

**TOWN OF MONTAGUE  
MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING  
Remote Meeting via ZOOM  
Monday, March 21, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/690763286>**

**PRESENT:** Chair Rich Kuklewicz; Chris Boutwell and Matt Lord, members; Town Administrator Steve Ellis.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kimberley Williams, Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation; Christopher Sawyer-Laucanno, Montague Historical Commission; Janel Nockleby; Brent Pitcher; Brian McHugh, FCRHRA; Walter Ramsey, Town Planner; Sally Peck, Bob Rueter and Jeff Clark, Energy Committee; Ariel Elan, resident; Jeff Singleton, Montague Reporter; Julian Mendonza, The Recorder; BettyLou Mallet, Scribe.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Rich Kuklewicz at 6:30 p.m. This meeting is being held via Zoom conferencing and being recorded by MCTV. Topics may start earlier than specified. All members present.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No public comment this evening.

**3. REVIEW MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes of March 7, 2022, and March 14, 2022 are being deferred until a future date.

**4. COVID-19 UPDATES**

- **Review of COVID case counts and trends**

Steve placed the Board of Health memo on the screen for everyone to review. The news continues to trend in a positive direction with case counts trending downward to 3 this week (1 fully vaccinated, 1 partially vaccinated and 1 not vaccinated). The age group is 1 in 18-35 and 2 in 50-64 years of age. The two-week timeframe showed a total of 10 cases from March 6, 2022, through March 19, 2022. These cases continue to be consistent with the state case counts and trends.

- **Discuss any related updates or priorities** – There were no priorities to discuss.

**5. PERSONNEL BOARD**

- **Appoint Kimberley Williams to the Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation for a vacant at-large seat. Term through June 30, 2023.**

Kimberley Williams was present for this appointment. The Board received her request to be appointed to the Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation to fill a vacancy from

March 21, 2022, through June 30, 2023. Kimberley felt it was a good fit as she is in business and very excited to be appointed to this position. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Montague Selectboard appointed Kimberley Williams to the Montague Economic Development Industrial Corporation to fill the vacancy from March 21, 2022, through June 30, 2023. Mat Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye. Vote is unanimous.** Kimberley is asked to see Deb Bourbeau, Town Clerk to be sworn in before attending any meetings.

## **6. DEMOLITION DELAY BYLAW PROPOSED FOR ATM WARRANT (Chris Sawyer-Laucanno).**

Chris Sawyer-Laucanno spoke with the Selectboard on behalf of the Montague Historical Commission. He stated that the Commission has not yet approved this bylaw as a few additional changes have been made as of this date. Therefore, they will be meeting on March 31, 2022, to review the final document and vote. He stated should the town vote to enact this bylaw, Montague would be working along side 150 other communities who have established this bylaw. The Demolition Delay Bylaw only applies to significant buildings in town defined by the Historical Commission as either being listed on the historic register or is of significance within a national historic district and certified by the State. If any building was constructed 100 years ago, this would also contribute to the history of the town and is subject to review.

Christopher stated that a house, garage or outbuilding does not meet the criteria of this bylaw and therefore, the homeowner does not need to be concerned. If the building is of significance, the individual is to present the request to the Building Inspector. It would then go before the Historical Commission and a public hearing would be scheduled. Once that is complete, the Building Inspector could either give the individual permission to tear it down, if deemed significant, the delay bylaw would go into effect where the owner would have a year to find another buyer or restore the building via tax credits. If progress is not made within the year, the Building Inspector can issue a demo permit.

If the Building Inspector, Fire Chief or Board of Health deem the building as unsafe, the Building Inspector has the full right to give a building demolition permit. Walter Ramsey concurs with the information Christopher is giving.

There were no comments from Chris Boutwell or Matt Lord. Rich Kuklewicz is not sure how he feels about this bylaw given the past history of buildings in Montague and the disposition with unqualified owners. He also asked about the timing of holding a public hearing and placing this bylaw on the Town Meeting Warrant. Christopher is very aware of Rich's concerns and stated the Historical Commission will meet on March 31, 2022, and he feels strongly it will be voted on and passed.

Christopher stated the reason this bylaw came about is through pressure from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. He feels the history of the Farren building may have promoted this bylaw as well. Although this bylaw may not save the Farren due to the fact that should the Town vote to move forward with this bylaw at Town Meeting, there is a 30-day period before the demo bylaw goes into effect. Should the owners of the Farren request a permit through the Building Inspector within the 30 days, it will be issued.

Matt Lord asked where the Historical Commission is within the process of this bylaw. Christopher stated a new version became available this morning and therefore, the Historical Commission has not approved it at this time. Town Counsel has also notified Walter of a few minor

changes. Rich stated the timeline for submission for the Town Meeting has already passed and feels if the Historical Commission votes, a public hearing is held, there may not be enough time to place on the warrant for Town Meeting and include the information in the packets for the town meeting members for their review. Steve stated April 4, 2022, is the deadline due to the volume of material issued to the Town Meeting members for their review. Christopher stated he believes the bylaw will pass and the information will be available to be placed in the town meeting member packets for their review by the deadline.

## 7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (Brian McHugh)

- **Execute contract for Montague Avenue A Streetscape Phase III construction to J. M. Nunes & Sons Construction, base bid of \$172,800.**

Brian McHugh attended the meeting. He described this contract as being Phase III construction in front of the Shea Theater and the Colle Building. In 2020, the award was granted to H. M. Nunes & Sons Construction, Inc. With the base bid of \$172,800. **Rich entertained a motion to execute the contract for Montague Avenue A Streetscape Phase III construction to the J. M. Nunes & Sons Construction, Inc. In the amount of \$172,800. Chris Boutwell made the motion and Matt Lord seconded. There were no questions. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.** Brian notified the Board that the preconstruction meeting will be on Tuesday, March 29, 2022, and the construction will begin in early April 2022.

- **Execute FY21 CDBG Grant Contract with MA DHCD in the amount of \$788,174.**

Brian explained that this is another phase of the StreetScape Project dated January 2022 in front of the Subway and Between the Uprights totalling \$788,174. The contract is with the Town and Housing Development. It will go to bid for the design for StreetScape. This is the request to release the funds from HUD. **Rich entertained a motion to execute FY21 CDBG Grant Contract with the MA DHCD in the amount of \$788,174 to be signed by the Chair. Chris Boutwell made the motion and seconded by Matt Lord. No questions. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

- **Consider prepared response to "Additional Special Conditions" associated with FY21 CDBG grant award.**

This last contract has additional special conditions inserted. The Board received the contract describing each addition. Changes such as the Selectboard having the final say regarding the grievance procedure, categorizing the grant activities and budget details for social services. Jeff Singleton asked if these changes would delay the grants to the social service agencies. Brian explained that there is no gap in services as money is fronted to them through FCRHRA. **Rich entertains a motion to approve the amended grant award as described and written. Chris Boutwell made the motion and seconded by Matt Lord. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

## 8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WESTERN MASS GRANT AWARDS (Walter Ramsey)

- **Execute MOU with Western MA Economic Development Corporation to authorize the use of \$80,750 for two Rapid Recovery projects: Peskeompskut Park bandshell upgrades and Town Hall Annex Re-use Study.**

Walter gave the background information for the two submissions last year for grant funding through the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts Grant. He stated Mon-

tagne was the only community to receive the two grants totalling \$80,850 which does not include the 5% administrative fee. The two projects are the Peskeompskut Park Bandshell and the Town Hall Annex Re-use Study.

For the Peskeompskut Park Bandshell, the Town has seen an increase in outdoor events through the pandemic and successful programs being held in the park. He showed a diagram which described the upgrades such as lighting, landscape buffers and a new sign on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The upgrades will begin this Spring. Rich asked about the drainage issue which Walter is aware of. Walter stated it is a big ticket item to put in a dry well for the drainage system and the thought is for a large squeegee when the park is being used instead.

The other project is for the dedevelopment of the Town Hall annex in the basement. The scope of the work is to be finalized but according to the grant, \$50,000 is to be used to explore cultural and media use of the space. There have been public discussions to also utilize the space for office and municipal storage. An RFP will be worked-up and a study will be done late this summer through the early fall. There were no questions or comments. **Rich entertained a motion for the Chair to sign the MOU with Western MA Economic Development Corporation to authorize the use of \$80,750 for two Rapid Recovery projects: Peskeompskut Park bandshell upgrades and the Town Hall Annex Re-use Study. Chris Boutwell made the motion and Matt Lord, seconded. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**9. PLANNING BOARD PETITION TO AMEND THE MONTAGUE ZONING BYLAWS for the purpose of adopting a Smart Growth Overlay District in Turners Falls (Walter Ramsey).**

The Planning Board petitioned to amend the Montague Zoning Bylaw after the public hearing held on February 14, 2022. The State determined the Town eligible. The next step is for the Planning Board to hold a 40A public hearing as two public hearings are needed. The second public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. remotely at the Town Hall. **Rich entertained a motion to except the petition to ammend the zoning bylaw. Chris Boutwell made the motion and Matt Lord seconded.** Matt Lord asked if Walter is limited to the changes being made on the zoning bylaw and Walter stated yes as it needs to stay within the State model. **Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**10. CONSIDER REQUEST FOR SELECTBOARD SUPPORT OF THE GREEN FUTURES ACT (Sally Peck)**

Sally Peck, Jeff Clark and Bob Rueter joined the Board to discuss the Support of the Green Futures Act. They presented the Board with information they had received after two questions were raised at the meeting with the Board on passage of the bill and the estimated costs/benefits to residents of the town.

One of the questions raised by the Board was the estimated amount for Montague. House Bill 3292 roughly gave a figure based on population and environmental justice of 2.7 million dollars between 2023 and 2030 (\$85,700 annually).

The other question that was asked is who will benefit from it? This bill is intended to fund the local and state programs with increases varying based upon the people's specific circumstances. Sally stated that Montague's median household income is noticeably below the state average, more than 40% of the town's population will qualify for rebate checks.

Matt Lord asked if there would be any rebates for businesses. Sally stated businesses could qualify as municipal funding, could receive a grant but no rebates. The State Board would manage the allocations of the rebates along with the Department of Revenue.

Rich asked if anything needs to be done by the residents who qualify for a rebate? Jeff stated it is automatic and the households do not need to do anything.

Rich asked what if the annual amount is not spent? Jeff stated the amount is over a 7-year period and it is up to Montague how to spend the funds and the pace of spending the funds. Sally stated the bill is also looking towards energy savings such as retrofits for buildings, solar and mini-splits for schools. This bill is not exclusive for the uses; just as long as it reduces greenhouse gasses.

Steve stated just like any other revenue streams, it is based on a state formula and could benefit as a secondary source of funding. Steve asked the Energy Committee their sense of this bill at this point in time? Jeff stated although the bill is still in session; it looks like it has a lot of momentum.

The Energy Commission drafted a letter for the Board to review and is requesting a motion of support. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board supports the Green Futures Act and endorses the Energy Commission to submit a letter with their vote to favorably support. All three members of the Board will sign the letter. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

## **11. MONTAGUE SEWER COLLECTION SYSTEM I & I/CSO STUDY (Steve Ellis)**

- **Update on DEP Asset Management Grant Program Award**

Steve updated the Board on the DEP Asset Management Grant Award Program stating the Town has received the assurance from the MA DEP for the award of \$250,000 to be funded in full. This funded project is for the area of Millers Falls and Turners Falls and comes in the form of a direct vendor contract as well as some I&I money that the town has left over to supplement a more comprehensive study. \$150,000 of the \$250,000 will be grant-funded and the balance will come from ARPA funding. There will be a couple of public hearings to make the final grant announcement.

- **Contract with Wright-Pierce for engineering services associated with the Montague Sewer Collection System I&I/CSO Study \$226,000.**

Knowing that the money is now coming, as well as, an ARPA appropriation, Steve would like the Town to enter into a contract with Wright-Pierce for engineering services for the Montague Sewer Collection System I&I/CSO study. The total value is \$226,000. There is the availability to leverage the money already obtained from a previous I&I study as a funding source to create what is essentially what the town is required to have for an I&I study that is required by the MA DEP. Steve showed a map on the screen which showed the locations of the collection systems.

The study is going to put a number of methods in place but the best one to understand is to have flow meters put in place over a period of 10 weeks. The metering is the best method because of the I&I throughout, which is permitted to monitor what comes into the system, as well as to understand the hydrology of the system particularly in Turners Falls and Treatment Plant areas.

The CSO side of the project is about understanding what alternatives are for implementing and reducing the number of CSO events that happen to occur over time. It will allow engineers to create a set of alternatives that the town can act upon in order to meet the obligations of the permit. The study will give the town the opportunity to see where the failures are within the town and allow them to make some serious changes such as in the Millers Falls system where problems persist. Steve stated this is what responsible management looks like in terms of the I&I/CSO.

Matt Lord asked about the timeline for this study. Steve stated the field study will begin in April while the ground levels are high. The completion of the study will be by February 2023 and June 2023 will be the completion of the project as the contract ends on December 31, 2023.

Jeff Singleton asked Steve about the study and how years ago, a large amount for a CSO was debated upon with the town and the whole issue with I&I going into the Connecticut River. Steve stated that project was able to be completed to a point due to funding. That project was not feasible to move to the second phase. The Town is now seeing the pressure to make the CSO complete and now the study can be undertaken due to the money appropriated.

**On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board approved the Chair to sign the contract with Wright-Pierce for engineering services associated with the Montague Sewer Collection System I&I/CSO Study in the amount of \$226,000. There were no other questions. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye. Motion approved.**

## **12. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S BUSINESS**

- **Initial discussion of Annual Town Meeting logistics**

Steve and Wendy would like to know if the Board would like to proceed with the Annual Town Meeting under the normal conditions for May 7, 2022, in person meeting at the Turners Falls High School Theater. Steve stated he checked in with the school district regarding the continued improvements with the air flow and filtration and everything is still fine. Chris Boutwell stated there may be some town meeting members who would wish to continue with the meeting being held outside. Rich stated he has talked with Steve about this idea and feels it is okay if the COVID count numbers continue in the downward trend however they can pivot the location to outside if needed. Matt Lord thinks if the numbers continue with the downward trend, it is entirely reasonable to have indoors in the theater even with past practices of wearing masks and good filtration. The Board agreed to have the meeting inside at the Turners Falls High School Theater on May 7, 2022 and can monitor on a weekly basis up until it is close to the time and can make the change as needed.

- **April forum regarding FY23 Selectboard Office personnel requests**

Steve stated there have been requests to provide an April forum regarding the FY23 Selectboard Office Personnel requests. Chris is open to the idea of another forum and Matt Lord does not have an opinion one way or the other. Rich feels this request has already been presented and questions have been answered with an open process. Matt Lord feels the Board has shared a wealth of information regarding this request but if other boards are requesting more information, it is important. Therefore, the Board agreed to add Steve's presentation regarding the FY23 Selectboard Office Personnel request to be held at the beginning of a Selectboard Meeting allocating 1 hour for the presentation starting at 6:00 p.m. This will be held on either April 11 or April 18 depending on the content of items on the agenda.

- **Execute agreement with MA Executive Office for Elder Affairs for continued formula-based grant funding to the Montague-Gill Council on Aging.**

Steve stated this is a standard contract by the State of Massachusetts for the continuation of a formula set amount based upon the calculation of older adults. Montague would be \$23,052 and the standard \$6,000 for Gill as they have fewer than 500 seniors. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board approved the Chair to sign the agreement with the Massachusetts Executive Office for Elder Affairs to continue the formula-based grant funding to the Montague-Gill Council on Aging. No questions. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

- **Update on EverSource double pole removal plan/process**

Steve received an update from EverSource regarding the removal of double poles. With the weather warming up, the process should be started this week. There will be 19 pull poles with Eversource, 152 transfers with Comcast, 11 transfers with Mass Technology Collaborative and 3 transfers with Verizon for a total of 185 pull poles/transfers.

- **Designation of signatory authority for Memorandum of Sale associated with April 21, 2022, auction of 2.91 +/- acres of land referenced as Map 48, Lot 0148**

Steve asks the Board for a designated signatory for the memorandum of sale of parcel of land between 507 and 517 Federal Street in Montague which will be going up for auction at noontime on April 21, 2022, in the Town Hall. The board discussed whether there should be a minimum bid established. This is a 2.9 acre lot that is not developed and is listed as rural business. Rich asks to check with the auctioneer about a minimum price.

**On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board moves to have Steve Ellis sign a Memorandum of Sale on behalf of the Montague Selectboard for a parcel of land locate between 507 and 517 Federal Street in Montague, MA consisting of 2.91 +/- acres, as appears on the Assessor's Map 48, Lot 0148. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

### 13. NEXT MEETING DATES

- **Joint meeting with the Finance Committee on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.**
- **Selectboard meeting on Monday, March 28, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom**

### 14. ADJOURNMENT

**On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

BettyLou Mallet  
Scribe