

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Due to COVID-19 Public Participation is by Zoom
Monday, December 13, 2021

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Chris Boutwell, and Matt Lord, Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz, RiverCulture Director Suzanne LoManto, Board of Assessors Director Karen Tonelli, Parks and Recreation Director Jon Dobosz, Airport Manager Bryan Camden, Town Planner Walter Ramsey, and Library Director Caitlin Kelley.

MCTV VIMEO Recording: <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 December 6, 2021 if available

Postponed until next week

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

In response to a question by Jeff Singleton and a comment by Lilith Wolinski, Kuklewicz states that the Historical Commission will be put on the agenda at a future meeting to discuss the Farren building situation.

Suzanne LoManto, RiverCulture Director

Use of Public Property: Santa Fire Truck Parade, 12/22/21 (raindate: 12/23/21), 6:00PM - 7:00 PM; Unity Park to Montague City to Turnpike Road to Millers Falls to Mineral Road to Lake Pleasant to South Street to Montague Center to Turners Falls

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Use of Public Property: Santa Fire Truck Parade, 12/22/21 (raindate: 12/23/21), 6:00PM - 7:00 PM; Unity Park to Montague City to Turnpike Road to Millers Falls to Mineral Road to Lake Pleasant to South Street to Montague Center to Turners Falls. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Class II License Request

Gregory Precourt, 10 Station Street, Montague (Display 2 used cars inside and 2 outside)

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Class II License Request by Gregory Precourt, 10 Station Street, Montague (Display 2 used cars inside and 2 outside), effective December 26, 2021. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Tom Bergeron, DPW Superintendent

Request to execute DEP 3rd Party Transfer Station Inspection Report and Corrective Action Form

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the DEP 3rd Party Transfer Station Inspection Report and Corrective Action Form, and authorize the Chair to sign the document. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

FY22 Tax Classification Hearing

FY2022 Tax Classification Presentation

- The Board of Assessors are present at the meeting, but Tonelli states that formally opening the meeting is not necessary.
- Tonelli summarizes the BOA's annual presentation with regard to setting the tax rates.
- Ellis states that one of the major variables is increased obligation primarily associated with the DPW facility.
- Ellis publicly acknowledges Tonelli's extraordinary efforts over the course of the last several months.
- The Town will be carrying greater excess capacity (money that the Town could technically have spent in the FY22 budget year).
- If Montague were to decide to spend up to its levy limit, the tax rate would increase both the residential (\$17.29) and the commercial (\$26.64).
- *Boutwell makes the motion to continue with the split rate that we currently have with the shift at 1.3100. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Boutwell makes the motion to offer for the Open Space Discount, with a recommended no vote by the Assessors. Seconded by Lord, unanimously unapproved. Boutwell - Nay, Lord - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*

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- *Kuklewicz makes the motion to offer for the Residential Exemption, with a recommended no vote by the Assessors. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Kuklewicz - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Lord - Nay*
- *Kuklewicz makes the motion to offer for the Small Commercial Exemption, with a recommended no vote by the Assessors. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Kuklewicz - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Lord - Nay*

COVID Updates

- **Review of COVID Case Counts**
Ellis displays the case counts on the screen:
 - We are not seeing a continued doubling in case counts. The number has leveled out.
 - For the week ending November 11, 22 of the 32 individuals who were identified as new cases were unvaccinated.
 - The link between serious illness and non-vaccination is very clear.
 - The State is now recommending that individuals 16+ get a booster shot.
 - There is a study suggesting that a 3rd booster shot appears to offer additional immunity against the Omicron variant.
 - The greatest prevalence is between 18 and 80.
- **Discuss any other needed response to COVID situation**
 - Ellis reports that Greenfield has implemented a mask mandate that went into effect today.
 - Boutwell reports that some of the neighboring communities have issued a mask mandate, and some have followed our lead with regard to strongly recommending masks.
 - Kuklewicz feels that a strong recommendation to wear masks is the way to go in order to maintain consistency. He feels that we should follow the leadership of the State.
 - In response to a question by Singleton, Bogusz states she will check the status of the signage situation with the Board of Health.
 - A resident, Janel Nockleby reports that several people are not wearing masks. She asks that the Board reconsider having a mandate. Kuklewicz suggests she attend a Board of Health meeting.
 - Wolinsky emphasizes that a mask-wearing policy saves lives. She feels the Town should provide our own leadership on this issue. She intends to attend a Board of Health meeting.
 - Ellis shares that the Town will be receiving 2,700 COVID test kits in advance of the holiday. Any organizations are welcome to share their thoughts with the BOH relative to how those kits can be equitably distributed.

Jon Dobosz

Montague Center Park Improvement Project Update

- We are currently in an in-house design phase; we are working off the recommendations of Conway's School of Design's master plan process.
- With the assistance and coordination of Montague Center resident Chris Pinardi, we are able to refurbish the infield of the Montague Center ballfield. Pinardi was able to solicit about \$8,000 worth of donations.
- Baltazar Construction skinned the infield and installed some clay a few weeks ago.
- We plan to do the following in the spring: remove the large swing set in the playground area and re-install it in another part of the park, move the picnic area, and make modifications in the playground area.
- There will hopefully be a public meeting sometime this winter.

Bryan Camden, Airport Manager

Request to provide services to charity; use of Airport truck with donated trailer to pick up wreaths for "Wreaths Across America 2021" from December 14th - December 18th

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the use of the Airport truck with donated trailer to pick up wreaths for "Wreaths Across America 2021" from December 14th - December 18th. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Personnel Board

- **Appoint Taelour Cornett, Library Assistant, NAGE Grade A, Step 3, effective 12/14/20**
Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Taelour Cornett, Library Assistant, NAGE Grade A, Step 3, effective 12/14/20. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Appoint Al Averill, Associate Member of Conservation Commission, Term ending 6/30/2022**

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Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Al Averill, Associate Member of Conservation Commission, Term ending 6/30/2022. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Walter Ramsey, Town Planner

- **Overview of Planning Board's Proposal for MGL 40R Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District to incentivize and plan for new housing in downtown Turners Falls at Griswold Mill site and First Street**
 - Ramsey gives a PowerPoint presentation, summarizing the following: What are Smart Growth Overlay Districts, 40R Zoning Overlay Districts, the reason the Town is doing this, Benefits, Requirements, Affordability Criteria, Montague Subsidized Housing Index, District Selection, Proposed Smart Growth Overlay District, Subdistrict A: Griswold Mill (11-15 Power Street), Subdistrict B: First Street, Subdistrict B: Downtown Gateway, Zoning Requirements, and Municipal (non-zoning) Actions to support housing production.
 - In response to a question by Lord, Ramsey clarifies that if somebody does just 25% affordable units, all of those units count towards our affordability threshold under 40B.
- **Discussion of potential for 0.65 acre municipal parcel on First Street (Map 4 Lot 31) to be redeveloped into housing in coordination with proposed rezoning**
 - Have had discussion with property owner and this does not change options available to private property owner. A single project could be done on this parcel
- **Authorize 2022 Planning Assistance Grant in the amount of \$33,000 to conduct Phase 1 of a Municipal Comprehensive Plan Update: Community Visioning and Scenario Planning**

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the 2022 Planning Assistance Grant in the amount of \$33,000 to conduct Phase 1 of a Municipal Comprehensive Plan Update: Community Visioning and Scenario Planning. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Announce FY22 Urban Agenda grant for Canal District Master Plan and FY22 Real Estate Technical Assistance Grant for Strathmore Site Re-Use Assessment. Both grants to be administered by Mass Development under a single contract valued up to \$125,000**

Ramsey states that we received two grants and shares that he is working on a strategy to engage Mass Development to combine them into a single contract.
- **Notice of Receipt of offer from Judd Wire, Inc. to purchase 4 Sandy Lane (Assessors Map 21 Lot 150) 1.27 acres and authorize expenditure of up to \$1,000 from the unexpected engineering account to prepare a municipal stormwater easement to be retained on the parcel**
 - Ramsey states that Judd Wire has offered to purchase 4 Sandy Lane. The EDIC is supportive of selling the lot.
 - *Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,000 from unexpected engineering as discussed. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Town Administrator's Business

- **FY22 MIA Grant Award**

We received a \$7,100 grant award which we will be using to hire Northeast Roofing Consultants to develop detailed roof analyses of nine different buildings in Town.
- **Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting/FRTA Garage**

The FRTA has been able to acquire the necessary funds to build a bus garage on Sandy Lane and is now able to reward a contract.

Other:

Anticipated Next Meeting Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 at 6:30 PM via ZOOM

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