

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Due to COVID-19 Public Participation is by Zoom
Tuesday, January 18, 2022

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; Director of Public Health Daniel Wasiuk; Town Clerk Deb Bourbeau; Airport Director Bryan Camden; Parks and Recreation Director Jon Dobosz; Highway Superintendent Tom Bergeron; WPCF Director Chelsey Little; Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen; and Police Chief Chris Williams.

MCTV Vimeo link: <https://vimeo.com/667734178>

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

Approve minutes of January 10, 2022

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the minutes of January 10, 2022 as presented. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Review of COVID case counts (not on agenda)

Case counts are as follows: from January 9 to 15 equals 109; from January 2 to 15 equals 274; from March 1, 2020 to January 15, 2022 equals 1,079. Percentage of all individuals fully vaccinated in Montague equals 64%, individuals with at least one dose equals 74%. Of the 109 cases in the past week, the vaccination breakdown is as follows: fully vaccinated, 38; partially vaccinated, 1; not vaccinated, 70. The age group breakdown is as follows: 18-35 equals 32, 36-49 equals 17, 50-64 equals 22, 65-80 equals 6, 81+ equals 0, and 17 and under equals 32.

FY23 Budget/Personnel Proposals

Review revenue and budget estimates as submitted

- Ellis states that in November budget guidance was provided which described to department heads and collaborating organizations that we did not see a major disruption in revenue. Departments were requested to submit a level services budget if they felt it was appropriate. However, any department that saw substantial differences from their previous year was asked to provide the Town Administrator's office with advanced notice of that, which would give the Selectboard an opportunity to hear preliminary requests. The proposed budget is looking at a total increase of about 3.7% expected from the budget; which does not keep pace with the total requests of the General Operating Budget, which is about 4.8%.
- The process would involve (1) hearing personnel requests as described by department heads, which the Selectboard may vote on; then (2) looking at the entirety of the budget next week and coming up with the Selectboard's proposed budget to the Finance Committee. At their January 26th meeting, the Finance Committee would embark on their own investigative process, knowing that the Selectboard is supportive of the personnel-related changes. On March 23rd there will be a reconciliation meeting between the Selectboard and the Finance Committee.
- In response to a question by Boutwell, Ellis states that we will be beginning our union negotiations with NAGE, NEPBA, and the UE regarding their contracts. There currently is no specific set-aside in this budget for them. However, a change of \$100,000 in the total budget will generally equate to about an 8 ½ cent increase on the tax rate if we were to hold everything constant.

Hear personnel and related budget requests/Department requests:

Town Clerk

- Bourbeau states that her budget is based upon the number of elections that she has in each fiscal year. This year's elections are the annual Town election, a State Primary, and an election for a new governor. Her budget would increase by a minimum of \$30,000. Other items that require increases include purchasing new software (minimum of \$2,988 annually), purchasing a new fire-proof file cabinet, and covering expenses involving book-binding.
- Kuklewicz suggests considering a better storage facility for Town records.
- The consensus of the Selectboard is to move forward the Town Clerk's request as presented.

Airport

- Camden states the most notable changes in the Airport budget include a position increase and utility estimates.

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- In response to a question by Lord, Camden states that the acquisition of the Pioneer property required new routers, a new computer, and a new printer station. With the new IT infrastructure, he is not expecting much of an expense for that line item.
- In response to a question by Lord regarding Building and Grounds, Camden states that with the recent expansion into Pioneer, there were a lot of expenses due to repairs.
- In response to a question by Kuklewicz, Camden states that he expects to end FY23 with a surplus of around \$9,000.
- In response to a question by Hanold, Camden states that with regard to the borrowing that the airport did in FY21, they expect to have the remainder of it paid back.
- Ellis states that his main concern was that the projected revenues were enough to support the budget.
- Ellis hopes that the Airport Commission would be willing to change the fundamental grading of the Airport Manager position. He hopes the Selectboard supports this.
- Camden is trying to adding 11 hours per week to the Airport Operations position.
- In response to a question by Kuklewicz, Camden states that although the Commission wants to boost his salary, he chooses to remain where he is because he would like to boost the second position.
- In response to a question by Kuklewicz, Camden states he has placed a hold on the fuel system for several reasons. He hopes that the airport will receive it at the end of March/beginning of April.
- The consensus of the Selectboard is to move forward with the Airport Director's presentation.

Parks & Recreation

- Dobosz explains the need for a groundskeeper.
- Bergeron suggests hiring three college students during the summer for the Highway Department, then allowing one of them to work at Parks and Rec. An 11-week summer employee would cost \$6,270.
- Ellis feels that this is a cost-effective approach to giving Dobosz what he needs when he needs it.
- In response to a question by Lord, Dobosz states that the DPW has been very helpful with regard to doing the work needed for the adult softball league.
- In response to a question by Boutwell, Dobosz states that he has not built into his budget the cost of keeping the playground equipment, etc., sanitized.
- The consensus of the Selectboard is to move forward with the changes in the budgets of the Parks and Recreation as well as the DPW Departments.

Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF)

- Little reiterates the need for a Lab Manager and summarizes the reasons for this need. The salary would be just under \$59,000. The individual must have a 5C License.
- Little did not include anticipated lab costs for certain procedures as the proposed lab manager could perform those. If the lab manager not approved, lab costs will increase.
- In response to a question by Lord, Little explains that the expenses under Contracted Lab Services involve sending tests out to free up staff.
- The consensus of the Selectboard is to move forward with the WPCF Director's personnel change request.

Board of Health

- Wasiuk summarizes the list of items behind the reason for the requested increase in the BOH budget: increase in personnel hours (for the clerk and the nurse), equipment, an inspection vehicle, and office supplies.
- Lord expresses his feeling that the personnel request is difficult timing-wise given the pending negotiations of contracts.
- Kuklewicz feels that with regard to the clerk position, a process needs to be gone through. He is concerned about creating a "ripple" effect.
- Boutwell states that as a former BOH member, he can see the point of the request, but is nervous about the total cost involved.
- Hanold states he is troubled that an individual can get a regrade on the basis of coming to their boss and asking for a raise. The change has to be justified with a fresh job description, then included in an evaluation across all the positions in Town.
- Ellis does not feel that a strong enough rationale has been presented to support the increase in the nurse's hours, but he feels that this is a conversation that can be held in the future.

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- In response to a comment by Kuklewicz, Olsen clarifies that the IT budget covers hardware and that printers and supplies are paid for by the departments.
- Lord feels that the increase in the nurse's hours should be funded for this year, using grant money.
- Ellis notes that ARPA Grant funding would require a detailed description of activities and relation to COVID, as well as tracking procedures proposed prior to dispensation of ARPA funds.
- Zamojski states that the plan for the increase in the nurse's hours was reflected on items outside of just COVID, and included working with the senior center, our homebound elders, and members of our at-risk population.
- With regard to the personnel changes, the Selectboard would like to hold off on making a decision until more research has been done.
- With regard to the inspection vehicle, the Selectboard would like to hold this conversation at another meeting.

Police/Dispatch

- Williams explains the need for a fifth dispatcher, who would do double duty by also doing some of the administrative requirements.
- Boutwell comments on the likelihood that an extra dispatcher would cut down on overtime.
- Lord notes he is reticent as we've made some recent changes in dispatch expenses.
- Kuklewicz believes that by hiring a fifth dispatcher, we'll save more money than we're anticipating and we'll have a full complement of staff.
- Lord asks Williams for a better plan for the percentage of the time that the new hire will not be doing dispatch.
- Town Meeting Member Ariel Elan shares her feeling that the last change in the dispatch situation was an "emergency rescue," not an improvement that needs to be assessed. She believes that Williams' plan is prudent.
- The Selectboard's consensus is to do a little more research on the dispatcher situation.
- Williams will address the request for a new sergeant at a future meeting, possibly next Tuesday.

Council on Aging

The rest of the budget will be discussed at a future meeting.

Selectboard

The rest of the budget will be discussed at a future meeting.

Town Administrator's Business

Execute Grants with Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MassWorks Turners Falls Canal District Improvements Project Amendment

- **Extend deadline of current grant to June 2023**
- **Increase Award amount from \$2,163,000 to \$2,933,000**

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the MassWorks Turners Falls Canal District Improvements Project Amendment, which extends the deadline of the current grant to June 2023 and increases the award amount from \$2,163,000 to \$2,933,000. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz – Aye

Urban Agenda Grant, \$100,000 toward Turners Falls Canal District Master Plan Process

Boutwell makes the motion to executive the Urban Agenda Grant, \$100,000 toward Turners Falls Canal District Master Plan Process; and authorize the Chair to sign the document. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Execute Finalized purchase and sale agreement and subsequently authorize execution of deed of sale to Judd Wire, Inc. for the sale of 1.268 acres to Judd Wire, Inc. (Assessors Map 21 Lot 150) for a purchase price of \$55,000

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the finalized purchase and sale agreement and subsequently authorize execution of deed of sale to Judd Wire, Inc. for the sale of 1.268 acres to Judd Wire, Inc. (Assessors Map 21 Lot 150) for a purchase price of \$55,000; and authorize the Board to execute the deed when it is available. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Update on Remote Town Meeting Request

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We are trying to get a remote Town Meeting. Senator Cumerford's Office is going to bring our proposed legislation to make allowance for said remote Town Meeting to the Governor's Office. Both Cumerford's and Blais's Offices are also working to make sure this matter comes to the attention of the House and Senate.

Execute Session in accordance with G.L. c. 30a, §21(A)(6), to consider the possible purchase, exchange, taking, lease, or value of real property - FirstLight Power, votes may be taken

Kuklewicz deems that holding this discussion in open session would be detrimental to the Town's position.

Boutwell makes the motion to go into Execute Session in accordance with G.L. c. 30a, §21(A)(6), to consider the possible purchase, exchange, taking, lease, or value of real property - FirstLight Power, votes may be taken. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye