

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Due to COVID-19 Public Participation is by Zoom
Monday, December 6, 2021

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard Rich Kuklewicz, Chris Boutwell, and Matt Lord, Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz, Director of Public Health Daniel Wasiuk, Town Counsel Gregg Corbo, Town Planner Walter Ramsey, Board of Health Members Michael Nelson and Melanie Zamojski, Finance Committee Director Jennifer Audley, Council on Aging Director Roberta Potter, Finance Committee member John Hanold, Police Chief Chris Williams, and Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen.

Vimeo Meeting Link: <https://vimeo.com/656592896>

Selectboard Chair opens the meeting, including announcing that the meeting is being recorded and roll call taken.

Approve Minutes

Selectboard Meeting of November 29, 2021 if available

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the minutes of the Selectboard Meeting of November 29, 2021 as presented. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

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

None

Shawn Hubert, Hubies Tavern and Restaurant - Cancellation and/or Non-Renewal of Liquor License Hearing

Lord makes the motion that the Board renew the Hubies Tavern and Restaurant Liquor License subject to the condition that the establishment either be re-opened or an application to transfer the license be made by June 30, 2022 provided that the Board may extend this deadline upon written request showing legitimate efforts to comply. Seconded by Kuklewicz, approved. Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Boutwell - Abstain

Michael McCarthy, Riff's North, Cancellation and/or Non-Renewal of Liquor License Hearing

Lord makes the motion that the Board renew the Riff's North Liquor License subject to the condition that the establishment either be re-opened or an application to transfer the license be made by June 30, 2022 provided that the Board may extend this deadline upon written request showing legitimate efforts to comply. Seconded by Kuklewicz, approved. Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye, Boutwell - Abstain

COVID Updates

Review of COVID Case Counts and Trends

Active cases from November 28 through December 4, 2021 equals 46; and from November 21 through December 4, 2021 equals 73. Cumulative cases from March 1, 2020 through December 4, 2021 equals 516. Percentage of individuals fully vaccinated in Montague is 63%. Cumulative percentage of all individuals 12+ years old with at least one dose is 74%. Breakdown of the new cases is as follows: Fully vaccinated, 14; partially vaccinated, 4; not vaccinated, 28. Age group breakdown is as follows: 18-35 is 9; 36-49 is 10; 50-64 is 6; 65-80 is 2; 81+ is 0; and under 17 is 19.

Discuss any other needed response to COVID situation

- The Board of Health had an emergency meeting last Thursday. They decided not to institute a mask mandate for indoor public spaces and private indoor spaces that are open to the public. Rather, they recommend a strong advisory pertaining to the usage of facial masks within the indoor public spaces. The BOH feels that individual entities can decide on implementing mask policies as they see fit.
- In response to a question by Lord, Zamojski states one of the BOH members feels that individuals currently wearing masks will continue to wear masks, and the issue comes to enforcement and State back-up.
- Boutwell states that many communities consider the mask situation a personal issue.
- Kuklewicz feels that public buildings (i.e., Town Hall, senior center, libraries, etc.) as well as public facilities (i.e., retail establishments, grocery stores, etc.) should have mask mandates implemented.

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- Lord states that he has not heard any opposition from local businesses regarding the mask mandate.
- Lord reminds us that the reason we had lockdowns at the beginning of the pandemic was because hospital capacity was beyond what they were capable of dealing with; and if we continue to have case counts that rise with nothing mitigating it, there would potentially be a greater transmission of the virus.
- In response to a question by Lord, Zamojski states that different schools in Montague have had some very high numbers.
- In response to a question by Kuklewicz, Wasiuk states that the public health nurse is trying to obtain information on hospitalization percentages with regard to vaccinations, antivirals, etc.
- Zamojski reports on case counts of hospitalizations as of December 12: 60 cases were currently hospitalized at Baystate Medical Center, 2 were hospitalized at Franklin County, and the remainder at the other hospitals.
- Audley suggests that we should keep an eye on ICU capacity at our local hospital and also in the Baystate system. She also hopes that the BOH and Health Department can increase the energy and attention that they put into trying to convince people to get vaccinated.
- Jeff Singleton feels that we should take into consideration the fact that some businesses have experienced difficulty with implementing a mask mandate if there isn't a Town-wide mandate.
- Potter shares that people at the senior center are very concerned about rising cases. The center is requiring masks for people that are not vaccinated, and strongly encouraging others to wear masks. She feels there might be some value for the Town instituting a mandate for Town buildings.
- *Lord makes the motion to mandate the use of masks at all Town-owned public buildings in Montague effective Monday, December 13, 2021 through April 4, 2022 (at which time the Board will decide whether to continue the mandate) with the exceptions as having been previously written in the prior mandates. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Boutwell makes the motion to strongly recommend the use of masks in all Town businesses effective Monday, December 13, 2021 through April 4, 2022; in addition, public buildings are instructed to have signs (prepared by Lord, Bogusz, and the BOH) with strong recommendations regarding mask use, vaccination, social distancing, and hand-washing. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- Hanold believes that the Town should be in the leading edge of this issue rather than always being in a reactive, follow-up mode.

Personnel Board

Expected Staffing Request for FY23 Budget - Police Department
2 Police Officers, Sergeant and Dispatcher

- Williams explains the need for the additional staff.
- Boutwell feels that a lot more information is required.
- The additional cost would equal approximately \$375,000.
- Lord feels an overtime cost-savings analysis would be compelling. He feels that a distinction needs to be made between making people's regular day-to-day jobs more sustainable and our needing additional resources to meet community needs.
- Lord asks what community engagement the two current school resource officers are doing.
- In response to a request by Lord, Williams will send the Board a job description of the sergeant's supervisory responsibilities.
- Different potentials for savings were discussed.
- Ariel Elan suggests designating a specific officer for residents to contact to talk about their concerns.
- This conversation will be continued in the future.

Mike Kane, Anna Raby, Eversource

Update on Double Utility Poles in Montague

- A map was displayed as to the location of the double poles.
- Removal of the 200 double poles is in progress.

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- A majority of the poles have Comcast attached to them; a few of the poles have Verizon attached.
- The Eversource representatives are invited to return to a mid-February to give another update.

Walter Ramsey, Town Planner

Authorize amendment #2 with Wright-Pierce Engineers for final permitting and construction administration phase services for the Montague City Road Flooding Relief Project. Value of contract amendment is \$47,090.

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize amendment #2 with Wright-Pierce Engineers for final permitting and construction administration phase services for the Montague City Road Flooding Relief Project, and to authorize the Chair to sign the document. Value of contract amendment is \$47,090. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Accept Zoning Bylaw Amendment Petition from the Planning Board regarding regulation of Battery Energy Storage Facilities

Boutwell makes the motion to acknowledge the Planning Board's initiation of a Zoning Bylaw Amendment for the regulation of Battery Energy Storage Facilities as has been presented by the Town Planner, and to refer this back to the Planning Board for a public hearing. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved.

Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Request participation in the proposal for the Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness & Leadership Initiative RFR submitted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Boutwell makes the motion to participate in the proposal for the Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness & Leadership Initiative RFR submitted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and to authorize the Chair to sign the document. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Request to forgo following the new policy of 2 separate tax classification meetings as a result of the delay in getting values approved by DOR in this revaluation year

Boutwell makes the motion to forgo following the new policy of 2 separate tax classification meetings as a result of the delay in getting values approved by DOR in this revaluation year. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Request to transfer \$2,000 from CD Discretionary Unallocated (225-5-184-5200) to CD Downtown Beautification (225-5-184-5233)

Boutwell makes the motion to transfer \$2,000 from CD Discretionary Unallocated (225-5-184-5200) to CD Downtown Beautification (225-5-184-5233). Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Execute 3 Year Agreement with Crocker Communications, Inc., Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Agreement , \$546.84/month

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the 3 Year Agreement with Crocker Communications, Inc., Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Agreement , \$546.84/month. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Municipal Participation in Statewide Opioid Settlement

Lord states that sometime ago, the Town Administrator was notified of the opportunity to participate in a class suit of multiple Attorney General's across the country against opioid distributors. A settlement was reached with these companies, and the State has set up a distribution mechanism for the settlement fees, which will go into a State fund and be distributed by a committee which was established by statute. The parties that are part of this settlement are Cardinal, McKesson, Amerisource Bergen, and Johnson & Johnson. By participating in the settlement, the Town would waive any further action against those parties. It would not affect the ability of any private parties to take an action against those parties.

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Boutwell makes the motion to continue to endorse the Town's participation in the opioid settlement and to authorize the Town Administrator or Selectboard Chair to sign the necessary documents. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Executive Assistant Business

Calendar Year 2022 License Renewal Fees

Lord makes the motion to reduce the fees as discussed to 50% for Calendar year 2022 licenses. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Other/Farren building

In response to a question by Singleton regarding the Farren building, Kuklewicz reports that he received a note from the Town Administrator stating that Trinity has received our email and intends to have an internal conversation. They will get back to us.

Other:

Anticipated Next Meeting Date: Monday, December 13, 2021 at 6:30 PM via ZOOM

Boutwell makes the motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye