

# FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT TO TOWN MEETING Fiscal Year 2012

Your Finance Committee proposes a balanced budget of \$17,963,908 to provide Montague's services during Fiscal Year 2012. These services include the town's general operations, maintenance of the Colle building, educational assessments, the Turners Falls Municipal Airport, and the Water Pollution Control Facility. Montague has staffed and operated effective municipal programs and services, which serve our residents as well as attracting visitors from outside the town. The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2012 reflects continued economies in personnel, benefits and other costs wherever possible, without reducing these services. Approval of this budget will affirm the value of the town's services as part of our continuing progress toward fiscal sustainability. The proposed budget includes the assessments for the Gill-Montague Regional School District (\$7,576,183) and the Franklin County Technical School (\$678,302) derived from the budgets approved by the respective school committees.

At the time this report went to print, the legislature had not set a final figure for state aid to either towns or school districts. In our recommendation we have used a municipal aid figure about \$36,000 below Governor Patrick's proposal, and will consider further developments in any future presentations to town meeting members. The Summary of the Total Proposed Budget is presented first, followed by some highlights of the Revenue and Expense categories. Figures in parentheses are reductions from Fiscal Year 2011.

	FY11 Budgeted	FY12 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
<b>Revenues</b>				
Taxation	12,603,683	12,981,749	378,066	3.00%
State Aid	1,358,131	1,258,668	(99,463)	(7.32%)
Local Receipts	1,127,570	1,222,240	94,760	8.40%
Available Funds/Reserves:				
Free Cash for Town Budget	125,000	125,000	0	0.00%
Free Cash for GMRSD	125,000	125,000	0	0.00%
Free Cash for Special Article	1,500		(1,500)	(100.00%)
Town Stabilization for Education	41,845	106,503	64,658	154.52%
Education Stabilization	129,436	0	(129,436)	(100.00%)
Town Stab/Special Articles	172,255	326,646	154,391	89.63%
Special Article Balances		58,000	58,000	100.00%

	FY11 Budgeted	FY12 Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Colle Receipts	91,725	90,600	(1,125)	(1.23%)
Sewer User Fees	1,629,934	1,569,239	(60,695)	(3.72%)
Sewer Retained Earnings		70,000	70,000	100.0%
Airport User Fees	30,263	30,263	0	0.00%
Long Term Borrowing	113,000		(113,000)	(100.00%)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>17,549,342</b>	<b>17,963,908</b>	<b>414,566</b>	<b>2.36%</b>
<b>Total Rev Net of Borrowing</b>	<b>17,436,342</b>	<b>17,963,908</b>	<b>527,566</b>	<b>3.03%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
General Town	7,164,447	7,311,792	147,845	2.06%
WPCF	1,845,654	1,760,758	(84,896)	(4.60%)
Airport	36,540	36,427	(113)	(0.31%)
Gill-Montague Assessment	7,401,608	7,576,183	174,575	2.36%
Franklin Cty Tech Assessment	627,663	678,302	50,639	8.07%
Colle	91,725	90,600	(1,125)	(1.23%)
Recommended Special Articles	290,255	509,846	219,591	75.65%
Raise Excl Debt / FY10 Exp	91,450		(91,450)	(100.00%)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>17,549,342</b>	<b>17,963,908</b>	<b>414,566</b>	<b>2.36%</b>
<b>Total Special Articles Net of Borrowing</b>	<b>177,255</b>	<b>509,846</b>	<b>332,591</b>	<b>187.63%</b>

### Revenue Highlights

The town's budget is funded mostly from four sources: property taxes, state aid, local receipts, and savings (also called "reserves").

The proposed budget assumes that the total property tax levy will rise to the 2.5% limit. In a flat economic climate new growth is conservatively forecasted to return to the level of earlier years

State Aid is expected to fall about 7% from Fiscal Year 2011 levels, reflecting efforts by the governor and legislature to close a forecasted deficit at the state level. Several state reimbursements and grants will grow slightly, but lottery distributions are expected to be 10% lower. The final determination of aid will not occur until late June.

The largest elements of Local Receipts are Motor Vehicle Excise taxes and Trash Stickers, which together comprise nearly 63% of the total. Revenue estimates for Fiscal Year 2012 remain conservative, and still lag Fiscal Year 2010 actual receipts by about \$100,000 after adjusting for one-time revenues in Fiscal Year 2010.

Savings are a combination of Free Cash, Stabilization Funds and other miscellaneous reserves. Last year we used \$125,000 of Free Cash to balance the town's operating budget, and \$172,255

of reserves to fund Special Articles. We also used \$125,000 of Free Cash and \$171,281 of reserves to fund the assessment from the Gill-Montague Regional School District, including the supplemental assessment in January 2011. For Fiscal Year 2012 we again recommend the use of \$250,000 from Free Cash, split between town and Gill-Montague Regional School District operations, but do not recommend any other use of reserves to fund the town's operating budget. As noted below, we recommend again using reserves to fund Gill-Montague operations.

In preparing the proposed Fiscal Year 2012 budget, we had two general goals. The first was to continue our efforts to fund annual needs (both departmental budgets and recurring special articles) from taxation, and the second was to continue allocating available funds in a set proportion between the Gill-Montague Regional School District assessment and other town functions, while meeting our commitment to long-term goals under a voluntary Compact with the District, the Town of Gill, and our local legislators. We made progress toward the first goal by funding over \$70,000 of Special Articles (including the Police Cruiser, which is now in the operating budget) from taxation. Given the reductions in state aid, we felt it was prudent to continue using reserves to fund some recurring Special Articles, but we intend to further reduce this practice in future years. For a second year we recommend allocating a portion of certified Free Cash to replenishing Town Stabilization, helping to save in advance for future non-recurring needs.

We addressed the second goal by recommending, as for Fiscal Year 2011, that 51.5% of available funds (as defined) be allocated to the town budget and 48.5% to the Gill-Montague Regional School District assessment. These percentages are based on past practice, and stabilize the balance of resources devoted to town and District budgets. This method would result in a recommended assessment that is about \$77,000 higher than the final Fiscal Year 2011 figure, but which is \$97,000 lower than the Fiscal Year 2012 request. We succeeded in agreeing on a Compact among GMRSD, Montague and Gill officials, and state legislators which outlines a multi-year plan for fiscal and educational sustainability. As of this date Montague and the District have met their commitments, but the legislators' success is not assured.

### **Town Operating Budget**

#### **General Conditions:**

Requests from town departments generally met the initial target of level funding of non-salary spending. On a comparable basis the cost of general town operations rose about \$147,000, or 2.06%, driven mostly by a modest growth in benefit costs. This increase includes moving the \$37,000 for a cruiser purchase into the Police Department budget for Fiscal Year 2012. Other principal contributors are described below.

#### **Staffing Changes:**

There was no change in the number of full-time or part-time positions in town departments, except for the restoration of part-time summer help in the Department of Public Works. Turn-over in employees contributed to cost savings in salaries, which allowed restoration of a service deleted from the Fiscal Year 2011 budget as part of the balancing process.

#### **Wages & Benefits:**

The proposed budget provides step increases to employees who have not yet reached the maximum of their salary range, but no cost of living adjustment. There have been no cost of

living adjustments since Fiscal Year 2008, and approximately 20% of our staff will have reached the maximum step by the end of Fiscal Year 2012. At this time, however, the town and its bargaining units have not reached agreement on a contract for Fiscal Year 2011 and the impact on Fiscal Year 2012 is uncertain. Employee Benefits costs rose only 3%, a welcome change from the larger increases earlier in the decade.

General Government Functions:

These departments include statutory or otherwise essential functions for basic municipal operations; principal ones are:

Selectboard	Accountant	Assessor	Public Building Utilities
Treasurer	Clerk	Planner	

The proposed total budget for this group is \$979,118, a slight decrease from Fiscal Year 2011; the savings from staff turn-over was partially offset by increased utility costs.

Police/Dispatch Operations:

The Fiscal Year 2012 request includes \$20,000 for training, which used to be funded by grants which are no longer available. Grant sources also once funded purchase of vests, radios and other needs which we recommend be paid from an equipment fund similar to the one below for Public Works. Funding for this purpose, and for the annual cruiser replacement, is planned to come from taxation as part of our progress toward using less savings for recurring expenses. Excluding the addition of the Police Cruiser to the Police Department Budget, the Public Safety group rose by just under 2%.

Public Works:

Increased costs for sand & salt and solid waste handling account for half of the Public Works increase. The Department of Public Works again requested a Special Article in the amount of \$100,000 for the purchase and major repair of equipment, but the Finance Committee recommends \$50,000 for this request since it also supports the purchase of a new sweeper for \$222,951. (It should be noted that at a later meeting, the Finance Committee was split 2-2 over whether to lease the street sweeper rather than purchasing it outright.) In Fiscal Year 2011 the \$100,000 requested for purchase and repair of equipment was reduced to \$75,000.

Human Services and Culture & Recreation Functions

These departments provide social services and other functions that enhance living conditions; principal ones are:

Public Health	Council on Aging	Veterans' Benefits
Libraries	Parks & Recreation	

The proposed total budget for this group is \$647,840, about \$2,900 (0.4%) over Fiscal Year 2011, and assumes no increase in Veterans' Benefits.

Debt Service:

This category is nearly 2% below Fiscal Year 2011 now that permanent financing for the Public Safety Facility and Combined Sewer Overflow projects is near completion. Debt for these

projects does not divert funds from the operating budget; it will be paid from taxes assessed beyond the Proposition 2-1/2 limit, and account for about 75% of the town’s debt service.

**Water Pollution Control Facility**

The Water Pollution Control Facility’s Fiscal Year 2012 operating budget of \$1,760,758 is lower than Fiscal Year 2011 by nearly \$85,000 or 4.5%, due largely to reduced solid waste disposal costs resulting from process improvements and new equipment. About 89% of the Water Pollution Control Facility operating budget for Fiscal Year 2012 is funded by sewer user fees, leaving about \$191,500 to be covered by taxation. This remainder represents “inflow and infiltration” into the system from misdirected surface water. Permanent borrowing for the Combined Sewer Overflow project is nearing completion, and retirement of some older bonds helped reduce debt service by about \$4,000 from Fiscal Year 2011. Two Special Articles, for roof repairs and review and evaluation of the eight pump stations, will be funded by the Facility’s retained earnings (similar to the town’s Free Cash).

**Airport**

Steady revenue from airport leases and cost management resulted in a slight decrease in taxation support in Fiscal Year 2012. The airport is now nearly 85% self-supporting.

**Educational Assessments**

**Franklin County Technical School**

The Franklin County Technical School assessment rose sharply after two years of decline, due primarily to an increase in the proportion of Montague students to total enrollment. At this time we do not recommend use of the Tech School Stabilization Fund authorized at an April 2010 Special Town Meeting. The School’s management anticipates increased assessments in future years and we recommend the Tech School’s stabilization fund be preserved until then.

**Gill-Montague Regional School District**

The total Gill-Montague Regional School District budget request remained unchanged from Fiscal Year 2011 at \$16,406,162 but the assessment request to Montague increased \$175,155 because state aid (Chapter 70 and transportation) rose only \$31,000 in response to budgetary pressures at the state level, while the net cost of Choice and Charter programs rose over \$90,000. The breakdown by category is:

GMRSD Assessment	BUDGET <u>FY10</u>	BUDGET <u>FY11</u>	REQUEST <u>FY12</u>	REQUEST <u>INCREASE</u>	PROPOSED <u>FY12</u>
Minimum Contribution	4,332,554	4,378,670	4,468,859	90,189	4,468,859
Transportation	382,016	309,556	316,047	6,491	316,047
Debt Service	195,777	178,577	183,714	5,137	183,714
Over Minimum	2,291,276	2,534,805	2,607,563	72,758	2,607,563
Total	7,201,623	7,401,608	7,576,183	174,575	7,576,183
% Increase		2.78%	2.36%		2.36%

As noted earlier, a recommended “affordable assessment” (\$7,478,840) was calculated by allocating total forecasted available funds, including some use of reserves, between the Gill-Montague District and the total of other town services in the proportion of 48.5% to the district and 51.5% to the town and other services. Our Fiscal Year 2012 recommendation is higher than the calculated “affordable assessment” because the Compact with other parties, referred to earlier, forecasted that a supplemental amount would be necessary until state aid recovers from the current economic downturn.

We wish to commend the Gill-Montague District’s administration and School Committee for respectively proposing and approving a level-funded budget. This is an outstanding achievement, in the face of numerous programmatic recommendations from state officials and local requests for increased spending, and was made possible by a substantial reorganization of non-classroom staffing and resulting cost reductions.

### **Other Subjects and Use of Reserves**

As noted earlier, we continue to take steps toward a financially sustainable future for Montague that does not depend on funding ongoing expenses with one-time savings. These steps are worth mentioning:

1. We believe it is important to continue last year’s practice of replenishing Montague’s Stabilization Fund as circumstances allow (for instance, when overlay reserves or high Free Cash balances are available), even as we draw on it for non-recurring and certain recurring costs. We ask your support for consciously setting money aside for major projects prior to beginning them.
2. We recommend regular appropriation of discretionary funds for equipment needs for Police, Public Works and Information Technology functions. Though these are best presented as Special Articles, to enable unused balances to be preserved, our hope is to rely increasingly on taxation as the funding source. In Fiscal Year 2012 this will be possible for Police and Information Technology, and in future years we hope to extend this to Public Works.

### **Conclusion**

Historically, personnel costs (wages and benefits) and selected other expenses such as utilities and solid waste removal have risen faster than property taxes and other state/local revenue sources. In addition, school district assessments have consumed an increasingly larger share of the town’s total revenues.

Looking forward to Fiscal Year 2013 we expect that state aid and local receipts will rebound only slowly, as economic recovery will result in a “new normal” structure of the country and state’s economies, and as higher governmental levels replenish their own reserves. We expect to work with the Selectboard and Capital Improvements Committee to formulate and follow a clear plan for maintaining a vital and effective town government without relying on the use of reserves for operating expenses.

In the relatively near future the town will face the difficult choice of whether to raise more revenues (for example through a Proposition 2 ½ override) or to streamline services. Any plan to restructure town departments, services delivered, or changes to revenue streams for Fiscal Year

2013 needs to begin immediately if it is to be successful. We invite both general comments and specific questions from residents and Town Meeting members as to which alternative they prefer, and in either case how to prioritize town services.

We may be contacted directly through the Town's website at [www.montague-ma.gov](http://www.montague-ma.gov). The website also contains this report, revenue estimates for Fiscal Year 2012, and line item budgets for all town departments. To locate this information, go to the website; from Departments list, select "Finance Committee and Town Accountant," then "Annual Budget Information."

John Hanold, Chair  
Michael Naughton

Robert Allen  
Lynn Reynolds

Andrew Killeen

## SUMMARY OF WARRANT ARTICLES

**PLEASE NOTE: All Special Articles that affect Stabilization Funds require a 2/3 vote. These are shown below with an asterisk in front of the Topic.**

### SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

ART NO.	TOPIC	AMOUNT REQUESTED	FUNDING SOURCE
1.	Supplemental Legal Appropriation	40,000	Free Cash
2.	Rescind Balance Public Safety Facility		
3.	Rescind Balance Sheffield Roof		
4.	*Transfer Free Cash to Stabilization	160,000	Free Cash
5.	*Transfer Overlay Reserve to Stabilization	285,000	Overlay Reserve

### ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

ART NO.	TOPIC	AMOUNT REQUESTED	FUNDING SOURCE
1.	Annual Reports		
2.	Accept Grants		
3.	Hazardous Materials Revolving Fund	7,500	Available Funds
4.	Elected Officials Salaries		
5.	Appointed Officials Salaries		
6.	Operating Budget	7,311,792	Tax Levy/Free Cash
7.	WPCF Operating Budget	1,760,758	Tax Levy/Sewer Use Fees
8.	Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation	90,600	Available Funds
9.	Airport Operating Budget	36,427	Tax Levy/Airport Use Fees
10.	Franklin County Technical School	678,302	Tax Levy
11.	*Gill-Montague Regional School District	7,576,186	Tax Levy/Free Cash/ Stabilization
12.	Sheffield Roof Entrance Ramp	9,000	Tax Levy
13.	Sheffield Auditorium Steps	7,000	Tax Levy
14.	Sheffield Parking Lot	3,000	Tax Levy
15.	WPCF Operations Building Roof	50,000	WPCF Retained Earnings
16.	WPCF Pump Station Survey	20,000	WPCF Retained Earnings
17.	Cable Contract Negotiation	8,000	Tax Levy
18.	Computer Expenses	8,200	Tax Levy
19.	*Purchase/Repair DPW Equipment	50,000	Stabilization
20.	*Lease DPW 6 Wheel Dump Trucks	54,055	Stabilization
21.	*DPW Street Sweeper	222,951	Stabilization
22.	Certain Surviving Spouse Benefit		
23.	Increase COLA base for Retirees		
24.	Solar Energy/Industrial Development	58,000	Article #10 4/30/09
25.	Police Equipment	20,000	Tax Levy
26.	Petitioned Article		
27.	Redistricting		
28.	Committee to Study Redistricting		
29.	Unregistered Motor Vehicles		
30.	Resolution to Seek Lower Electric Rates		

# SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MOTIONS

## May 7, 2011 8:30 AM

**ARTICLE 1 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$40,000 for the purpose of supplementing the Town's Legal Budget for Fiscal Year 2011, said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0-0)*

**ARTICLE 2 MOVED:** That the Town vote to rescind the appropriation balance of Article #7 of the October 11, 2007 Town Meeting (Public Safety Facility) in the amount of \$485,563.26, and further rescind the remaining borrowing authority of \$485,475.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0-0)*

**ARTICLE 3 MOVED:** That Town vote to rescind the appropriation balance of Article #12 of the June 6, 2010 Town Meeting (Sheffield Roof) in the amount of \$47,270.35, and further rescind the remaining borrowing authority of \$47,270.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0-0)*

**ARTICLE 4 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$160,000 to be transferred into the Town of Montague Stabilization Fund, said sum to be raised from Free Cash.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0-0)*

**ARTICLE 5 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$285,000 to be transferred into the Town of Montague Stabilization Fund, said sum to be raised from Overlay Reserve.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0-0)*

# ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MOTIONS

## May 7, 2011 8:45 AM

**ARTICLE 1 MOVED:** That the Town vote to 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 MOVED:** That the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen, or other Town departments with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, 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 MOVED:** That the Town vote in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44, Section 53E ½, as amended, to reauthorize a revolving fund for the Hazardous Materials Response Planning Committee (a.k.a. the SARA Title III Committee) into which fund will be placed the fees collected from individuals responsible for oil and hazardous material spills, and to further authorize the SARA Title III Committee to expend up to a maximum of \$7,500 from the Revolving Fund in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011 for the purpose of cleaning up oil and hazardous material spills.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 4 MOVED:** That the Town vote to fix the salaries of all elected officials as required by law for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011.

<u>TITLE</u>	<b>SCHEDULE I Elected Officials</b>			
	<u>FY10 ACTUAL</u>	<u>FY11 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY12 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY12 PROPOSED</u>
<b>MODERATOR</b>	327	327	327	327
<b>BOARD OF SELECTMEN</b>				
All Members	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
<b>BOARD OF ASSESSOR</b>				
All Members	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
<b>TREASURER/COLLECTOR</b>				
	59,786.23	60,942.82*	61,848.80**	61,848.80

\*59,590.82 (8-16) plus Treasurer/WPCF stipend of 1,352

\*\*60,496.80 (8-17) plus Treasurer/WPCF stipend of 1,352

<u>TITLE</u>	<b>Elected Officials</b>			
	<u>FY10 ACTUAL</u>	<u>FY11 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY12 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY12 PROPOSED</u>
<b>TOWN CLERK</b>	56,165.65	57,286.91*	58,130.80**	58,130.80
* (8-14)				
** (8-15)				

**BOARD OF REGISTRARS**

Town Clerk	772	772	772	772
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<b>TREE WARDEN</b>	1,267	1,267	1,267	1,267
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**BOARD OF HEALTH**

All Members	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
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*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)  
(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 5 MOVED:** That the Town vote to fix the salaries of all appointed officials as required by law for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011.

**SCHEDULE II  
Appointed Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY10 ACTUAL</u>	<u>FY11 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY12 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY12 PROPOSED</u>
<b><u>ANNUAL STIPENDS</u></b>				
<b>BOARD OF REGISTRARS (3)</b>	338	338	338	338
<b>EMERGENCY MGMT DIRECTOR</b>	5,490	5,490	5,490	5,490
<b>BURIAL AGENT</b>	670	670	670	670
<b>ANIMAL INSPECTOR</b>	1,339	1,339	1,014	1,014
<b>BARN INSPECTOR*</b>			325	325
*Previously included in Animal Inspector				
<b>FOREST WARDEN</b>	1,584	1,584	1,584	1,584
<b><u>HOURLY RATES</u></b>				
<b>ASST. BLDING INSPECTOR/Inspect</b>	27.06	27.06	27.06	27.06
<b>GAS INSPECTOR/Inspection</b>	27.06	27.06	27.06	27.06
<b>PLUMBING INSPECTOR/Inspection</b>	27.06	27.06	27.06	27.06

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY10 ACTUAL</u>	<u>FY11 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY12 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY12 PROPOSED</u>
<b><u>HOURLY RATES</u></b>				
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR/Inspection	27.06	27.06	27.06	27.06
<b>EXTRA CLERICAL</b>		<b><u>Ranges/hr.</u></b>	<b><u>Ranges/hr.</u></b>	<b><u>Ranges/hr.</u></b>
All Departments & Election Workers/hr.	8.00	8.00-10.00	8.00-10.00	8.00-10.00
<b>SUMMER HIGHWAY</b>	8.00	8.00-12.00	8.00-12.00	8.00-12.00
<b>SNOW PLOW DRIVERS</b>	25.00	15.00-25.00	15.00-25.00	15.00-25.00
<b>PART TIME POLICE OFFICER</b>	14.62	14.62-16.00	14.62-16.00	14.62-16.00
<b>PARKS &amp; RECREATION</b>	<b><u>Ranges/hr.</u></b>			
	8.00-25.63	8.00-25.63	8.00-25.63	8.00-25.63

**NON-UNION EMPLOYEES NOT SHOWN ABOVE**

	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Range FY2011</u>		<u>Range FY2012</u>	
<u>SALARIED</u>		Start	End	Start	End
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	11	64,856.90	90,785.03	64,555.40	90,363.00
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	8	44,286.27	62,004.44	44,080.40	61,716.20
CHIEF OF POLICE	10	61,661.25	86,362.29	61,661.25	86,362.29
DPW SUPERINTENDENT	10	61,661.25	86,362.29	61,661.25	86,362.29
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	8	44,286.27	62,004.44	44,080.40	61,716.20
LIBRARY DIRECTOR	9	44,651.88	62,483.40	44,651.88	62,483.40
WPCF SUPERINTENDENT	10	61,661.25	86,362.29	61,661.25	86,362.29

**HOURLY**

SELECTMEN'S SECRETARY	5	16.35	22.86	16.35	22.86
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(The change in some ranges for FY2012 is due to fewer hours in the fiscal year for Town Hall employees.)

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 6 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$7,311,792 for the maintenance of the several departments of the Town and for any other necessary changes, with \$125,000 to be raised from Free Cash and \$7,186,792 to be raised from Taxation.

DEPT NO.		EXPENDED FY10	BUDGET FY11	REQUESTED FY12	PROPOSED FY12
<b>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</b>					
113	TOWN MEETING	1,333	1,707	1,707	<b>1,707</b>

DEPT NO.		EXPENDED FY10	BUDGET FY11	REQUESTED FY12	PROPOSED FY12
	<b>GENERAL GOV, CONT</b>				
122	SELECTMEN	125,056	128,071	129,174	<b>129,174</b>
131	FINANCE COMMITTEE	432	900	820	<b>820</b>
132	RESERVE FUND	72,195	50,000	50,000	<b>50,000</b>
135	TOWN ACCOUNTANT	67,649	67,900	67,900	<b>67,900</b>
141	ASSESSORS	132,196	139,118	142,657	<b>142,657</b>
145	TREASURER/COLLECTOR	187,869	183,430	184,980	<b>184,980</b>
151	TOWN COUNSEL	52,991	41,600	41,600	<b>41,600</b>
159	SHARED COSTS	54,187	66,920	57,015	<b>57,015</b>
159	SHARED COMP CAPITAL	8,063	-	-	-
161	TOWN CLERK	113,696	118,807	116,094	<b>116,094</b>
175	PLANNING	46,157	74,680	61,906	<b>61,906</b>
176	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS	1,560	2,080	2,080	<b>2,080</b>
190	PUBLIC BLDG UTILITIES	87,631	110,305	123,185	<b>123,185</b>
	TOTAL GEN GOVERNMENT	951,015	985,518	979,118	<b>979,118</b>
	% CHANGE FROM FY11			-0.65%	
	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>				
211	POLICE	1,118,814	1,160,301	1,163,742	<b>1,163,742</b>
211	POLICE CRUISER	-	-	37,000	<b>37,000</b>
212	DISPATCH	167,894	173,589	198,596	<b>198,596</b>
241	BUILDING INSPECTOR	109,856	114,068	114,779	<b>114,779</b>
244	SEALER OF WEIGHTS	2,750	2,750	2,750	<b>2,750</b>

DEPT NO.		EXPENDED FY10	BUDGET FY11	REQUESTED FY12	PROPOSED FY12
	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY, CONT.</b>				
291	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	5,490	5,640	5,640	<b>5,640</b>
292	ANIMAL CONTROL	4,443	6,500	6,350	<b>6,350</b>
294	FOREST WARDEN	1,584	1,584	1,584	<b>1,584</b>
299	TREE WARDEN	7,776	7,867	7,867	<b>7,867</b>
	TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	1,418,607	1,472,299	1,538,308	<b>1,538,308</b>
	% CHANGE FROM FY11			4.48%	
	<b>PUBLIC WORKS</b>				
420	DEPT OF PUBLIC WORKS	856,204	918,060	926,222	<b>926,222</b>
420	DPW RADIOS	-	-	8,000	<b>8,000</b>
423	SNOW & ICE	185,135	194,037	198,900	<b>198,900</b>
433	SOLID WASTE	400,430	393,540	406,075	<b>406,075</b>
491	CEMETERIES	5,000	5,000	6,000	<b>6,000</b>
	TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	1,446,769	1,510,637	1,545,197	<b>1,545,197</b>
	% CHANGE FROM FY11			2.29%	
	<b>HUMAN SERVICES</b>				
511	BOARD OF HEALTH	87,193	96,864	95,745	<b>95,745</b>
541	COUNCIL ON AGING	25,651	28,384	28,174	<b>28,174</b>
543	VETERANS' SERVICES	101,938	127,500	127,500	<b>127,500</b>
	TOTAL HUMAN SERVICES	214,782	252,748	251,419	<b>251,419</b>
	% CHANGE FROM FY11			-0.53%	

DEPT NO.		EXPENDED FY10	BUDGET FY11	REQUESTED FY12	PROPOSED FY12
	<b>CULTURE &amp; RECREATION</b>				
610	LIBRARIES	293,355	296,040	298,813	<b>298,813</b>
630	PARKS & RECREATION	92,678	94,994	96,408	<b>96,408</b>
693	WAR MEMORIALS	1,199	1,200	1,200	<b>1,200</b>
	TOTAL CULTURE & REC	387,232	392,234	396,421	<b>396,421</b>
	% CHANGE FROM FY11			1.07%	
	<b>DEBT SERVICE</b>				
700	DEBT SERVICE	506,141	675,128	663,079	<b>663,079</b>
	% CHANGE FROM FY11			-1.78%	
	<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL</b>				
840	INTERGOVERNMENTAL	82,516	83,440	85,050	<b>85,050</b>
	% CHANGE FROM FY11			1.93%	
	<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>				
910	EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	1,638,872	1,719,606	1,773,079	<b>1,773,079</b>
946	GENERAL INSURANCE	81,543	72,837	80,121	<b>80,121</b>
	TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS	1,720,415	1,792,443	1,853,200	<b>1,853,200</b>
	INCREASE FROM FY11			3.39%	
	<b><u>GRAND TOTAL GENERAL TOWN BUDGET</u></b>	<b>6,727,478</b>	<b>7,164,447</b>	<b>7,311,792</b>	<b>7,311,792</b>
	% CHANGE FROM FY11			2.06%	

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)  
(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 7 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$1,760,758 for the purpose of operating the Water Pollution Control Facility and associated pumping stations with \$191,519 to be raised from Taxation and \$1,569,239 to be raised from sewer user fees.

DEPT NO.		EXPENDED FY10	BUDGET FY11	REQUESTED FY12	PROPOSED FY12
	<u>WATER POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITY</u>				
440	Wages & Expenses	1,029,980	1,236,173	1,147,135	<b>1,147,135</b>
440	Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-
700	Debt Service	352,310	401,633	397,214	<b>397,214</b>
910	Employee Benefits	134,630	152,889	161,450	<b>161,450</b>
	SUBTOTAL WPCF	1,516,920	1,790,695	1,705,799	<b>1,705,799</b>
449	<u>DPW SUBSIDIARY</u>				
	Wages & Expenses	16,362	46,959	46,959	<b>46,959</b>
	Capital Outlay	4,867	8,000	8,000	<b>8,000</b>
	SUBTOTAL DPW SUBSIDIARY	21,229	54,959	54,959	<b>54,959</b>
	<u>GRAND TOTAL WPCF</u>	1,538,149	1,845,654	1,760,758	<b>1,760,758</b>

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 8 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$90,600 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.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 9 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$36,427 for the purpose of operating the Turners Falls Airport, with \$6,164 to be raised from Taxation and \$30,263 to be raised from Airport User Fees.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 10 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$678,302 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.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 11 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$7,576,183 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 \$125,000 to be raised from Free Cash, \$106,503 to be raised from Town Stabilization and \$7,344,680 to be raised from Taxation.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 12 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$9,000 for the purpose of repairing the Sheffield Entrance Ramp, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends)*

**ARTICLE 13 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$7,000 for the purpose of repairing the Sheffield Auditorium Steps, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends)*

**ARTICLE 14 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,000 for the purpose of repairing the Sheffield Employee Parking Lot, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends)*

**ARTICLE 15 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$50,000 for the purpose of reroofing the operations building at the Water Pollution Control Facility, said sum to be raised from Sewer Retained Earnings.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*  
*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends)*

**ARTICLE 16 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$20,000 for the purpose of surveying the sanitary sewage pump stations, said sum to be raised from Sewer Retained Earnings.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*  
*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends)*

**ARTICLE 17 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$8,000 for the purpose of negotiating the cable television contract, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 18 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$8,200 for the purpose of funding information technology equipment, parts, accessories, software and installations, said sum to be raised from Taxation.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*  
*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends)*

**ARTICLE 19. MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$50,000 for the purpose of funding purchases and major repairs of DPW vehicles and equipment, said sum to be raised from Town Stabilization.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*  
*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends)*

**ARTICLE 20 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$54,055 for the purpose of funding lease payments for 2 Six Wheel Dump Trucks, said sum to be raised from Town Stabilization.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*  
*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*  
*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends)*

**ARTICLE 21 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$222,951 for the purpose of buying a Street Sweeper, said sum to be raised from Town Stabilization.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 2-1)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

*(Finance Committee had a later vote to change this to \$49,442 for a lease payment, voted 2-2)*

*(Capital Improvements Committee Recommends \$49,442 for a first lease payment)*

**ARTICLE 22 MOVED:** That the Town vote in accordance with MGL Chapter 32, Section 101, paragraph 3, as amended by Sections 27 and 28 of Chapter 131 of the Acts of 2010, to approve the Montague Retirement Board's acceptance of an increase in the supplemental annual allowance provided to eligible surviving spouses of retirees.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 3-1)*

**ARTICLE 23 MOVED:** That the Town vote in accordance with MGL Chapter 32 Section 103(j), as amended by Section 19 of Chapter 188 of the Acts of 2010, to approve the Montague Retirement Board's acceptance of an increase to the base amount for calculating retiree cost-of-living increases to \$18,000.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 24 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$58,000 for the purpose of pre-development work and site engineering for solar energy generation and industrial development on municipal land off Turnpike Road, said sum to be raised from Article #10 of the April 30, 2009 Town Meeting (Develop Millers Falls Industrial Park).

*(Board of Selectmen, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 3-0)*

**ARTICLE 25 MOVED:** That the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$20,000 for the purpose of funding purchases of Police equipment such as bullet-proof vests, tasers, computers, firearms, radios or similar items, said sum to be raised from taxation.

*(Board of Selectmen Recommends, voted 3-0)*

*(Finance Committee Recommends, voted 4-0)*

**ARTICLE 26 MOVED:** That the Town vote to stop the Selectboard from using any taxation money or free cash for the Strathmore Mill Complex effective 10 days after Town Meeting May 7, 2011.

**ARTICLE 27 MOVED:** That the Town vote to petition the General Court for a special act providing that legislation be adopted amending the Town's Representative Town Government Act as set forth below; and further, to authorize the General Court to make clerical or editorial changes of form only to the bill, unless the Board of Selectmen approves amendments to the bill before enactment by the General Court, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to approve amendments which shall be within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition; or pass any vote or votes in relation thereto:

An Act Relative to Representative Town Meeting in the Town of Montague

Section 1. Chapter 398 of the Acts of 1962, "Act establishing in the town of Montague representative town government by limited town meetings", as amended by Chapter 706 of the Acts of 1987, is hereby further amended by deleting sections 2 and 3 and inserting in place thereof the following:-

Section 2. The Town shall be divided into convenient voting precincts from time to time in accordance with the laws of the commonwealth.

Section 3. There shall be elected from each voting precinct 24 Town Meeting Members, all of whom shall be eligible to vote at Town Meetings. Town Meeting Members shall be elected by registered voters of each precinct for terms of three years. Provided, however, that at the first regular Town election held after the total number of voting precincts has changed or precinct lines have been redrawn in accordance with the provisions of Section 2, the terms of all incumbent Town Meeting members shall terminate, and the eight candidates from each precinct receiving the highest number of votes shall serve for terms of three years, the next highest eight shall serve for terms of two years, and the next highest eight shall serve terms of one year. In the event of any tie vote, including a tie affecting the division into thirds as aforesaid, the members elected from the precinct shall by ballot determine their terms of office or who should serve as a Town Meeting Member. The town clerk shall, after every election of town meeting members, forthwith notify each member by mail.

Section 2. Said chapter 398 is further amended by inserting, at the end of the first sentence of Section 18, the following:- or at such later time certain as may be specified in said resignation.

Section 3. Said Section 18 of chapter 398 is further amended by inserting in the second sentence after the words, "the town shall", the following:- immediately.

Section 4. Said chapter 398 is further amended by inserting a new section after section 18 to provide as follows:- Town meeting members shall attend all representative town meeting sessions. Each calendar day during which any portion of a representative town meeting is conducted shall be deemed to be a single "representative town meeting session". Notwithstanding the preceding sentences, however, a member may be excused by the town moderator from attendance at a representative town meeting session. If a representative town meeting member fails to attend more than one representative town meeting session in a calendar year without being excused therefrom by the moderator, the position shall be deemed vacant by the town clerk and town moderator, acting jointly at a meeting posted in accordance with the

Open Meeting Law. The town clerk shall keep a record of attendance at each representative town meeting session which shall reflect all excused and unexcused absences.

Section 5. Section 38 of said chapter 398 is further amended by inserting in the third sentence after the words, “limited town meetings,” the following:- as amended from time to time.

Section 6. Said chapter 398 is further amended by deleting sections 5-8, 12-14, 15-16, 24, and 37, and renumbering all remaining sections accordingly.

Section 7. The terms of any incumbent town meeting members holding office on the effective date of this act shall not be affected merely by passage of this act; provided, however, that such incumbents shall be subject to the provisions of said chapter 398, as amended, following any reprecincting that may be required under Section 2 of chapter 398 as amended herein.

Section 8. This act shall take effect upon passage.

**ARTICLE 28 MOVED:** That Town Meeting appoint a committee to study the topic of redistricting specifically with regard to:

1. How many precincts shall exist in the Town
2. Whether the makeup or form of town meeting should be changed

Said committee will be in place within a month of the passage of this article. The Committee shall return to town meeting on or before November 20, 2011, with recommendations based upon their findings.

**ARTICLE 29 MOVED:** That the Town amend Article VI of the By-Laws of the Town of Montague by striking the entire Section entitled “Unregistered Motor Vehicles” and replacing it with the following new language:

#### Unregistered Motor Vehicles

##### Section 1: Purpose

- A. It is the intent of this by-law to provide a mechanism for regulating, subject to reasonable and appropriate controls, certain types of activities having to do with the storage of unregistered vehicles within the Town of Montague while at the same time protecting and preserving the residential atmosphere of the various neighborhoods of the town.

##### Section 2: Definitions

APPEAL AUTHORITY: Board of Selectmen or its designee.

**FARM VEHICLES:** Motor vehicles or trailers used exclusively and specifically by a farmer, as defined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 90, Section 1.

**GARAGE:** A building, as defined by the Montague Zoning By-Law, designed and constructed for the storage of motor vehicles, for which a permit is required to erect or construct. For the purposes of this By-Law, the term “garage” does not include any structure whose exterior walls and/or roof are made of tarpaulin type material.

**OPERATING CONDITION:** Capable of being used in its existing condition for the purpose for which it was designed.

**NOT IN OPERATING CONDITION:** Not capable of being used as such in its existing condition by reason of being damaged or dismantled or failing to contain parts necessary for operation.

**TRAILER:** Any vehicle or object on wheels defined as such in M.G.L. c 90 Section 1.

**VEHICLE:** Any motor vehicle defined as such in M.G.L. c 90 Section 1, requiring registration pursuant to M.G.L. c 90 Section 2 to be operated in a public way.

**VEHICLE COVER:** A cover designed specifically for the purpose of covering motor vehicles or trailers. For purposes of this ordinance, a general-purpose tarpaulin shall not be considered a vehicle cover.

Section 3: Storage of one (1) unregistered motor vehicle or trailer or one (1) registered motor vehicle or trailer not in operating condition, permitted

A. Any property owner, or any other person with the permission of the property owner, may store, or permit to be stored, one (1) unregistered motor vehicle or trailer, or one (1) registered motor vehicle or trailer not in operating condition, on said property owner’s premises. Any motor vehicle or trailer or major parts thereof, whether registered or unregistered, stored pursuant to this section that are not in operating condition shall, if visible from any public street or way, or from any abutting property, be covered with a vehicle cover.

Section 4: Storage of more than one (1) unregistered vehicle or more than one (1) registered vehicle not in operating condition, prohibited

A. No property owner, or any person, may store or permit to be stored more than one (1) unregistered vehicle not in operating condition on said property owner’s premises unless:

1. The vehicles are stored in a garage, or:
2. A permit to store more than one (1) unregistered vehicle or more than one (1) registered vehicle not in operating condition is granted by the Town Administrator or his/her designee after a public hearing as described in Section 5 of this chapter, or:
3. The property owner or person in control of the property holds a Class I or Class II License for the sale or motor vehicles or trailers issued pursuant to M.G.L. c 140, Section 57 to Section 69.

Section 5: Application to store more than one (1) unregistered vehicle or more than one (1) registered vehicle not in operating condition, Public Hearing, and Board of Health report

A. Any property owner, or other person with the permission of the property owner, seeking to store more than one (1) unregistered vehicle or more than one (1) registered vehicle, not in operating condition, un-garaged on the property owner's premises, must make application for said storage to the Town Administrator's Office. Upon receipt of an application to store unregistered vehicles or registered vehicles not in operating condition, the Town Administrator or his/her designee shall hold a public hearing on the issue within forty-five (45) days of receipt of said application.

B. Authorization to store more than one (1) unregistered vehicle or more than one (1) registered vehicle not in operating condition shall be granted by the Town Administrator or his/her designee only if, as a result of the public hearing, the Town Administrator or his/her designee finds that no hazards to health or safety are involved and no unsightly conditions visible from public streets or ways, or abutting properties, exist or will be created by the storage of said vehicles.

C. Prior to any public hearing, the Board of Health will conduct an inspection and investigation of the property in question. The Board of Health shall submit a written report to the Town Administrator's Office describing any issues or concerns they have. This written report will be read at and become part of the record at the public hearing.

Section 6: Notice of Public Hearing Costs

A. Legal notice of any public hearing held pursuant to this section shall be given by:

- (1) Posting legal notice in a newspaper of general circulation at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the public hearing.
- (2) Sending notification to all abutters, within three hundred (300) feet of any part of the storage property, via certified letter with a return receipt at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the public hearing. Said return receipts to be provided to the Town Administrator or his/her designee at the time of the public hearing. Failure to provide return receipts may be grounds for disapproval of the application for storage.

B. Any and all costs associated with giving notice of the public hearing shall be borne by the applicant.

C. The applicant is responsible for actually publishing the notice and sending it to all abutters as outlined in Section 6A (1) and 6A (2).

Section 7: Exemptions

A. This chapter shall not apply to:

- (1) Motor vehicles or trailers in operating condition, registered pursuant to M.G.L. c 90, Section 2;
- (2) Farm vehicles in operating condition;
- (3) A single recreational vehicle or a single camping, boat or utility trailer in operating condition.

B. Limited variances to public hearing requirements may be granted at the discretion of the Appeal Authority.

Section 8: Enforcing Authority.

A. This chapter may be enforced by the Police Department, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, or the Town Administrator or his/her designee.

Section 9: Violations and penalties.

A. Criminal Complaint - Whoever violates any of the provisions of this chapter may be penalized by indictment or on complaint brought in the district court. Except as may otherwise be provided by law, and as the district court may see fit to impose, the maximum penalty for any violation of these provisions shall be three hundred dollars (\$300) for each offense. Each day on which a violation exists shall be deemed to be a separate offense; or

B. Non-Criminal Disposition - Whoever violates any provision of this by-law may be penalized by a non-criminal disposition as provided in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 21D and may be punished by a non-criminal fine of fifty dollars (\$50) for the 1<sup>st</sup> offense, one hundred dollars (\$100) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense, and two hundred dollars (\$200) for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and subsequent offenses. Each day a violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

Section 10: Existing unregistered vehicles

A. Any property owner, or any other person with the permission of the property owner, who, at the time this by-law takes effect, is in violation of any section (s) of this chapter shall have ninety (90) days to come into compliance.

Section 11: Severability.

In the event any section or provision of this by-law is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining sections and provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

**ARTICLE 30 MOVED:** That the Town adopt the following resolution:

Resolution to Seek Lower Electric Rates in a Competitive Market

Whereas, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by enacting Chapter 164 of the Acts of 1997, has established a competitive marketplace through deregulation and restructuring of the electric utility industry; and

Whereas, the citizens of the Town of Montague in Franklin County have substantial economic, environmental, and social interests at stake; and

Whereas, Montague's residential and business consumers are interested in reducing their electricity rates;

Be it therefore resolved, that the Town Meeting of Montague grant the Board of Selectmen authority to develop and participate in a contract, or contracts, for power supply and other related services, independently, or in joint action with other municipalities through the Hampshire Council of Governments. If such contracts are to be approved, individual consumers would retain the option not to participate and to choose any alternative service they desire; and

Be it further resolved, that the Board of Selectmen will appoint a representative for a committee to oversee such joint action.