

The regular meeting of the Montague Retirement Board, duly posted, was held via Zoom on the above date, and came to order at 9:01 AM.

Chairperson Cheryl Clark announced that the meeting was being recorded, and roll call was taken.

Retirement Board Members Present: Cheryl Clark, David Dion, Steven Ellis, Marianne Fiske, and Angelica Desroches were present.

Retirement Board Staff Present: Administrator Deb Underhill was present.

Minutes: September 30, 2025 Retirement Board meeting minutes for review and approval.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by Steven Ellis, the Board voted to approve the September 30, 2025 Retirement Board meeting minutes.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Contributory Retirement Warrant approve the October 2025 Warrant #10 dated September 30, 2025 in the amount of 509,970.30

Payroll	\$ 379,713.83
Expenses	\$ 15,148.23
Transfers	\$ 104,518.63
Refunds	\$ 10,589.61
Total Warrant	<u>\$ 509,970.30</u>

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by David Dion, the Board voted to approve the October 2025 Warrant #10 dated October 30, 2025 in the amount of \$509,970.30

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

New Members: approve new member listed below:

Katrina Morin, GMRSD, Administrative Asst., effective 10/2/2025
Sayge Hesse, GMRSD, Instructional Asst., effective 9/22/2025
Josiah Beck, GMRSD, Instructional Asst., effective 9/19/2025
Seth Reed, GMRSD, Custodial/Maintenance, effective 9/23/2025
Katelyn Yukl, GMRSD, Instructional Asst., effective 10/6/2025

On a motion made by Steven Ellis and seconded by Marianne Fiske, the Board voted to approve new members listed above.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Partial AS Refund: approve partial annuity savings refund for Lawrence Eckert, GMRSD, for deductions taken in error on clothing allowance and cell phone stipends in the amount of \$25.05.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by Angelica Desroches, the Board voted to approve partial annuity savings refund for Lawrence Eckert, GMRSD, for deductions taken in error on clothing allowance and cell phone stipends in the amount of \$25.05.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Partial AS Refund: approve partial annuity savings refund for Virginia Thornton, GMRSD, for deductions taken in error on extra hours in the amount of \$19.75.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by David Dion, the Board voted to approve partial annuity savings refund for Virginia Thornton, GMRSD, for deductions taken in error on extra hours in the amount of \$19.75.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Partial AS Refund: approve partial annuity savings refund for Lisa Simpson, GMRSD, for deductions taken in error on extra hours in the amount of \$41.82.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by David Dion, the Board voted to approve partial annuity savings refund for Lisa Simpson, GMRSD, for deductions taken in error on extra hours in the amount of \$41.82.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

AS Refund: approve annuity savings refund for David De Lucca, GMRSD, 11/14/2019 – 11/4/2024, 5 years, 1 month, 21 days, in the amount of \$10,502.99.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by Angelica Desroches, the Board voted to approve annuity savings refund for David De Lucca, GMRSD, 11/14/2019 – 11/4/2024, 5 years, 1 month, 21 days, in the amount of 10,502.99.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

AS Transfer: approve annuity savings transfer to Franklin Regional Retirement System for Kyle Bessette, TWN, 11/14/2016 – 8/28/2025, 8 years, 9 months, 15 days, in the amount of \$40,505.70.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by David Dion, the Board voted to approve annuity savings transfer to Franklin Regional Retirement System for Kyle Bessette, TWN, 11/14/2016 – 8/28/2025, 8 years, 9 months, 15 days, in the amount of \$40,505.70.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

AS Transfer: approve annuity savings transfer to Northampton Retirement Board for Eric Williams, GMRSD, 3/23/2022 – 2/3/2025, 2 years, 10 months, 9 days, in the amount of \$11,791.33.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by David Dion, the Board voted to approve annuity savings transfer to Northampton Retirement Board for Eric Williams, GMRSD, 3/23/2022 – 2/3/2025, 2 years, 10 months, 9 days, in the amount of \$11,791.33.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

AS Transfer: approve annuity savings transfer to the State Board of Retirement for Daniel Poirier, TWN, 1/6/2014 – 7/10/2025, 11 years, 6 months, 5 days, in the amount of \$52,221.60.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by David Dion, the Board voted to approve annuity savings transfer to the State Board of Retirement for Daniel Poirier, TWN, 1/6/2014 – 7/10/2025, 11 years, 6 months, 5 days, in the amount of \$52,221.60.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

MACRS conference fees & travel expense: Board to approve conference fees & travel expenses for the MACRS fall conference in Springfield which will be held December 7-10.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by David Dion, the Board voted to approve conference fees & travel expenses for the MACRS fall conference in Springfield which will be held December 7-10.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Amend Board Regulation B1 under Creditable Service: Per PERAC, if we do not have a regulation concerning pro-rated creditable service, then we cannot prorate the member's service if they fall below 20 hours per week. Instead, they would continue to receive full creditable service under the "Once a member, always a member" rule.

Board to discuss and vote to add the following sentence at the end of our Board Regulation B1 under Creditable Service. Board attorney Tom Gibson recommends the following (see his email): *"If the member's hours of employment fall below 20 hours per week, but remains continuously employed and with no break in service, the member shall receive pro-rated creditable service based on full-time equivalency of 20 hours per week."*

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by Steven Ellis, the Board voted to add the above sentence to the end of our Board Regulation B1 under Creditable Service.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

5 in Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Cyber Insurance: Board to review the cyber security insurance quotes from MIIA/Cabot and from Lydon & Murphy Insurance, discuss and vote to choose one plan.

Discussion: The Board discussed the pros and cons of the two quotes and decided to go with the Lydon and Murphy base quote in the amount of \$3000 beginning January 1, 2026 to be in line with our budget.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by Steven Ellis, the Board voted to approve the Lydon & Murphy base quote in the amount of \$3000 for cyber insurance beginning 1/1/2026.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – Aye, Steven Ellis – No, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

4 in Favor **1** Opposed **0** Abstained

Administrator retro pay: When the Administrator pay was approved for CY2025 comparable to Grade G, Step 10, the Board said that if the Town Salary Classification & Compensation Review increased the pay for that Grade, the Board would revisit the salary amount. At the 10/22/25 Montague Town Meeting, a new pay scale was approved. Town Department Heads who were at Grade G, Step 10, will be moved to the new pay scale at Grade C, Step 7 for FY26 and receive the pay increase from \$45.06 per hour to \$46.90 per hour, retro to July 1, 2025. For FY27 they will move to Grade C, step 8 at \$49.52 per hour.

Discussion: Marianne Fiske does not agree that the Board should tie the Retirement Administrator salary to the Town pay scale, because when the current administrator retires, we are going to have to go out and look at the pay scale for other retirement systems. Marianne would like it to be clear that we are comparing the Retirement Administrator pay to the Town pay scale and current wage study, not tying the Administrator to the Town pay scale. Steven Ellis said that he would like to see the Administrator position in equity with the Town Treasurer and Town Accountant as those positions are of similar weight and equity in our community. Cheryl Clark stated that the Administrator pay for CY2026 would be included with the CY2026 budget discussion and vote.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by Angelica Desroches the Board voted to approve an increase in the Retirement Administrator salary from \$45.06 to \$46.90 per hour, retroactive to July 1, 2025 and through December 31, 2025.

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – No, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

4 in Favor **1** Opposed **0** Abstained

CY2026 Proposed Budget: Board to discuss and approve the CY2026 budget.

Discussion: The Retirement Administrator went over the proposed CY2026 budget by line item. There are increases due to increased advertising expenses, and increased employee insurance costs. Steven Ellis asked what happens with excess money left in the budget at the end of the year. Deb Underhill said that nothing happens, the money stays in our fund. The main purposes of the budget are to have a framework that the Board approves for spending during the year, and to allocate the Retirement System expenses across all 4 employment units through the annual appropriations which are computed by the PERAC Actuary.

Steven Ellis made a motion to set the Administrator's salary at \$49.52 per hour for CY26.

David Dion said that he thought the salary increase was excessive.

Steven Ellis said that he understands Mr. Dion's concern, and that while this salary is not tied to the Town wage scale, the market forces are the same. Mr. Ellis thinks that someone would find this salary attractive especially because it is a 4 day, 32 hour position. He understands that it can be a tough pill to swallow for a tax payer, but we have runaway inflation right now and it has shown up in the labor market.

Cheryl Clark said that the Administrator salary has been climbing to be comparative with other retirement boards.

David Dion said that we have less active employees in 2024 than we had in 2010.

Deb Underhill said that we currently have 173 retirees, 202 active members and 110 inactive members and that the system has grown substantially since she started in 2016. The work is also more complex now, the way that many things are done has changed. Marianne Fiske said that there are more recalculations because the laws are always changing.

Steven Ellis said that it is a professional position, it's busy office and the requirements have not diminished in any way. Historically, we were probably under compensating this position. Administrators are running complex operations, they need financial, professional and technical skills, and we want to reasonably compensate them. Mr. Ellis thinks that this will better position us for when our current Administrator retires in the next year or two.

Steven Ellis withdrew his motion. The Board decided to vote on the CY2026 budget as a whole.

On a motion made by Marianne Fiske and seconded by Angelica Desroches, the Board voted to approve the CY2026 proposed budget in its entirety, which includes funding the salaries and stipends, in the amount of \$519,822.00

Roll Call Vote: Cheryl Clark - Aye, David Dion – No, Steven Ellis – Aye, Angelica Desroches, Aye, Marianne Fiske - Aye

4 in Favor 1 Opposed 0 Abstained

MONTAGUE RETIREMENT SYSTEM
ESTIMATED CY25 & PROPOSED CY26 BUDGET

Description	CY25	CY25	DIFFERENCE	CY26	%
	BUDGETED	ESTIMATED		DRAFT	CHANGE
BUDGET					
Salaries					
Town Accountant	4,020	4,020	0	4,020	0.00%
Treasurer	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	0.00%
Administrator/32 hrs.	74,967	74,967	0	82,401	9.92%
Administrator Longevity	300	300	0	500	66.67%
**Administrator Extra Hours	1,000	0	1,000	1,000	0.00%
Board Stipend	16,080	16,080	0	16,080	0.00%
Total Salaries	99,367	98,367	1,000	107,001	7.68%
Expenses					
Fiduciary Ins.	2,800	2,649	151	3,000	7.14%
Cybersecurity Insurance	0	0	0	3,500	0.00%
Contract Labor	500	0	500	500	0.00%
Administrative Expenses ***	7,500	6,500	1,000	7,500	0.00%
PTG Support/Baystate Pension for 2026	26,800	26,800	0	21,871	-18.39%
Association Dues (MACRS)	650	650	0	650	0.00%
Election	1,000	465	535	1,200	20.00%
Employee Fringe Costs****	9,500	11,000	-1,500	14,100	48.42%
Furniture & Equip.	1,000	0	1,000	500	-50.00%
Legal Exp.	8,000	5,000	3,000	8,000	0.00%
Travel & Education/Training	6,500	1,800	4,700	6,500	0.00%
Town Audit - GASB	8,500	8,500	0	10,500	23.53%
Management Fees (PRIT)	327,000	285,000	42,000	335,000	2.45%
Total Expenses	399,750	348,364	51,386	412,821	3.27%
Total Salaries & Expenses	499,117	446,731	52,386	519,822	4.15%

10:05 AM: Marianne Fiske left the meeting.

Notice: Pension Technology Group (PTG) has been given written notice of the termination of our contract with them effective 12/31/2025, and they have acknowledged receipt. They will continue to provide hosting and support through the end of our contract on 12/31/2025. We are now **live** with Baystate Pension Solutions. Please note that some reports may look different going forward.

Notice: The DPW cracked the window in the outside door in the Retirement office while weed whacking in mid-July. Greenfield Glass has been here a couple of times, but the window still has not been replaced, 3 months later. I asked the DPW to follow up on the order, but received no response. I have asked Chris Nolan-Zeller, Assistant Town Administrator, to please help to get the broken window replaced.

Notice: PERAC has approved our credit card regulation as written and approved at our 9/30 meeting. PERAC has also approved the changes to our travel/meals regulation as approved by the Board at our 9/30 meeting.

Legal RFP: Our 7 year contract with the Law Offices of Thomas Gibson expires on 1/24/2026. We will be starting the RFP process for legal counsel. The Board will have to review any submissions.

Notice regarding retirement paystubs (Notices of Deposit): There was not much of a response to my letter regarding only sending Notices of Deposit (paystubs) when there is a change. I decided to continue to send them to everyone through the end of the year, as they are easier to turn on and off in the new pension software.

Notice: Administrator Deb Underhill is tentatively planning to take a vacation day on November 10th.

Financial Statements: Board reviewed the September 2025 financial statements, containing the following documents:

Cash Receipts Report	Bank Statements	Monthly Trial Balance
Cash Disbursement Report	Bank Reconciliation	Y-T-D Trial Balance
Adjustments Report	PRIT Statements	Monthly General Ledger
Supplementary Schedule	PRIT Reconciliation	Y-T-D Budget Comparison

Topics not anticipated to be covered in the 48 hour posting requirement, if any.

Steven Ellis would like the current Town of Montague health insurance issues put on the agenda and discussed at a future meeting, as any changes will affect the retirees too.

Adjourn: On a motion made by David Dion, seconded by Steven Ellis, the meeting adjourned at 10:24AM.

Upcoming Meetings: **Tuesday, November 25, 2025 at 9AM via Zoom**
Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 9AM via Zoom

Meeting Materials:
Agenda, September 30, 2025
August 28, 2025 Minutes
September 30, 2025 Warrant #9
Meals Supplemental Regulation
Draft Credit Card Regulation
August 2025 Financial Reports, if available
Cyber Insurance Quotes

APPROVED BY THE MONTAGUE BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Cheryl Clark, Chairperson

respectfully submitted,

Angelica Desroches

Debra Underhill
Administrator
Montague Retirement Board

David Dion

Steven Ellis

Marianne Fiske