rate. In FY20, we expect the revenue growth rate to return to historically normal levels.

As has been the case in recent years, departments were asked to submit "level services" budgets. For the most part they have done so, but some requested changes in response to new circumstances and opportunities. Realistic revenue estimates combined with perennial increases in personnel and other costs have constrained the Town's ability to fund innovations, but we have tried to provide additional funding where it seemed prudent to do so.

FUNDING GOALS

As in previous years, the Finance Committee continued to pursue three general goals for FY20. The first is to fund annual needs (both departmental operating budgets and recurring Special Articles) from non-Reserve sources, and to avoid using Reserves for non-recurring projects estimated to cost less than $25,000. We accomplished this goal again this year, using a combination of **Taxation** and **Free Cash**. Our ability to do so is a sign of our improving fiscal health.

The second goal is to fund the assessment of the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) according to the method described in the Compact for Funding Education which was ratified in 2010. In this agreement, Montague pledges 48.5% of its available revenues to fund the district assessment. The district's FY20 request matches that figure, and we recommend approval of their request.

The third goal is to follow the Financial Management Policies, adopted by the Selectboard in 2014, that provide guidelines for capital spending, debt financing, and appropriations to various stabilization accounts. Bond rating agencies encourage towns to follow such guidelines, and we expect that the Town's commitment to doing so will result in favorable interest rates on future debt.

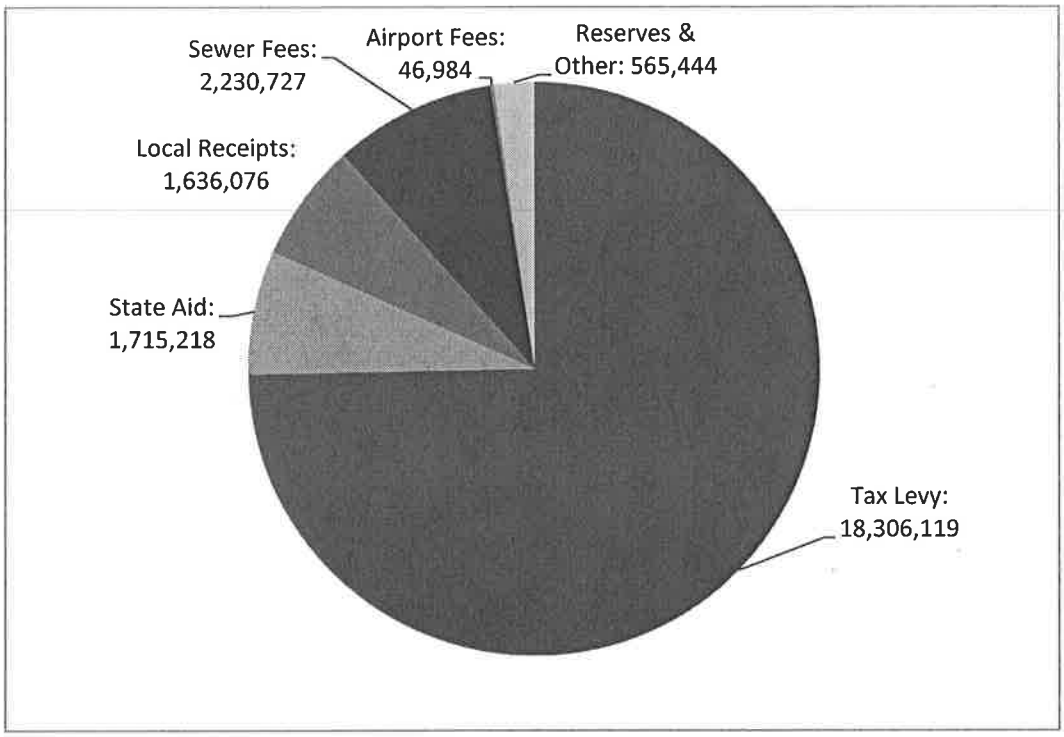
One thing to note is that these policies suggest that the Town is not carrying enough of a debt load. However, the Town's ability to finance more debt without doing a debt exclusion is limited; doing so would likely require reducing spending in other areas. How best to maintain the balance between providing services and maintaining infrastructure will be a matter of ongoing discussion in the years ahead.

Revenues

The Town's revenue is derived primarily from five sources: Property Taxes, State Aid, Local Receipts, Enterprise Fund (WPCF and Airport) revenues, and Reserves (principally Free Cash or Stabilization Funds). A summary table with revenue and expense comparisons to FY18 and FY19 is included on page 9. Please note that "Taxation" in the motions includes the combination of property taxes, state aid, and local receipts.

The chart on the following page illustrates the proportion of revenues received from each source.

All Revenue Sources:



REVENUE HIGHLIGHTS

Property Taxes The proposed budget assumes that property will be taxed to the **Levy Limit**. Net levy revenue is 4.5% higher than FY19. After two years of higher than normal growth, the estimate of **New Growth** has returned to more historically normal levels. We are projecting about $250,000 in **New Growth** for FY20 compared to final **New Growth** of $611,390 for FY17 and $520,073 for FY18. Progress on resolving disputed valuations of certain utility properties has been slow; court decisions so far have supported the Town's position, but the property owners continue to appeal. Until this is resolved, the Town will continue to set aside reserves to cover the possibility that our valuation is not ultimately accepted.

State Aid We have followed past practice of using the Governor's budget (also called "House 1") for estimates for State Aid, as those are the best figures available at this time. These predict an increase of 2.4% over FY19.

Local Receipts We are projecting Local Receipts at 14.9% above FY19. The categories of Local Receipts are shown below. This category includes a mix of revenue types. Franklin County Technical School reimburses the full cost of its School Resource

Officer (SRO) and Gill Montague Regional School District reimburses 75%.

Local Receipts	FY18 Actuals	FY19 Estimated	FY20 Estimated	% of Total
Motor Vehicle Excise	829,212	657,000	725,000	44.3
Other Excise	1,376	-	1,000	0.1
Meals Tax	-	-	30,000	1.8
Penalties & Interest	177,628	70,000	101,000	6.2
PILOT	5,388	5,000	5,000	0.3
Charges for Trash Disposal	249,708	190,000	233,000	14.2
Rental (Includes Kearsarge)	45,050	155,922	158,792	9.7
Other Charges for Service	78,459	43,760	51,760	3.2
Licenses & Permits	217,448	102,000	136,000	8.3
Fines & Forfeits	19,235	7,000	14,000	0.9
Investment Income	13,002	5,000	9,000	0.6
SRO Reimbursements	46,872	122,989	99,024	6.1
Miscellaneous Recurring	96,325	64,803	72,500	4.4
Misc. Non-Recurring	4,683	-	-	
	1,784,386	1,423,474	1,636,076	100.0

Reserves are made up of **Free Cash**, **Stabilization Funds** and other miscellaneous funds. The Finance Committee has recommended gradually reducing our reliance on Free Cash to fund the Town Operating budget and GMRSD assessment, so we propose reducing its contribution from $150,000 in FY19 to $100,000 in FY20. We also recommend using Free Cash for several Special Articles, rather than using any of the Stabilization Funds.

Airport and Sewer User Fees

Unlike most Town services, the Airport and the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) are Enterprise Funds, funded by fees from those who use their services. Airport user fees include Payments in Lieu of Taxes, rentals/leases and house rent. Sewer user fees include residential and industrial sewer bills and septage fees. The Town pays a user fee to the WPCF to cover Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) in the system, but otherwise the WPCF is self-supporting. The Airport collects fees and other payments from hangar owners and a business based at the airport, along with landing fees and rental income from a single-family home on Millers Falls Road. In FY20, the airport will continue to require support from the taxpayers, but the amount has steadily decreased in recent years.

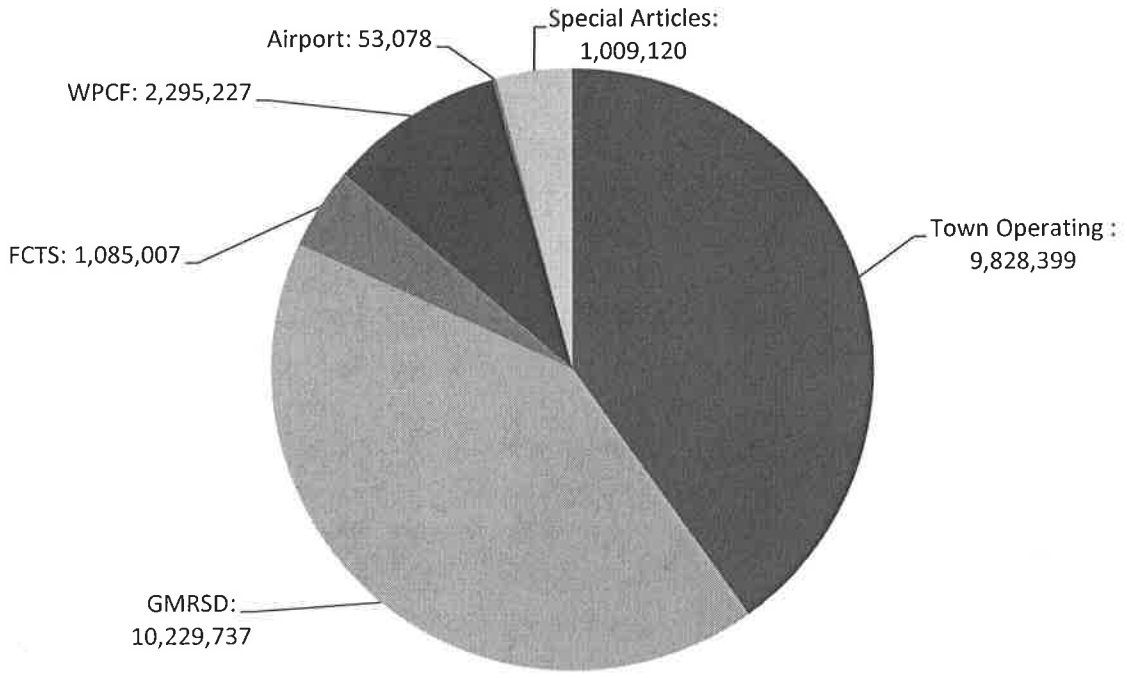
Education Revenue

Although it does not figure directly into the Town's budget, Chapter 70 State Aid to the local school districts is an aspect of their funding that merits mentioning here. Changes to the school aid formula for FY20 resulted in a significant increase for GMRSD and FCTS, which has helped to offset the slower growth of the Town's assessment contribution. The Chapter 70 formula remains enrollment-based, however, so maintaining enrollment levels in the districts in the face of a region-wide population decline continues to be a challenge.

Expenditures

Expenditures fall into four basic categories: Town Operating, Education, Enterprise Funds (WPCF and Airport), and Special Articles. Education takes the largest share, at 46.2%, followed by Town Operating at 40.1%, Enterprise Funds at 9.6%, and Special Articles at 4.1%. A summary table with revenue and expense comparisons to FY18 and FY19 is included on page 9.

Total Town Budget:

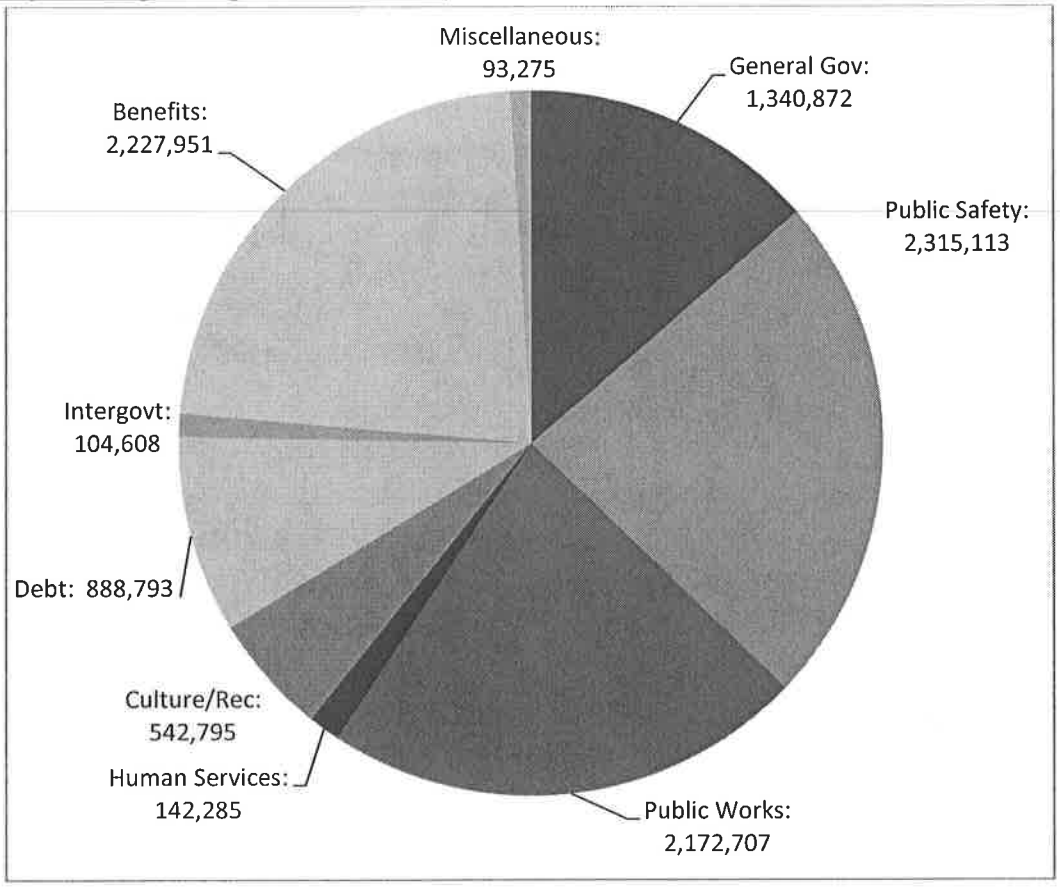


EXPENDITURE HIGHLIGHTS

In the course of our investigations this year, some topics were raised that we felt

deserved mentioning, although they do not directly relate to appropriations for FY20.

Town Operating Budget Allocation:



Wages & Benefits – All collective bargaining agreements are currently being negotiated, so the budgeted wages only include step increases for eligible employees and stipend increases recommended by the Finance Committee and Selectboard. Once collective bargaining agreements are reached, the amount to fund increases will be requested at a fall special town meeting. Per a request from the Personnel Board, we are recommending a two-step increase for the Treasurer/Collector, based on the experience she gained in the private sector. We expect to recommend another two-step increase for FY21.

Planning Department – Last year this department added a 30-hour/week Cultural Coordinator (previously grant-funded). The Town Planner reported that community development activities have already increased, and that approximately $100,000 in additional investments to Montague were directly connected to this position.

Health Department – This department will see significant staffing changes in FY20 with the hiring of a new Director and Inspector. The outgoing Health Director initially

requested a substantial increase in FY20 funding for the department in order to restore hours for a part-time Public Health Nurse, but the Board of Health decided to hold off making that change and other adjustments to the structure of the Health Department until the new Health Director is in place.

Libraries – This year, the Trustees and Director focused time and energy to begin to address problems with the buildings where the libraries are housed. In FY19, the Trustees' Building Committee worked closely with the Capital Improvements Committee to assess the condition of the three library buildings; the special article requests from the Libraries this year are intended to address critical issues they identified. The building study funded with a $45,000 special article at last year's Annual Town Meeting is still in process.

Debt Service – In FY20, borrowing for the first phase of the new Public Works Facility and the Town's share of debt for the Storm Drain project contribute to a $259,000 increase. In FY21 we expect to see the end of two bond service payments, but debt service will stay at a higher level for the foreseeable future. Similar increases to debt service for the Water Pollution Control Facility are also expected.

Turners Falls Airport – The Airport Manager and Airport Commission have several projects in development that would further diversify the airport's revenue streams and/or generate additional savings. We are cautiously optimistic that the airport will end its reliance on taxation in the near future.

WPCF – The Superintendent continues to make efforts to minimize costs. The Fournier Press is now being used to reduce the volume of sludge, and we have a new contract for sludge disposal at a lower cost. The WPCF continues to compost as much sludge as possible, and hopes funding from a special article this year will help determine how the composting process could be expanded or improved. The costs associated with maintaining and upgrading WCPF infrastructure are considerable and will be ongoing; we support the WPCF Superintendent's efforts to improve the facility's financial outlook for the future.

GMRSD – Montague's share of the local assessment contribution has increased considerably since the Compact for Funding Education was developed. Demographic shifts, changing revenue streams for the Town and districts, and potential opportunities to collaborate with neighboring districts suggest that a review of the "Affordable Assessment" approach and our District Agreement may be in order prior to the FY21 budget season.

School Resource Officers – In FY19, GMRSD and the Montague Police Department forged an agreement to bring a School Resource Officer back to the district, and Town Meeting voted to fund the staffing change. (The Franklin County Technical School has had an officer from Montague serving as its School Resource Officer for several years.) Chief Williams and GMRSD leadership reported to us that the arrangement is working well. The Chief also indicated that the 75% reimbursement the Town receives from GMRSD is more typical than the 100% FCTS pays.

CONCLUSION

Submitting a balanced budget remains challenging. The Town's ability to maintain services has been significantly aided by the commitment and resourcefulness of Town employees and the gradual recovery of revenue sources. Reducing costs and stabilizing revenues while ensuring regulatory compliance at the Water Pollution Control Facility will remain a challenge in FY20.

Looking forward to FY21 and beyond we expect that state aid will continue to increase slowly, if the legislature continues the practice of increasing unrestricted aid in line with increased tax collections. More solar installations seem likely in future years, which would increase local receipts. We also expect to include tax revenue from retail sales of cannabis products at licensed dispensaries in our revenue projections for FY21.

The Town's fiscal condition continues to be healthy, and we expect it will remain so. The increasing age of our buildings and equipment, including those at the Water Pollution Control Facility, will require continued spending for repair, maintenance or replacement. We are recommending funding several special articles that will help us begin to address problems with some town-owned buildings and in our sewer system, and we anticipate that significant further spending will be required going forward. We will continue to work with the Selectboard and Capital Improvements Committee to formulate and follow a clear plan to manage the Town's assets in a responsible manner.

As always, the Finance Committee invites both general comments and specific questions from residents and Town Meeting members as to how Town services should be prioritized to support our common goals.

Respectfully submitted:

John Hanold, Chair	Jennifer Audley	Frederic Bowman
Gregory Garrison	Christopher Menegoni	Michael Naughton
Richard Widmer		

HISTORICAL BUDGET SUMMARY

REVENUES	**FY18**	**FY19**	**FY20**	**% Incr**
Net Tax Levy	16,455,441	17,512,031	18,306,119	4.5
State Aid	1,617,524	1,675,209	1,715,218	2.4
Local Receipts	1,416,846	1,423,474	1,636,076	14.9
Other Available	22,850	53,465	0	-100.0
Reserved Receipts	97,525	247,375	95,400	-61.4
Free Cash	401,000	344,000	470,044	36.6
Borrowing	385,000	521,000	0	-100.0
Airport Fees	33,258	36,096	46,984	30.2
Sewer User Fees	2,627,714	2,241,379	2,230,727	-0.5
Total Revenues	**23,057,158**	**24,054,029**	**24,500,568**	**1.9**
EXPENSES				
General Government	1,258,683	1,333,973	1,340,872	0.5
Public Safety	2,147,078	2,265,691	2,315,113	2.2
Public Works	1,985,091	2,088,609	2,172,707	4.0
Human Services	178,989	149,889	142,285	-5.1
Culture & Recreation	508,386	534,642	542,795	1.5
Debt Service	639,218	629,774	888,793	41.1
Intergovernmental	99,253	101,036	104,608	3.5
Employee Benefits	2,083,243	2,211,404	2,227,951	0.8
General Insurance	94,000	91,000	93,275	2.5
WPCF	2,384,214	2,392,379	2,295,227	-4.1
AIRPORT	49,925	48,539	53,078	9.4
FCTS Assessment	747,340	974,338	1,085,007	11.4
GMRSD Assessment	9,356,560	9,811,160	10,229,737	4.3
Special Articles	1,520,492	1,420,206	1,009,120	-29.0
Total Expenses	**23,052,472**	**24,052,640**	**24,500,568**	**1.9**

SUMMARY OF WARRANT ARTICLES

#	TOPIC	AMOUNT REQUESTED	% OF TOTAL	FUNDING SOURCE
1.	Annual Reports			
2.	Accept Grants			
3.	Elected Salaries			
4.	Appointed Salaries			
5.	Town Operating Budget	9,828,399	40.11	Taxation/Free Cash
6.	WPCF Operating Budget-	2,295,227	9.37	Taxation/SUF*
7.	Colle Operating Budget	95,400	0.39	Colle RRA**
8.	Airport Operating Budget	53,078	0.22	Taxation, Airport Rev
9.	FCTS Assessment	1,085,007	4.43	Taxation
10.	GMRSD Assessment	10,229,737	41.75	Taxation/Free Cash
11.	TFHS Sidewalks/Curbs	76,670	0.31	Free Cash
12.	Sheffield/Admin Columns	21,755	0.09	Free Cash
13.	GMRSD Truck	35,344	0.14	Free Cash
14.	Utility Valuations	16,250	0.07	Free Cash
15.	Hydroelectric Valuations	50,000	0.20	Free Cash
16.	WPCF Equipment	20,000	0.08	SUF*
17.	Compost Study	25,500	0.10	SUF*
18.	Millers Falls I & I Study	50,000	0.20	SUF*
19.	Pump Station Upgrade	55,000	0.22	SUF*
20.	DPW Equipment	100,000	0.41	Taxation
21.	IT Equipment	11,000	0.04	Taxation
22.	Police Equipment	15,000	0.06	Taxation
23.	Optical Ballot Scanners	50,000	0.20	Free Cash
24.	Carnegie Doors	10,000	0.04	Free Cash
25.	Montague Center Library	22,050	0.09	Free Cash
26.	Millers Falls Library	20,000	0.08	Free Cash
27.	Industrial Park Signs	7,500	0.03	Free Cash
28.	Town Hall Awning	8,975	0.04	Free Cash
29.	GMRSD Stabilization	38,507	0.16	Taxation
30.	FCTS Stabilization Fund	51,500	0.21	Free Cash
31.	Town General Stabilization	57,654	0.24	Taxation
32.	Town Capital Stabilization	121,015	0.49	Taxation
33.	OPEB Trust Fund	50,000	0.20	Taxation
34.	10 Year Recycling Contract			
35.	Extend MCCI Contract			
36.	Sell Montague's share in GMTA Building			
37.	Annual vote for meals tax (petitioned)			
38.	Nuclear weapons resolution (petitioned)			
39.	State flag/seal resolution (petitioned)			
40.	Pollinator resolution (petitioned)			
Total		24,500,568		

*Sewer User Fees **Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF MONTAGUE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
May 4, 2019

MOTIONS
with Background and Comments

ARTICLE 1 – Annual Reports
MOVED: That the Town receive and act upon the reports of the Officers of the Town and to receive the report of any committees and act thereon.

ARTICLE 2 – Accept Grants

MOVED: That the Town authorize the Selectboard, or other Town departments with the approval of the Selectboard, to apply for and accept grants from the Federal Government, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or any other source, and to expend the same for purposes received without further appropriation.

ARTICLE 3 – Fix the Salaries of Elected Officials
MOVED: That the Town fix the salaries of all elected officials as required by law for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, as set forth in Schedule I, Elected Officials.

SCHEDULE I
Elected Officials

TITLE	FY19 BUDGET	FY20 REQUEST	FY20 RECOMMEND
MODERATOR	350	370	370
SELECTBOARD			
Chairman	2,040	2,355	2,355
Second/Third Members	2,040	2,140	2,140
BOARD OF ASSESSOR			
Chairman	1,500	1,765	1,765
Second/Third Members	1,500	1,605	1,605

SCHEDULE I
Elected Officials

TITLE	FY19 BUDGET	FY20 REQUEST	FY20 RECOMMEND
TREASURER/COLLECTOR *G-3**G-5 no COLA	61,243*	64,342**	64,342
TOWN CLERK *G-10 no COLA	71,388	71,388*	71,388
BOARD OF REGISTRARS			
Town Clerk	800	840	840
TREE WARDEN	1,500	1,575	1,575
BOARD OF HEALTH			
Chairman	1,500	1,765	1,765
Second/Third Members	1,500	1,605	1,605

Background: This article appears regularly on the annual warrant. This year, in an effort to respond consistently to requests for increases, the Finance Committee undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the stipends in Schedules I and II. All were increased modestly; some for the first time in many years. The stipends for the chairs of three boards (Selectboard, Board of Health, Board of Assessors) were increased more than members' stipends to reflect the additional responsibilities associated with the role. While the Town Clerk and Treasurer/Collector are elected officials, their salaries are determined by the pay scales of full-time appointed officials.

Comments: The Committee intends to recommend maintaining the Schedule I and II stipends for part-time officials at the FY20 level for at least five years, reviewing them again for FY25.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 4 – Fix the Salaries of Appointed Officials.

MOVED: That the Town vote to fix the salaries of all appointed officials as required by law for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, as set forth in Schedule II, Appointed Officials.

SCHEDULE II
Appointed Officials

TITLE	FY19 BUDGET	FY20 REQUEST	FY20 RECOMMEND
ANNUAL STIPENDS			
BOARD OF REGISTRARS (3)	500	525	525
EMERGENCY MGMT DIRECTOR	5,490	5,765	5,765
ANIMAL INSPECTOR	1,500	1,575	1,575
BARN INSPECTOR	1,000	1,050	1,050
IT ADMINISTRATOR	2,000	2,100	2,100
FOREST WARDEN	1,631	1,710	1,710
RATES PER INSPECTION			
ASST. BUILDING INSPECTOR	27.50	35.00	35.00
GAS INSPECTOR	27.50	35.00	35.00
PLUMBING INSPECTOR	27.50	35.00	35.00
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR	27.50	35.00	35.00
HOURLY RATES	Ranges/hr.	Ranges/hr.	Ranges/hr.
EXTRA CLERICAL	11.00-12.00	12.00-13.75	12.00-13.75
ELECTION WORKERS	11.00-13.00	12.00-14.75	12.00-14.75
SUMMER HIGHWAY	11.00-13.00	12.00-14.75	12.00-14.75
SNOW PLOW DRIVERS	15.00-25.00	15.00-25.00	15.00-25.00
PART TIME POLICE OFFICERS	17.00-19.00	17.00-21.00	17.00-21.00
PART TIME DISPATCHERS	17.00-19.00	17.00-21.00	17.00-21.00
PARKS & RECREATION	11.00-20.00	12.00-20.00	12.00-20.00
AIRPORT INTERN	11.00-12.50	12.00-14.25	12.00-14.25

NON-UNION EMPLOYEES NOT SHOWN ABOVE No COLA

	Grade	Range FY2019		Range FY2020	
SALARIED		Start	End	Start	End
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	J	89,651	110,332	89,651	110,332
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	G	58,291	71,388	58,291	71,388
CHIEF OF POLICE	I	81,501	100,301	81,501	100,301
DPW SUPERINTENDENT	H	74,094	91,183	74,094	91,183
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	G	58,291	71,388	58,291	71,388
LIBRARY DIRECTOR	G	58,291	71,388	58,291	71,388
WPCF SUPERINTENDENT	H	74,094	91,183	74,094	91,183
HOURLY					
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	E	21.66	26.67	21.66	26.67
POLICE LIEUTENANT	G+8.5%	36.51	39.52	36.51	39.52
POLICE CUSTODIAN	A	14.52	17.54	14.52	17.54

Informational Only: Fiscal Year 2020 budgeted wages – No COLA

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	110,332	DPW SUPERINTENDENT	91,183
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	71,388	DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	71,388
LIBRARY DIRECTOR	68,615	WPCF SUPERINTENDENT	91,183
CHIEF OF POLICE*	107,953	POLICE LIEUTENANT	38.75/hr
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	26.67/hr	POLICE CUSTODIAN	16.43/hr

*includes additional 20% educational incentive pay

Background: This article appears regularly on the annual warrant. As explained in Article 3, this year the Finance Committee evaluated and recalibrated stipends for part-time elected and appointed officials. Per-inspection rates for inspectors have been increased to more accurately reflect the value of these services. Ranges for part-time temporary employees have been increased to reflect current and expected increases in the state minimum wage.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 5 – Town Operating Budget

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $9,828,399 for the maintenance of the several departments of the Town, said sums to be allocated in accordance with Schedule III, Budget, and for any other necessary charges, with $50,000 to be raised from Free Cash and $9,778,399 to be raised from Taxation.

SCHEDULE III
Budget

DEPT NO.		BUDGET FY19	REQUEST FY20	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY20	$ Increase	% Incr
	GENERAL GOVERNMENT					
113	TOWN MEETING	1,800	2,070	2,070	270	15.0
122	SELECTMEN	175,625	179,296	179,296	3,671	2.1
131	FINANCE COMMITTEE	680	680	680	-	0.0
132	RESERVE FUND	60,000	60,000	60,000	-	0.0
135	TOWN ACCOUNTANT	77,765	79,163	79,163	1,398	1.8
141	ASSESSORS	172,981	187,824	187,824	14,843	8.6
145	TREASURER/COLLECTOR	221,739	220,990	220,990	(749)	-0.3
151	TOWN COUNSEL	98,000	98,000	98,000	-	0.0
155	INFORMATION TECH	47,100	46,000	46,000	(1,100)	-2.3
159	SHARED COSTS	81,559	65,659	65,659	(15,900)	-19.5
161	TOWN CLERK	162,710	155,236	155,236	(7,474)	-4.6
175	PLANNING	114,059	124,184	124,184	10,125	8.9
176	ZONING BD APPEALS	2,400	1,200	1,200	(1,200)	-50.0
182	MEDIC	1,000	1,000	1,000	-	0.0
190	PUBLIC BLDG UTILITIES	116,555	119,570	119,570	3,015	2.6
	TOTAL GENERAL GOVT	1,333,973	1,340,872	1,340,872	6,899	0.5
	PUBLIC SAFETY					
211	POLICE	1,615,928	1,624,912	1,624,912	8,984	0.6
211	POLICE CRUISER	34,000	51,600	51,600	17,600	51.8
212	DISPATCH	295,792	305,255	305,255	9,463	3.2
241	BUILDING INSPECTOR	132,108	138,047	138,047	5,939	4.5
244	SEALER OF WEIGHTS	2,750	2,750	2,750	-	0.0
291	EMERGENCY MGMT	5,490	5,765	5,765	275	5.0
292	ANIMAL CONTROL	19,257	20,057	20,057	800	4.2
294	FOREST WARDEN	1,631	1,710	1,710	79	4.8
299	TREE WARDEN	17,210	18,285	18,285	1,075	6.3
511	BOARD OF HEALTH	141,525	146,732	146,732	5,207	3.7
	TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	2,265,691	2,315,113	2,315,113	49,422	2.2
	PUBLIC WORKS					
420	DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS	1,348,463	1,369,805	1,369,805	21,342	1.6
420	FLAIL LEASE #2/5	24,090	24,090	24,090	-	0.0
423	SNOW & ICE	230,000	252,000	252,000	22,000	9.6
433	SOLID WASTE	479,056	519,812	519,812	40,756	8.5
491	CEMETERIES	7,000	7,000	7,000	-	0.0
	TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	2,088,609	2,172,707	2,172,707	84,098	4.0

DEPT NO.		BUDGET FY19	REQUEST FY20	FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY20	$ Increase	% Incr
	HUMAN SERVICES					
541	COUNCIL ON AGING	43,889	45,685	45,685	1,796	4.1
543	VETERANS' SERVICES	106,000	96,600	96,600	(9,400)	-8.9
	TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES	149,889	142,285	142,285	(7,604)	-5.1
	CULTURE & RECREATION					
610	LIBRARIES	401,962	404,274	404,274	2,312	0.6
630	PARKS & RECREATION	130,980	136,721	136,721	5,741	4.4
691	HISTORICAL COMMISSION	500	500	500	-	0.0
693	WAR MEMORIALS	1,200	1,300	1,300	100	8.3
	TOTAL CULTURE/REC	534,642	542,795	542,795	8,153	1.5
	DEBT SERVICE					
700	DEBT SERVICE	629,774	888,793	888,793	259,019	41.1
	INTERGOVERNMENTAL					
840	INTERGOVERNMENTAL	101,036	104,608	104,608	3,572	3.5
	MISCELLANEOUS					
910	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	2,211,404	2,227,951	2,227,951	16,547	0.8
946	GENERAL INSURANCE	91,000	93,275	93,275	2,275	2.5
	TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	2,302,404	2,321,226	2,321,226	18,822	0.8
	TOTAL TOWN BUDGET	9,406,018	9,828,399	9,828,399	422,381	4.5

Background: Schedule III includes the FY20 requests from all Town departments. In the course of reviewing this year's requests, the Selectboard and Finance Committee suggested some adjustments or reworked estimates, which were incorporated into Schedule III before recommendations were voted. Therefore, the amount requested matches the recommended amount.

The Town Operating Budget request for FY20 is 4.5% higher than the previous year. 61.3% of the increase is connected to an additional $259,019 in Debt Service, 98.6% of which stems from initial borrowing for the new DPW facility.

The Board of Assessors budget includes an increase of $8,500 in legal costs to defend their valuations at the Appellate Tax Board.

The decrease in Shared Costs reflects shifting the cost of annual fees for permit software to the departments that use the software.

The Planning budget restores $4,000 for a part time intern to provide additional planning support.

The Town Clerk budget reflects fewer elections and no planned retirements.

The Police budget includes salaries and other non-personnel costs for officers assigned to the Gill-Montague Regional School District and the Franklin County Technical School.

The Police Department typically incorporates a replacement vehicle in its annual budget. The request for FY20 is higher than in past years because this year the department plans to acquire and equip a 2020 gasoline-electric hybrid model to replace an aging cruiser. Lower fuel costs over the vehicle's life are expected.

The Snow & Ice budget includes an increase of $14,000 to cover the higher cost of winter sand.

The Solid Waste budget includes an increase of $44,000 for the waste removal contract.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 6 – Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) Operating Budget
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $2,295,227 for the purpose of operating the Water Pollution Control Facility and associated pumping stations, said sums to be allocated in accordance with Schedule IV, WPCF Budget, with $215,000 to be raised from Taxation and $2,080,227 to be raised from Sewer User Fees.

SCHEDULE IV
WPCF Budget

DEPT NO.		BUDGET FY19	REQUEST FY20	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY20	$ Increase	% Incr
	WATER POLLUTION CONTROL					
440	Wages & Expenses	1,689,656	1,431,562	1,431,562	(258,094)	-15.3
700	Debt Service	390,221	533,163	533,163	142,942	36.6
910	Employee Benefits	261,702	279,702	279,702	18,000	6.9
	SUBTOTAL WPCF	2,341,579	2,244,427	2,244,427	(97,152)	

DEPT NO.		BUDGET FY19	REQUEST FY20	SELECTBOARD FIN COMM RECOMMEND FY20	$ Increase	% Incr
449	DPW SUBSIDIARY					
	Wages & Expenses	42,800	42,800	42,800	-	0.0
	Capital Outlay	8,000	8,000	8,000	-	0.0
	SUBTOTAL SUBSIDIARY	50,800	50,800	50,800	-	
	TOTAL WPCF	2,392,379	2,295,227	2,295,227		-4.1

Background: The WCPF's total FY20 budget request (including Special 16, 17, 18, and 19) is $2,445,727, of which about 91% is funded by user fees (residential and industrial sewer bills and septage fees.) The remaining $215,000 (covered by Taxation), represents the approximate cost of treating inflow and infiltration (I&I) into the system from non-metered sources.

The WPCF is now running as a conventional treatment plant and relying more heavily on residential user fees to fund its operations than it did in the past. The WCPF request for FY20 is $2,295,227, a decrease of $101,152 or -4%, and is based on the predictable costs of running the facility with a staff of seven and using the Fournier press to reduce the cost (by reducing the volume) of sludge disposal, which reduced costs by more than $240,000. The intention is to minimize sewer user rate increases in FY20.

Debt service for the WCPF increases in FY20 because the Town has now obtained permanent financing for over $2 million of completed pump station and sewer line upgrades, for which we had previously made only interest payments.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 7 – Colle Building Budget

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $95,400 for the purpose of funding the operations, maintenance, and debt service of the Colle Building, said sum to be raised from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation. (Selectboard Request)

Background: This budget is wholly funded by building lease fees, which are dedicated to the building. This Colle Special Revenue Fund 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; it will be retired at the end of Fiscal Year 2023.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 8 – Airport Budget

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $53,078 for the purpose of operating the Turners Falls Airport, with $6,094 to be raised from Taxation and $46,984 to be raised from Airport Revenues. (Airport Commission Request)

Background: This budget pays for the operating costs of the Turners Falls Airport, which is run by the Airport Commission. Most of the increase in spending will go toward restoring hours the manager cut from his own schedule in order to employ an intern, and to increasing the intern's hours for next year. While the budget shows an overall $4,539 increase in expenses compared to the current year, the requested funding from taxation is reduced, from $12,443 in FY19 to $6,094 in FY20. This is possible because the Airport anticipates a 29% increase in revenue for FY20.

Comment: The Airport Commissioners made a convincing case that hiring an intern was beneficial for airport operations, and continuing to fund this position while restoring the Airport Manager's hours to their previous level is important for FY20.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 9 – Franklin County Technical School Assessment

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $1,085,007 for the purpose of paying the Franklin County Technical School District for Montague's share of the assessment for the yearly operation of the Franklin County Technical School, said sum to be raised from Taxation. (Franklin County Technical School Request)

Background: Montague is one of 19 member towns in the Franklin County Technical School District, which operates a school currently educating 461 students in grades 9-12 on a campus in the Montague Industrial Park. The total FY20 assessment for all 19 member towns is $6,167,075 (a 2.8% increase), and the total FY20 budget is $11,721,019, which includes the first full payment

($237,419) on 15-year bonds for recent capital improvements (parking lot, roof, and windows and doors). A projected increase of $428,238 in Chapter 70 state aid funding for FY20 is a welcome change on the revenue side. FCTS calculates each town's share of its annual assessment based on current year enrollment, and in Fall 2018, 85 (18.4%) of the students at FCTS were Montague residents.

Comment: The school has added a new Veterinary Sciences program that will enroll its first class of 9th graders in Fall 2020. Our high school-aged residents are fortunate to have this appealing educational option, which contributes in enduring ways to our local economy.

Enrollment numbers at FCTS are trending up, and Montague's share is increasing more quickly than neighboring towns' with an increase of 9 students for FY20 (for a total of 85). Based on the number of applications received for next year, Superintendent Martin projects that Montague will be sending 109 students to FCTS next school year, so our recommendation is to fund this year's assessment from Taxation and to reserve the funds in the FCTS Stabilization Fund for use in FY21. Appropriating funds into the FCTS Stabilization Fund (Article 30) will increase the balance of that fund to deal with expected increases in Montague's assessment.

Finance Committee Recommends 7-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 10 – Gill-Montague Regional School District Assessment
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $10,229,737 for the purpose of paying the Gill-Montague Regional School District for Montague's share of the assessment for the yearly operation of the Gill-Montague Regional Schools, with $50,000 to be raised from Free Cash and $10,179,737 to be raised from Taxation. (Gill-Montague Regional School District Request)

Background: The GMRSD has provided additional information in a separate document. The district's request matches the Affordable Assessment amount provided to them by Montague during the district's budget development process. This amount is calculated as 48.5% of Montague's available operating revenues; it also includes excluded debt for GMRSD projects. The total operating budget for the GMRSD in FY20 is $19,932,858, an increase of $747,514 or 3.9%.

The combined assessments from Montague and Gill comprise 52.7% of the district's total operating revenue. (The remainder comes from state aid and reimbursements, grants, school choice payments from sending districts, etc.) In FY20, the district also stands to benefit from changes in the formula used to calculate how Chapter 70 state aid is allocated to public schools. This welcome increase in Chapter 70 funding is tied to the large number of "high needs" students served by the district. Other aspects of state funding for public schools (such as transportation reimbursement) remain flat.

The GMRSD is also requesting appropriations for three capital improvement projects: Articles 11,12, and 13.

Comment: The GMRSD has again managed to build a budget around an "affordable" figure provided to them by Montague, in part because that amount reflects a 4.27% increase over last year. By approving this request, Town Meeting upholds its commitment to offer the district a significant, predetermined portion of its revenue, while reserving the rest for other uses. It is clearly evident that the district has managed to "live within its means" by building budgets that focus primarily on fulfilling obligations and mandates; it may not be possible for them to accomplish more without shifts in the funding landscape and increased investment. We are encouraged by the increased communication and collaboration between municipal and district leaders, at GMRSD and in the region, and by efforts being made to advocate for more equity in public education funding at the state level.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 11 – GMRSD: TFHS Sidewalks and Curbs
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $76,670 for the purpose of replacing sidewalks and curbing at the Turners Falls High School, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Gill-Montague Regional School District Request)

Background: This request is for Montague's share (93.5%, based on current enrollment at the secondary schools) of the cost of replacing the sidewalks in front of Great Falls Middle/Turners Falls High School. Seventeen years of plowing with a metal plow blade have caused significant damage to the front sidewalks, which have deteriorated to the extent that they pose a tripping hazard and run the risk of being out of compliance for ADA access standards. The

problem will only worsen over time. As part of this project, granite curbs will be installed in affected locations and a salt-guard treatment will be applied, with sealant to be applied annually thereafter.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 12 – GMRSD: Sheffield Building Columns

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $21,755 to complete the installation of columns at the Sheffield Elementary School, including replacing wood trim and railings, masonry work at the landing, and any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Gill-Montague Regional School District Request)

Background: This will complete the installation of columns purchased with an appropriation of $10,000 in 2016. It was originally proposed that GMSRD facilities staff would replace the rotten columns at the entrance to 35 Crocker Avenue, where the district's administrative offices are located, but it has been determined that an outside licensed contractor is needed for this job. Additional work is required that was not originally identified: the brick landing will be repointed and rotten wood along the roofline will be replaced. Painting of front entrance and installation of new aluminum railings are included in the project scope as well.

Comment: In their review of this request, the Capital Improvements Committee observed that the cordoned-off entrance to the building that houses the district's main offices is a safety hazard as well as an aesthetic issue. These repairs need to be completed soon to preserve the investment that the Town made in the columns, and to prevent further deterioration of the entrance.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 13 – GMRSD Facilities Vehicle

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $35,344 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a truck for the GMRSD Facilities Management Department, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Gill-Montague Regional School District Request)

Background: This request is for Montague's share (88.4%, based on current enrollment at the district's five schools) of the cost to replace a 2002 GMC pickup truck used by facilities management staff for plowing, sanding and other tasks. The new vehicle will be equipped with a new plow and heavy-duty suspension to handle the district's sand spreader. The current plow truck is currently unable to pass state vehicle inspection and no longer goes into reverse. The gas tank straps have rotted, and the brake lines are deteriorating.

Comment: Members of the Selectboard and the Finance Committee observed that ideally, vehicle maintenance and replacement costs would be incorporated in the GMRSD's operating budget, but we supported this as an emergency request. The Capital Improvements Committee also noted that with its plow truck out of commission, the district has been relying on assistance from the Montague DPW, which takes them away from maintaining Town roads during snow events.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 14 – Utility Valuations

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $16,250 for the purpose of hiring a contractor to provide valuation services relating to the natural gas and electric transmission/distribution utility properties located in Town, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Board of Assessors Request)

Background: This is the second year of a three-year plan intended to establish fair market values and build a valuation module for utility companies with holdings in Montague. Last year's results were a success in that an additional $11.2 million in valuation was assessed to NStar (Eversource/Neon, Inc.), Berkshire Gas, and New England Power Co. Additionally, easements owned by these companies were valued and taxed for the first time. The second year of utility valuation services will focus on obtaining updated personal property data

from the utility companies, adjusting depreciation of these assets, and continuing to use data to build a valuation module unique to Montague.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 15 – Hydroelectric Generating Facilities Valuations
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $50,000 for the purpose of hiring a contractor to provide specialty property valuation services for hydroelectric generating facilities, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Board of Assessors Request)

Background: These funds are needed to hire an outside appraiser to perform property appraisals on the hydroelectric facilities located in Montague, namely Cabot Station, Turners Falls #1 and Turners Falls Hydro LLC, for valuation as of January 1, 2019. Because these facilities generate our largest tax bills and because the value of the properties are dependent on electricity prices, the Board of Assessors believe it's important to have these properties appraised on a regular basis. These properties have been appraised by an outside consultant every three years. The last one was done in 2017, so in order to keep on schedule, another appraisal should be done in 2020.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 16 – WPCF Equipment Account
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $20,000 for the purpose of purchasing, equipping and making major repairs to WPCF vehicles and equipment, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Sewer User Fees. (WPCF Request)

Background: The WPCF and its pump stations run 24/7, and when equipment fails, expensive repairs may need to be made quickly. This is a discretionary account similar to those used by the DPW, IT Department, and Police, but funded by sewer user fees. It is intended to provide flexibility in purchasing vs. repair decisions, particularly those involving capital items. Any balance that remains at the end of the year stays in the account for future use.

In FY19 funds from this account were used to upgrade hardware/programming to SCADA from pump stations and in FY20 the Superintendent hopes to continue with these upgrades. Having the pumps visible on SCADA reduces the need for daily site visits, which may help convince DEP to approve the staffing levels the WPCF has requested.

Comment: The Finance Committee and Selectboard discussed the pros and cons of this and the other discretionary funds extensively this year. Although we ultimately recommended this request, some questions remain about whether these accounts are truly necessary, or simply convenient.

Finance Committee Recommends 5-0-1
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 17 – WPCF Compost Facility Study

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $25,500 for the purpose of obtaining a feasibility study for a composting facility for the Montague WPCF, said study to include the development of plans and specifications, cost estimates, location options and anything related thereto, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Sewer User Fees. (WPCF Request)

Background: This study will determine the cost and location for a composting facility that could handle all sludge produced by the Montague WPCF, and includes a feasibility study to see if composting all sludge is a more cost effective approach to sludge management. Sludge disposal accounts for nearly 30% of the operation and maintenance budget of the WPCF. Composting could drastically reduce the volume of sludge needing disposal, which would reduce the cost and help to stabilize sewer user rates.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 18 – WPCF Millers Falls Inflow & Infiltration Study

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $50,000 for the purpose of obtaining a study to assess inflow and infiltration to the public sewer system in the village of Millers Falls and to provide options and cost estimates for removal of same, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Sewer User Fees. (WPCF Request)

Background: About 65% of the water entering the sewer in Millers Falls is from an unknown source or sources. For instance, in 2018 approximately 13 million gallons of water was pumped to Millers Falls, but 35 million gallons of sewer water were treated by Erving's Waste Water Treatment Plant. It is widely believed that the source of the excess water entering the sewer system comes from underground springs beneath the village. If that is the case, clean water is being combined with sewer water and treated. This can strain the capacity of the Erving treatment plant and is very costly to Montague. This study will help us gain a better understanding of where the additional water is entering the sewer system, so we can determine what options exist for reducing the flow to Erving.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 19 – WPCF Industrial Park Pump Station Upgrades

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $55,000 for the purpose of providing upgrades to the Industrial Park pump station, including replacing the control panel and level sensors in the wet well, and any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Sewer User Fees. (WPCF Request)

Background: This pump station is still operating with original components and controls from the late 70's/early 80's. It handles the most caustic water in the sewer system and puts out more errant alarms than any other pump station in Town. The proposed upgrades are modeled after recent upgrades to the Lake Pleasant pump stations. Upgraded systems can be monitored and controlled remotely.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 5-1
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 20 – DPW Equipment Account

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $100,000 for the purpose of purchasing, equipping, and making major repairs to DPW vehicles and equipment, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Taxation. (Department of Public Works Request)

Background: This fund provides flexibility for the DPW Superintendent in making purchasing decisions and repairs to major equipment. It also allows him

to take advantage of time-sensitive opportunities when appropriate. Purchases from this fund are reviewed by the Town Administrator and the Selectboard.

The practice has been to start each fiscal year with a balance of $100,000 in the account. By the end of June 2019, the balance in the account is expected to be fully depleted. So far in FY19, funds from this account were used to buy a new one-ton dump truck with plow and sander, several smaller pieces of equipment, and vehicle repairs. There is currently just over $20,000 remaining for rebuilding fans in the vactor truck and emergency repairs. Plans for the new appropriation include $40,000 for a mini-excavator, and likely repairs to the vactor truck.

Comment: This was the first and remains by far the largest discretionary account to be established in Montague. In our discussions of the pros and cons of such accounts, there was general agreement about its purpose and value.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 21 – Information Technology Equipment Account
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $11,000 for the purpose of funding information technology equipment, parts, accessories, software and installations, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Taxation. (IT Administrator Request)

Background: Funds appropriated into this discretionary account may be used to purchase new items or equipment and may also be used for unexpected purchases or to make necessary repairs to damaged equipment. FY19 expenditures will include a server warranty extension for the e-mail server, replacing the main town server, and extending the warranties on ten workstations. In FY20, plans for the appropriation include replacing four workstations at the DPW and four laptops at the Council on Aging. The appropriation also allows for additional purchases, such as unanticipated requests for new hardware.

Comment: In this year's discussions about discretionary funds, there was considerable debate about whether the IT budget should include some of the scheduled expenditures currently being charged to this account. Ultimately, the majority favored continuing to fund a modest equipment account for IT, which allows the IT Administrator to accumulate funds over multiple years and shields

the IT operating budget from fluctuating as a result of scheduled equipment expenditures that vary in size from year to year.

Finance Committee Recommends 4-2
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 22 – Police Equipment Account

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $15,000 for the purpose of purchasing police equipment such as firearms and accessories, computers and accessories, police cruiser equipment, department furniture, bullet-proof vests, Tasers, radios or any similar items as well as extraordinary repairs to same, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Taxation. (Police Chief Request)

Background: Funds appropriated into this discretionary account may be used by the Chief to purchase equipment and make repairs to damaged equipment without prior approval from the Finance Committee or Town Meeting, and to retain unspent funds for use in the future. In FY19 the balance of past appropriations into this account were used to purchase new computer systems for 2 cruisers, new firearms and holsters (replacing firearms that were 20 years old), gear for two special response officers, and a firewall for the police department's computer network. Potential uses of the FY20 appropriation include the purchase of new radios and uninterrupted power sources (UPSs) for computers and other electronic devices that are plugged into wall outlets. Another possible purchase is an additional portable speed sign.

Comment: In this year's discussions about discretionary funds, there was considerable debate about whether the Police Department's operating budget should include the sorts of equipment expenditures this account has recently covered. Ultimately, the majority favored continuing to fund a modest equipment account for the time being, based on the understanding that for this department, delays in replacing or repairing equipment could adversely affect public safety.

Finance Committee Recommends 5-1
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 23 – Optical Ballot Scanners

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $50,000 for the purpose of purchasing seven optical scanners to replace wooden ballot boxes, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

Background: This request would provide each of Montague's six precincts with an optical scanner, with one extra as a backup. The wooden ballot boxes have become increasingly problematic in the last several years. The counting mechanisms are not functioning properly and some of the lock mechanisms are failing, which jeopardizes the integrity of our election process. Poll workers must currently hand count all votes, and at times stay until after midnight. Then the Town Clerk and Board of Registrars sometimes work until 2 AM to complete the process. With new equipment, the number of poll workers needed can be reduced, and election results will be tabulated more efficiently.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 24 – Carnegie Library Doors
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $10,000 for the purpose of modifying the interior swinging doors and repairing and weatherizing the front doors of the Carnegie Library, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Library Trustees Request)

Background: This request is to repair, restore and refinish the main entry doors at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls, and to convert the interior vestibule doors to swing in one direction only. The heavy swinging interior doors are a known safety hazard that can be remedied with installation of new modern hinge mechanisms. The exterior entry doors have weathered to the point where they will require removal and restoration offsite. If left to the elements much longer, restoration will no longer be possible; replacing them would be more expensive than restoring them. New weather stripping will be added when the exterior doors are re-installed.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 7-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 25 – Montague Center Library Building Improvements
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $22,050 for the purpose of making building improvements to remediate moisture problems at the Montague Center Library,

including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Library Trustees Request)

Background: Persistent moisture and mold issues in this building have destroyed books and artifacts and if left unchecked will inevitably compromise structural aspects of the building. The moisture issue stems mainly from an uncovered dirt floor basement and a leaky duct system that allow the exchange of unconditioned and conditioned air. Some mold has developed in the backup bathroom and hallway; this will be remediated as well. Installation of a vapor barrier and duct and air sealing comprise the majority of the mitigation process.

Comment: In their review of this request, the Capital Improvements Committee noted that the transfer of moisture laden air into the library has led to complaints of poor air quality from staff and patrons alike, and that the active mold in the bathroom and hallway is a public safety hazard. Leaks in supply ducting result in energy loss during the heating season, when warm air from the furnace blows onto the dirt floor of the crawlspace instead of into the registers.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 26 – Millers Falls Library Building Improvements
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $20,000 for the purpose of making building improvements to remediate moisture problems at the Millers Falls Library, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Library Trustees Request)

Background: This building's basement is very damp. Exposed window wells allow storm water to enter the basement where that water then pools and needs to be pumped out. Water also enters the basement through the front and side masonry joints where the mortar has severely disintegrated. It has been advised to fill in the window wells and repoint the masonry. The structural support beams under the front of the building also need permanent columns installed, along with some minor repairs to the beams themselves.

Comment: In their review of this request the Capital Improvements Committee noted that if left untreated, the leaking masonry will crumble and fail resulting in expensive renovation costs. Without installation of proper support columns in the basement, the beams will continue to sag and buckle which could result in issues

with doors, windows and even roofing systems. Over time this will further deteriorate the structure and become a safety hazard for the buildings' users.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 27 – Airport Industrial Park Signs
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $7,500 for the purpose refurbishing or replacing signs at the Airport Industrial Park, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (EDIC Request)

Background: This project will clean and repaint the "Airport Industrial Park" sign at the entrance on Millers Falls Road and replace the two directory signs that name and help visitors locate the 10+ business in the park. The current signs are approximately 30 years old. In conjunction with this project, the Montague EDIC will formalize a plan/policy for keeping the directory signs updated.

Finance Committee Recommends 7-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 28 – Front Town Hall Awning
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $8,975 for the purpose of restoring the lower skirt of the Montague Town Hall front awning, including any and all incidental and related costs, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Selectboard Request)

Background: This request is to restore 19th century metalwork that serves as an awning for the Town Hall in Turners Falls. The awning is made of copper, brass and decorative glass and is seriously damaged from years of exposure. At this point the awning can still be salvaged, but delaying the project will likely cause it to deteriorate beyond repair. The Town has found a local silversmith able and willing to repair the piece. The DPW will assist in removal and re-installation of the lower skirt.

Comment: This is a unique and irreplaceable building feature with historical significance. The Capital Improvements Committee observed that the condition

of the awning makes it a hazard to public safety, and that the cost of installing a modern awning would certainly be more than restoration of the current awning.

Capital Improvements Committee Recommends 5-0
Finance Committee Recommends 7-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 29 – GMRSD Stabilization Fund
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $38,507 for the purpose of increasing the GMRSD Stabilization Fund, said sum to be raised from Taxation.
(Finance Committee Request)

Background: As part of the lease agreement with Kearsarge, Montague will receive an annual lease payment for 20 years. In keeping with the financial policy of sharing 48.5% of our general operating revenues with the GMRSD, and in order to both increase operational revenue and invest in future capital needs for the GMRSD, the Finance Committee decided to further allocate the 48.5% to the GMRSD by including half of it in the affordable assessment calculation and putting half of it in the GMRSD Stabilization Fund.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 30 – FCTS Stabilization Fund
ORIGINAL MOTION
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of **$78,000** for the purpose of increasing the FCTS Stabilization Fund, said sum to be raised from Free Cash. (Finance Committee Request)

AMENDED MOTION
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of **$51,500** for the purpose of increasing the FCTS Stabilization Fund, said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

Background: The Finance Committee uses a formula, adopted in 2015, to determine when funds should be transferred into or out of the FCTS Stabilization Fund. Depending on calculations on enrollment trends and current costs per pupil, money should be moved to the FCTS Stabilization Fund when the

expected assessment is higher than the actual assessment, and when the expected assessment is lower than the actual assessment, some of the FCTS Stabilization Fund is used for the current budget. While this calculation would indicate the use of funds this year, the expected spike in next year's FCTS assessment convinced the committee to put all remaining Free Cash into that fund instead.

Finance Committee Recommends $51,500 7-0
Selectboard Recommends $51,500 2-0

ARTICLE 31 – Town General Stabilization Fund
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $57,654 for the purpose of increasing the Town General Stabilization Fund, said sum to be raised from Taxation. (Finance Committee Request)

Background: 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. The Town's Financial and Management Policies and Objectives direct that an annual appropriation of 0.3% of prior year gross operating revenues (PYGOR) should be made to this fund. This article meets that requirement.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 32 – Town Capital Stabilization Fund
ORIGINAL MOTION
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of **$124,369** for the purpose of increasing the Town Capital Stabilization Fund, said sum to be raised from Taxation. (Finance Committee Request)

AMENDED MOTION
MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of **$121,015** for the purpose of increasing the Town Capital Stabilization Fund, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

Background: The Town's Financial Management Policies and Objectives direct that an annual appropriation of 0.2% of PYGOR should be made to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund. This year that figure is $38,436. Additionally, the

Selectboard and Finance Committee have recommended setting aside 51.5% of the Kearsarge lease payment for future capital needs. For FY20, that amount is $81,778. The total required is $120,214, and it was further increased by $801 to balance the budget.

Finance Committee Recommends $121,015 6-0
Selectboard Recommends $121,015 2-0

ARTICLE 33 – OPEB Trust Fund

MOVED: That the Town appropriate the sum of $50,000 for the purpose of increasing the Town OPEB Trust Fund, said sum to be raised from Taxation. (Finance Committee Request)

Background: 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. The appropriation of funds into the OPEB Trust is largely viewed as a symbolic gesture showing that Montague recognizes its obligation and is beginning to address it. The Town's long term plan is to address the OPEB unfunded liability more aggressively after the Town's unfunded pension liability has been addressed. Once the Town's pension fund is "fully funded" (currently expected to occur in FY2033) the money currently appropriated to fund the unfunded pension liability will be freed up for use, on an annual basis, to more rigorously fund the unfunded OPEB liability, although there may not be a formal funding schedule in place.

Finance Committee Recommends 6-0
Selectboard Recommends 2-0

ARTICLE 34 – 10 Year Recycling Contract

MOVED: That the Town authorize the Selectboard to enter into a ten (10) year contract with the option for a five (5) year extension, commencing on July 1, 2020 with the qualified vendor selected by MassDEP through a competitive bid process for recycling processing services for the Town, subject to the Selectboard's determination that the contract is in the best interests of the Town and subject to Town Meeting approval in the Spring of 2020 for funding for these services.

Background: Montague is part of a regional recycling processing contract with the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) that is set to expire on June 30, 2020. A bid process is underway to select a vendor for another 10-year contract that will likely be finalized in August 2019. The current schedule requires towns that wish to sign on to the contract to do so no later than December of 2019. This article would allow the Selectboard to sign a 10-year contract, should they find it to be in the Town's best interest. Changes in the global recycling industry make it likely that the new contract will include a processing fee for recyclables, but regional procurement of these services should allow for lower costs than going it alone in that changing environment.

Town meeting approval is required for contracts for more than three years. This authorization would allow the Selectboard to enter into the intended extension of this contract, subject to annual appropriation for the expense.

ARTICLE 35 – Extend MCCI Contract

MOVED: That the Town extend MCCI's present three year contract to provide PEG access services to the Town for an additional seven years, as is required by their current contract after completion of its third year. (Selectboard Request)

Background: The Town currently has a three year contract with MCCI, with the option for a seven year extension subject to a positive performance review and town meeting approval. The Cable Advisory Committee held a Public Hearing on April 4, 2019 to evaluate MCCI's performance and recommends continuation of the contract for an additional seven years.

ARTICLE 36 – Sell Montague Share of GMTA building

MOVED: That the Town authorize the Selectboard to sell Montague's interest in the GMTA building, located at 382 Deerfield Street, Greenfield, MA. (Selectboard Request)

Background: When the Greenfield-Montague Transportation Area was established, a building was purchased with Montague having an ownership of 30%. At this point, the only function of the GMTA is the ownership of this building and a lease of the building to the FRTA. The FRTA expects to move to a new location at some point in the near future. The current facility is in need of substantial repairs and the City of Greenfield may need the property for other purposes in the near future. An affirmative town meeting vote is required to

authorize the Montague Selectboard to sell its 30% to Greenfield, should the City elect to buy Montague's share.

ARTICLE 37 – Annual Vote on Meals Tax
MOVED: That the Town of Montague vote to have the local option tax (approved by 2018 annual town meeting) renewed at every town meeting election by popular vote.

Any changes to such a tax in the future would also have to be approved at town election. By popular vote. The changes would be in effect for 1 year .then go back to original

If the local option tax is approved revenue generated by it would be published in the town report

(Petitioned Article)

ARTICLE 38 – Petition to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons
MOVED: That the town vote to adopt the following resolution:

A RESOLUTION
Calling for the US to Join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

WHEREAS, nuclear weapons cannot be used without catastrophic humanitarian consequences that violate every principle of international law and human morality; and

WHEREAS, the continued existence of these weapons poses an intolerable risk to human survival, since they can be detonated by accident as well as by design; and

WHEREAS, the United States, together with Britain, France, Russia and China, signed and ratified a legally binding commitment more than 50 years ago to negotiate "in good faith" and "at an early date" the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals; and

WHEREAS, the International Court of Justice ruled, in their 1996 Advisory Opinion on the Legality of Nuclear Weapons, that the legally binding commitment to negotiate means "bringing those negotiations to a successful conclusion;" and

WHEREAS, in the year 2000 the United States, together with Britain, France, Russia and China gave an "unequivocal undertaking" to 187 other nations that they would fulfill their commitment to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals; and

WHEREAS, in July 2017, 122 nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, making it illegal under international law to develop, test, produce, possess, stockpile, transfer, use, or threaten to use nuclear weapons ; and

WHEREAS, once this Treaty enters in force, it will be illegal in all countries who are party to this Treaty to assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited by the Treaty; and

WHEREAS, more and more countries will continue to sign and ratify this Treaty, including sooner or later many key allies of the United States; and

WHEREAS, this means that the United States will find it increasingly difficult to develop, manufacture, deploy or justify its continued dependence on nuclear weapons.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we the Town Meeting of Montague call on the town governance to take all necessary steps to align Montague with the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Montague calls upon our federal leaders to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to invite the other nuclear armed nations to do likewise, leading to an agreed multilateral pathway for the elimination of all nuclear weapons worldwide.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Montague calls upon the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to align with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by setting up, as a first step, a Citizens Commission to look into the implications of doing so, as per bills HD.3477 and SD.1688, currently before the State Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Montague calls upon our federal leaders and our nation to take immediate steps in the meantime to reduce the threat posed by the continued existence of these weapons and to prevent the possibility of nuclear war taking place by accident, miscalculation or design, by:

- renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- ending the president's sole, unchecked authority to launch a nuclear attack;
- taking US nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert;
- cancelling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons; and

- leading a global effort to reduce tensions, particularly with Russia, through dialogue, diplomacy and other confidence-building measures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the town clerk shall cause a copy of this resolution to be sent to State Representative Natalie Blais, State Senator Jo Comerford, U.S. Congressperson Jim McGovern, U.S. Senator Edward Markey, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, and President Donald J. Trump.

(Petitioned Article)

ARTICLE 39 – Petition to Change State Flag & Seal
MOVED: That the town vote to adopt the following resolution:
Resolution in Support of Changing the State Flag and Seal of Massachusetts

Whereas the history of the State of Massachusetts is replete with instances of conflict between the European Colonists and the Native Nations of the region, who first extended the hand of friendship to the Colonists on their shores in 1620, and helped them to survive starvation during the settlers' first winters on their land;

Whereas members of the Native Nation for whom the State of Massachusetts is named were ambushed and killed by Myles Standish, first commander of the Plymouth Colony, in April of 1623, barely two years after the Pilgrims arrived on their shores;

Whereas the naked Colonial broadsword brandished above the head of the Native man on the Massachusetts State Flag and Seal is modeled over Myles Standish's own broadsword, borrowed from the Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth by the illustrator Edmund Garrett in 1884;

Whereas the belt binding the Native's cloak on the Flag and Seal is modeled after a belt worn by Metacomet, known to the English as King Philip, who was among the Wampanoag leaders who resorted to a mutually destructive war in 1675-76 in defense of Native lands against Euro-Colonial encroachment;

Whereas the proportions of the body of the Native man in the Flag and Seal were taken from a Native skeleton unearthed in Winthrop, the bow modeled after a bow taken from a Native man shot and killed by a colonist in Sudbury in 1665, and his features taken from a photograph of an Ojibwe chief from Great Falls, Montana, considered by the illustrator to be a "fine specimen of an Indian," though not from Massachusetts;

Whereas the history of relations between Massachusetts since Colonial times and the Native Nations who continue to live within its borders includes the forced internment of thousands of so-called "praying Indians" on Deer Island, in Boston Harbor, where they died by the hundreds of exposure in 1675, their subsequent enslavement in Boston, Bermuda, and the Caribbean Islands, the offering of 40 pounds sterling as bounty for the scalps of Native men, women and children in Massachusetts beginning in 1686, increased to 100 pounds sterling for the scalps of Native adult males by 1722, half that amount for Native women and children;

Whereas Native Nations within the boundaries of Massachusetts were kept in a state of serfdom, and their members legally considered incompetent wards of the state until the nonviolent action of the so-called Mashpee Rebellion of 1833 led to the granting of Native self rule by the Massachusetts legislature in 1834, as if the sovereign right of Native self-government was the Massachusetts legislature's to confer;

Whereas Native Americans were legally prohibited from even stepping foot into Boston from 1675 until 2004, when that law was finally repealed;

Whereas the quartercentenary anniversary of the landing of the Euro-Colonists at Plymouth Plantation, which gave rise to the long chain of genocidal wars and deliberate policies of cultural destruction against Native Nations of this continent, is approaching in the year 2020, affording every citizen of the Commonwealth a chance to reflect upon this history and come to a new awareness of a better relationship between the descendants of the Euro-Colonial immigrants and the Native Nations of the Commonwealth;

Whereas Native Americans have long suffered the many abuses of racism, the appropriation of their symbols for public schools and sports teams, the diminution and pollution of their ancestral lands and the encroachment of their cultural lifeways;

Whereas the Town of Montague, first settled by European colonists in 1715, shares a rich Native history, going back 12,000 years, and was once known as Wissatinnewag (Shining Hill), a place of shared resources for many Native Nations such as the Abnaki, the Sokoki, the Mohegan, the Pocumtuc, the Nipmuc, and the Narragansett, among others;

Whereas the Town of Montague held a reconciliation ceremony to "bury the hatchet" with the Narragansetts on May 19, 2004, during which the Montague selectboard and Lloyd Running Wolf Wilcox, Medicine Man of the Narragansetts, committed to "a future that will continue the exchange of action to promote understanding about and between

the cultures, increase mutual vigilance for historic preservation, and deepen our appreciation for the rich heritage of the indigenous peoples of our region, and all who have found respite, sanctuary and welcome here;

Now, therefore, **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town of Montague hereby adopts this resolution in support of , a "Resolve Providing for the creation of a Special Commission relative to the Seal and Motto of the Commonwealth," and request that Representative Natalie Blais and Senator Jo Comerford continue their strong advocacy and support for the aforementioned Resolve (HD.2968 and SD.1495) in the General Court, and that the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight, after holding a public hearing on the Resolve report it out favorably, and if the legislation shall pass that the governor shall sign it and work with members of the General Court to ensure its enactment.

(Petitioned Article)

ARTICLE 40 – Petition for Pollinator-Friendly Community
MOVED: That the town vote to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION DECLARING the TOWN of MONTAGUE to be a POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, bees and other pollinators are a necessary component of a healthy ecosystem and food system, providing pollination of plants in order to grow vegetables, herbs and fruits; and WHEREAS, locally grown crops such as apples, blueberries, strawberries, squash and tomatoes depend on pollinators and thus are at risk; and WHEREAS, extensive research has documented that neonicotinoid and other systemic insecticides cause illness and death to bees and pollinators; and WHEREAS, alternative land management practices are available that dramatically increase pollinator forage while decreasing maintenance costs; and WHEREAS, the monetary and social costs of maintaining pollinator-friendly landscapes can be less expensive than costs associated with maintaining chemically-treated mono-crop landscapes. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Meeting of the Town of Montague, Massachusetts, that the Town of Montague is hereby declared a Pollinator-Friendly Community, and that the Town encourages adoption of policies and practices that protect and support pollinator health by minimizing the sale and use of insecticides. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Montague urges all Montague property owners, residents, businesses, institutions and neighborhoods to become more pollinator friendly by adopting practices including: committing to avoiding use of insecticides, including systemic insecticides on their property; avoiding the planting of flowering plants which are treated with systemic

insecticides; planting more pollinator-supporting forage on their property, and adopting organic or chemical free lawn and landscaping practices.

The Town Clerk is requested to send copies of this Resolution to Governor Charlie Baker, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner John Lebeaux, State Senator Jo Comerford, and State Representative Natalie Blais, or to take any other action relative thereto.

(Petitioned Article)