

**TOWN OF MONTAGUE  
MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING  
Remote Meeting via ZOOM  
Monday, March 28, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/693489659>**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** John Hanold, Montague Finance Committee member; Maggie Martin, The Brick House Community Resource Center, LLC; Russ Martin, Money Game, LLC; Peter Wackernagel, Project Manager of the Brick House; Jon Dobosz, Parks and Recreation Director; Tom Bergeron, DPW Superintendent; Chelsey Little, WPCF Superintendent; Chris Williams, Montague Police Chief; 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. The meeting is being taped as well as aired on MCTV. All members present.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There were not public comments

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**The Board received and reviewed the minutes of March 7, 14 and 21, 2022. On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the minutes of March 7, 14, and 21, 2022 were approved as presented. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**The Board received and reviewed the joint meeting minutes of the Montague Selectboard and the Montague Finance Committee meeting of March 16, 2022. On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the meeting minutes of March 16, 2022 were approved as presented. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**4. COVID-19 UPDATES**

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

There were no members of the Board of Health present. Steve presented the weekly report from the BOH stating there were 7 cases in the last 7-day period against 3 cases from the previous week. The breakdown consists of 5 fully vaccinated; 0 partially vaccinated; 2 not vaccinated. Age range is 1 in 18-35; 5 in 26-49 and 1 in 50-64. The Town is aware of the concern of the recent increase in cases and will continue to have conversations with the BOH.

**5. MAGGIE MARTIN – THE BRICKHOUSE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER, LLC**

- **5K Fun Run and Walk, June 18, 2022 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Rail Trail, Unity Park and through "the Patch".**

Maggie Martin from the Brickhouse Community Center joined the meeting to discuss the scheduled 5K Fun Run/Walk and request permission to use public property during this event. Rich read the submitted registration for assembly, public demonstration or use of public property. Maggie explained that this is the same run event in town since 2015. A map was shown while Maggie described the run and locations where the volunteers will man the stations at all the crossings. They will comply with all of the COVID protocols in place at the time of the event. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board approved the request submitted by Deborah Frenkel of the Brick House Community Resource Center, LLC for the 5K Fun Run/Walk to be held on June 18, 2022 from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. along the DCR Canalside Rail Trail at Unity Park through "The Patch". Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye. The Chair will sign the registration form.**

**Due to the scheduled items on the agenda and the Selectboard running ahead of scheduled times, items below are out of order due to the availability of individuals who are in attendance of the meeting earlier than scheduled.**

## **8. PERSONNEL BOARD**

- **Appoint Timothy Little to WPCF Foreman Position, NAGE Grade F, Step 3, \$28.72 effective 3/29/2022**

Chelsey Little was in attendance this evening. Steve stated due to the relation by marriage, he has been deeply involved in the creation of this position and will discuss Tim Little with the Board. Steve described Tim as a highly qualified individual and very hard worker through his observations as well as conversations with two former WPCF Superintendents over the course of their tenure. Rich stated Tim has been employed by the plant for many years and is a very valuable member. The position of Chief Operator has now changed to Foreman according to Chelsey Little. She stated Tim has been employed for 15 years, has a great rapport with the vendors and other staff members. He is the perfect person for this position. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board appointed Tim Little to the WPCF Foreman position, NAGE Grade F, Step 3 at the rate of \$28.72 effective 03/29/2022. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

- **Approve Cell Phone Stipend for Timothy Little, \$5.77/week, effective 03/22/2022**

**Chris Boutwell made the motion and seconded by Matt Lord to approve a stipend for Timothy Little's cell phone in the amount of \$5.77/week effective 03/22/2022. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

- **Chief Chris Williams – Execute Critical Incident Training Grant for Reimbursement**

Chief described this grant that has been in place since 2019 and expires on July 1, 2022. This is the process to renew this grant for Police Chief Christopher Williams and Lieutenant Christopher Bonnet to obtain the critical incident training. Jeff Singleton asked Chief to define what critical incident training is and he explained it had to do with mental health and the next level training from Clinical and Support Options. Classes for this training are finally opening again after a hiatus from the pandemic. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board approved the Chair to sign the Standard Contract Form and Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing for the Critical Incident Training Grant. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

- **Discussion of removal of Montague Police from Civil Service**

Chief Williams stated he and the Union are in talks regarding the removal of the civil service. He stated the town has been in civil service since a town meeting in 1932 and the town needs to vote to be removed from civil service. If the town votes their approval, the next step would be legislature certifying the vote. Chief Williams explained the benefits of moving forward without civil service where the pool of officers would be broader, the hiring process would be faster and would secure the employment of officers in town. Many towns in the area are no longer covered by civil service. Ariel Elan has learned a great deal of necessity to hire local officers as they have a history of the community. Rich stated by removing civil service in no way lowers any standards of who is hired into the police department. The process would be to advertise, interview the applicant, conduct a background check and then make a decision. There were no questions. This request will be placed on the warrant of the upcoming Annual Town Meeting.

#### **6. RUSS MARTIN, MONEY GAME, LLC**

Russ Martin and Lawrence Scott attended the meeting at 6:54 p.m. They described the filming of a story from Julian Lowenthal who is from Turners Falls. There will be several scenes shot from Subway to Great Falls Market on the first day. The second day will be at Unity Park filming a basketball game. There will be a couple of cameras, a small crew and a few trucks in the area for about 5 hours per day. Jon Dobosz of the Parks and Recreation Department stated it will be posted on social media notifying the public of the closure of the areas during filming. A registration for assembly, public demonstration, or use of public property form has been submitted by Russ Martin for Money Game, LLC for the dates of March 30, 2022 through April 8, 2022. The area of coverage is Avenue A sidewalks and Unity Park. There is a certificate of insurance in place. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board approved Russ Martin and Money Game, LLC the use of public property for filming beginning March 30, 2022 along Avenue A sidewalks and then Unity Park on 04/01/2022 providing a certificate of insurance is received. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

#### **7. PETER WACKERNAGEL – POLLINATOR GARDENS**

Peter Wackernagel, project manager at the Brick House, LLC joined the meeting to describe another set of pollinator gardens along the tree belts and grassy slope on the north side of the town hall. He shared a few drawings on the screen for the Board to review. Tom Bergeron mentioned that the DPW does not have the capacity to maintain, so the work needs to be completed and maintained by community groups and volunteers. Steve also noted that the town does not have any way to water these gardens as there is no water source. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and seconded by Matt Lord, the Board endorses the pollinator gardens on L Street along the tree belt as well as the grassy slope on the North side of the town hall. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

#### **9. ARPA CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RELIEF SPENDING PLAN**

Steve described there were several items on the agenda tonight to make decisions relative to claiming revenue loss options, however final decisions do not need to be made tonight. The Board has the next few weeks to discuss and vote as the report needs to be filed by April 30, 2022. The Board can also talk about a general framework of spending as the Board can set perimeters and create a plan to be modified over time. This framework is just a local planning tool and does not need to be reported to the government. The last two items need to be discussed prior to the Annual Town Meeting as they may wish to be funded through the ARPA funding.

- **Make Decisions Relative to Claiming Revenue Loss Option**

Steve recapped that most communities are taking the standard allowance to the maximum allowance to spend funds as situations arise and simplifies the reporting requirements. Steve said the town is submitting questions to the State DLS regarding clarity on the funding for office assistance and they are stating the expenditures could possibly be made through this grant. It would be worthwhile to set aside a small portion of the funds to give the town flexibility to spend outside the plan.

Rich asked the Board their thoughts on setting aside funds for downtown business development. Matt was not on the Board with the CDBG grant was funded and was curious as to the participation involved. Rich stated funds were allocated by the Board and they were run through the Community Development Program who took care of the logistics. Franklin County CDC managed all of the developments for local funds. Steve was told there was a great deal of reporting and coaching for this program which turned out to be very difficult. Over time, the town has found the importance to find the ways to create curb appeal and ways to direct outsiders to downtown businesses. Steve stated he received a suggestion from Loot to have the Town place and maintain attractive trash barrels to pick up the trash and place in by good samaritins. Matt concurs with Steve to try and find a good program that is flexible in maintaining.

Rich asks what would qualify to bring in some improvements for businesses on public property. Steve stated if they accept the lost revenue category, there may be more flexibility in that category for general governmental purposes to help businesses on public properties.

Ariel Elan asked if the Community Development Block Grant had ended? Steve stated it was programming left over from previous years' grant but applications are yearly. She also wants to not forget Millers Falls as well as her thought on providing trash barrels is that some people, instead of purchasing trash stickers, dump their personal trash in the barrels.

Rich mentioned also on the spreadsheet provided by Steve listing an ARPA spending strategy is worker premium pay. Steve understands that as the town pays workers for special assignments, unions and non-unions, it's allowable under general governmental purposes.

Rich asked the Board if they are supportive of claiming the total available funds as lost revenue. Matt is somewhat supportive at declaring as a lost revenue exemption. Rich and Chris agree to claim as lost revenue.

**Rich entertained a motion to move that the Town of Montague, through its Selectboard, designate a sum of \$2,402,826 of its total \$2,402,826 ARPA CSLFRF funding as "revenue loss" and to authorize the Town Administrator and Town Accountant to file any notice or reports relative thereto. Chris made the motion and Matt Lord seconded. No discussion. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

· **Consider Funding for WPCF Screw Pumps (\$745,000)**

Rich stated this has been discussed and the screw pumps are heavily needed. If allocated along with the Vac Truck, would use approximately 50% of the funds. Chris stated they are needed and using ARPA funds will help with sewer users fees otherwise it would have to go through borrowing. Rich asked Chelsey if the bid of \$745,000 includes shipping from, deliver to, rigging of, installation and all except for the electrical set-up. Chelsey states it does make it "turn-key". She does not know the length of the quote. Steve has allocated up to \$800,000 just in case due to the market.

**Rich entertains a motion to move to appropriate a sum not to exceed \$800,000 of ARPA CSL FRF monies for the purpose of funding the purchase and installation of new wastewater screw pumps at the Montague Water Pollution Control Facility, and any costs relative thereto. Chris Boutwell makes the motion and seconded by Matt Lord. No discussion. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

- **Consider Funding Source for Balance of Expected Sewer Vac Truck cost (\$400,000)**

Rich asked Tom Bergeron if the Vactor Truck is on order. Tom stated that Sanborn has one in the lot waiting when and where to be delivered. Yes it is available. The Town has approved at the Special Town Meeting \$108,000. Steve informed the Board that this is different than any other funding sources as cannot purchase directly through a bid list or competitive purchasing. Following Federal procurement rules which are more stringent and counsel gave rules to follow and give vendors the opportunity to receive through this vendor. It is still a Federal grant of funds and need to follow through this procedure. Matt asked if the funding is available and Steve explained about the timing of the funding as the screw pumps will be on a slightly delayed schedule and focus on the Vactor Truck first. This way the money will be available. It is the timing of the competitive bidding process.

**Rich entertains a motion to move to appropriate a sum not to exceed \$400,000 of ARPA CSLFRF monies for the purpose of funding the purchase of a sewer vac truck, with said sum intended to supplement a previous appropriation for that purpose. Chris Boutwell makes the motion and seconded by Matt Lord. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

- **Discuss Allocation Framework/General Spending Priorities**

There are other items on this ARPA Spending Plan and Allocation Strategy spreadsheet for discussion such as affordable housing which Walter spoke on; business development, a few library items, COVID contingency and worker premium pay. Chris would like to defer these items to a future agenda. Steve would like to discuss the library's request for the tent which they need to commit as a tent may not be available in the long term. This is not in their budget. Matt feels speaking about the library tent now would give them time to schedule one. JH asked if this would be a continuing library expense year after year? Steve stated they could move forward to discuss in their budgeting process. Perhaps the trustees can discuss. John recommends the trustees keep in mind to possibly place in their budget if this is an ongoing event. Rich stated he agrees with renting rather than purchasing and to come from CDBG rather than ARPA funds. Steve feels the CDBG balance is solid and he will discuss with Caitlyn and bring back to a future agenda. The Board will be thinking of other ways to utilize these funds around May/June.

## **10. TOWN MEETING WARRANT**

- **To consider articles for inclusion on the May 7, 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant, including annual operating and capital budgets, revolving funds, enterprise fund budgets, departmental equipment requests, general and zoning bylaw amendments and citizen petitions, votes may be taken.**

The Board placed the draft Annual Town Meeting warrant on the screen for review. Rich went through each article number with the audience and opened for discussion.

**Articles 1 and 2** are general housekeeping and should be kept on the warrant

**Article 3** is the Airport Revolving Fund and to create a revolving fund for the fuel so straightforward.

**Article 4** is discussion on the Assistant Town Administrator position which will be placed on the agenda for April 11, 2022 for public discussion so leave on the warrant. All three positions are placed on the warrant; ATA, laboratory manager and assistant office clerk per past town practice.

**Article 5** fix salaries for elected officials

**Article 6** fix salaries for appointed officials

**Article 7** general maintenance of several departments in the town

**Article 8** is for the WPCF primarily fund through sewer user fees.

**Article 9** is general maintenance of the Colle Opera Building which is covered under the leases of the building.

**Article 10** to fund operations of the Airport which is covered by the income of the airport operations.

**Article 11** is \$1,029,566 for the Tech School Assessment

**Article 12** appropriation of \$11,341,466 for the Gill-Montague Regional School District assessment

**Article 13** request \$10,000 from the Conservation Commission for the Waidlich Conservation Fund

**Article 14** \$45,000 for transportation and tuition for a Montague student to attend Smith Vocational School

**Article 15** DPW discretionary fund for DPW. Steve stated the request from the department remains \$100,000 but the Selectboard has the discretion to change to \$50,000 as previously discussed with other committees. The Finance Committee and the Capital Improvements Committee approved the reduction to \$50,000. Rich entertained a motion for the Selectboard to reduce the discretionary amount for the DPW from \$100,000 to \$50,000. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord asks if the warrant should read Selectboard or the DPW request. Steve stated it is still the department that has made the request. JH feels the warrant should be written according to the departments request and can be amended on Town Meeting floor. Chris withdraws his motion. More discussion stated the Selectboard is making the motion of the reduction of the discretionary funding. Steve also stated it is the Moderator's opinion to request the reduction on the town meeting floor. Rich accepts the withdrawal of the motion and would like Tom Bergeron to be aware the Finance Committee and the Selectboard have recommended the reduction to \$50,000.

**Article 16** request for the screw pumps will be removed as it has been committed this evening for ARPA funds.

**Article 17** back up generator at the WPCF for \$130,000 has been reviewed and from the Capital Stabilization Funds

**Article 18** to increase the sum of \$21,584 of Article #18C of the May 22, 2021 Annual Town Meeting for bid and project overruns. This is to bring funds back up to \$25,000 and is under the Complete Streets Project.

**Article 19** would appropriate funds as \$125,000 Town Hall Roof; \$60,000 Shea Front Roof; \$130,000 Carnegie Basement Renovations; \$100,000 Montague Center Library Masonry Repair and Vector lease payment can be removed. These have been planned in this year's budget cycle. Steve feels this library request is part of the thinking to include the three libraries and requests by Deb Bradway in previous discussions. Rich states to leave these as plans in previous discussions. Jeff Singleton ask to have clarification on the \$100,000 for the library to include handicap accessibility and Steve will look into that.

**Article 20** to transfer funds into Town Capital Stabilization Fund, OPEB Trust Fund, GMRSD Stabilization Fund and FCTS Stabilization Fund. Steve noted that the Finance Committee stated the funds did not need to be transferred to the Town's Capital Stabilization Fund as it has reached it's capacity.

**Article 21** is \$173,800 costs associated with the establishment and operation of 253 Farmacy impact fees are \$86,900 for licensed alcohol and druge abuse counselor at GMRSD and \$86,900 for licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor at FCTS.

**Article 22** \$40,000 for providing STEM afterschool enrichment programs coming from the community impact fees. This is a selectboard request and not a school request.

**Article 23** \$25,000 for a multi-model design on Millers Falls Road and Industrial Boulevard. Use of impact fees to provide sidewalks from GMRSD to FCTS. Rich asks if it fits in the impact fees? Matt states it includes the sidewalks as a use and bus stop in conjunction and crosswalks that are used by students in the site of 253 Farmacy and the traffic they are generating there.

**Article 24** to rescind \$286,081.30 to Article #8 of the February 25, 2021 Special Town Meeting for acquiring three properties for the airport and aviation purposes.

**Article 25** rescind \$1,305,011.05 borrowing as voted to Article #1 of the March 29, 2018 Special Town Meeting for the building and equipping the new DPW Facility.

**Article 26** establish a special purpose fund known as the Canal District Utility Improvements Stabilization Fund.

**Article 27** for the town to add a bylaw known as the Demo Delay Bylaw which was discussed in a previous meeting.

**Article 28** MEDIC request to update the Montague Economic Development Plan. Matt states it is a statutory requirement.

**Article 29** Smart Growth Overlay which has been reviewed in the past meeting.

**Article 30** Transfer of parcel of land at 11 Power Street to the EDIC Griswold Mill

**Article 31** Transfer a parcel of land on First Street to the Selectboard not the EDIC

**Article 32** to remove the police from civil service

**Article 33** licence for 196 Turners Falls Road El Nopalito Restaurant

**Article 34** the Fair Share Amendment- Montague Resolution of Support

## **11. JEFF SINGLETON – FRTA REPRESENTATIVE**

Jeff Singleton shared his screen which showed the agenda items of the last meeting. He discussed the maintenance facility in Montague and move out of Greenfield. There were discussions of leases and how long the project will take in Montague and staying in an "at risk" building in Greenfield. Jeff is asking Steve if he has an update on the completion of the Sandy Lane project to leave the Greenfield station. Steve has a meeting scheduled for next week for all to have a discussion.

Jeff also spoke of sub-committees to look at the Comprehensive Transit Plan to expand the ridership and the state aid. This discussion includes weekend fixed route service as FRTA is the only facility that does not have a weekend schedule. They are looking at pilot programs to include weekend ridership of Saturday and Sunday at a reduced version of the weekly schedule. Jeff feels it is more viable for a limited weekend service would give equity with other RTA's and would like to discuss with the Board in the future.

Matt agrees with Jeff regarding the weekend service but if through ARPA funds, use as a real pilot program and see how it works with the ridership. Rich remembers GMTA ran Saturday services and there was limited riders but feels using the funds may help to just run a pilot.

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

### **Review Unity Park Sealing/Painting Project Bids and Consider Use of Bid Overrun Account Funds up to \$3,412.75**

This would put in place, to protect the town, to perform projects if the bid that comes in exceeds expectations or if the work exceeds expected costs. He's asking to review the bid results for the Unity Park sealing and painting project of the basketball court and the splash pad. Also the hopscotch area with specialized surface suitable for courts and public playgrounds. Could award the base bid and leave a bit of contingency. He feels they have a qualified contractor. Asking the Board to use this source to cover the base bid. Balance is \$50,000 unallocated CDBG funds. Rich feels a project like this should be

CDBG funds. Chris agrees. **Move to expend \$3,500 from the Community Development Undiscretionary Account for the purpose of sealing and painting project at Unity Park. Motion made by Chris Boutwell, seconded by Matt Lord. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

· **Legislation Relative to Host Community Agreement**

Steve stated there is lobbying towards Host Community Agreements and he was advised by Senator Comerford and the President of the Town Administrator's Municipal Organization about a Bill on the Host Community landscape. It is being actively considered in the House and Senate. He wants the Board to be aware and will work with a member to lobby on the town's behalf a letter to the House/Senate. Matt will work with Steve on a letter on behalf of the Town. Rich stated Montague agreed with these host agreements in good faith.

· **Update on General Pierce Bridge Advocacy**

The Town continues to lobby for continued improvements to the bridge and the bridge will have lightening and target date is May 15, 2023. The pedestrian walkway and vehicle lanes to open about the same time. Required improvements have been made to the steel decking of the bridge. The painting is still outstanding.

· **Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting**

Steve said Senator Comerford and Rep. Blais wrote about the storm of late July there is some restitution to the town for infrastructure in the vicinity of \$84,000 not through MEMA or FEMA but the ARPA funding leveraged to provide a portion back to the communities in the General Fund.

**13. EXECUTIVE SESSION – M.G.L. c 30A, s21(a)(36 to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate)**

**Rich stated the Board will now be going into executive session for the purpose of M.G. L. C30A, s21 (a) (3) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate. Holding this in public session is detrimental to the public. The Board will come out of executive session only to adjourn in regular session. Rich entertains a motion to go into executive session. Chris makes the motion and Matt Lord seconds the motion. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**14. EXECUTIVE SESSION – M.G. L. C30A, s21(1)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (NAGE, UE and NEPBA). Votes may be taken – does not need to be held this evening.**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**Selectboard Meeting Monday, April 4, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in person and via Zoom at the Town Hall  
Selectboard Meeting Monday, April 11, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom**

**Joint meeting with Finance Committee: March 30, April 6, April 13, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
BettyLou Mallet



Scribe