

**TOWN OF MONTAGUE
MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
Hybrid Meeting Format – 1 Avenue A and Zoom
Monday, June 6, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.**

MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/717851778>

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Melanie Zamojski, Board of Health; Emily Monosson, Dorinda Bell-Upp, Harry Rockland-Miller, Kathleen Lynch, John and Lynn Reynolds, Deborah Radway, Will Quale, Tom Bergeron, DPW Superintendent; Jeff Singleton, J. Moran, Paul Lipke, Ariel Elan, Leigh Rae, Walter Ramsey, Town Planner; Brian McHugh, FCRHRA.

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rich Kuklewicz. The meeting is being recorded and aired by MCTV. The meeting is being held in person at 1 Avenue A as well as remotely via Zoom. Votes May be taken.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – May 11, 16 and 23, 2022

The minutes of May 11, 2022 were not available at the time of this meeting. The Board received the minutes of May 16 and 23, 2022 to review. **CB made the motion to approve the minutes of May 16, 2022 and May 23, 2022 as presented. Seconded by ML. All in favor. Approved unanimously.**

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were several public members present via Zoom. Kathy Lynch raised issues that were placed on tonight's agenda regarding the Center Street Bridge closure and that there is not adequate signage which is creating a safety problem. Lynn and John Reynolds also raised concern about the signs as well as the language being used to describe the closure; also if the South Street Bridge will handle a fire truck. Rich and Steve noted all of these items will be discussed later during tonight's meeting.

4. COVID-19 UPDATES

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

The memo regarding the current COVID/Flu case counts and trends was placed on the screen for the Board and audience to review.

- **Introduce Jack Sullivan, Shared Services Grant Epidemiologist**

Melanie Zamojski introduced Jack Sullivan to the Board and audience. Jack shared a bit of his background as being an epidemiologist as well as his current position as part of a municipal grant for a 4-town region (Greenfield, Montague, Deerfield and Sunderland). He spoke of the current numbers which also included the tallies for flu cases. Matt asked about the influenza time period and asks if future reports could reference date rangers which would be easier for the Board to follow. Rich asked for the trends to be shown, even for all 4 towns, which would be a helpful graph to follow the increases/decreases. Jeff Singleton asked if there could be public discussion regarding the data and how it could be useful for policy-making. Melanie stated the data comes from the State Department but in the future, the Board will be working on an after-action report which would lead the Town in some direction. This is a learning experience as the Town has not been involved in a pandemic.

5. PERSONNEL BOARD

- **Appoint Mark Nelson as DPW Mechanic, UE Grade D, Step 3 effective 6/7/2022 (previously Building Maintenance, Grace C, Step 6)**

The Board received a Personnel Status Change Notice in their packets. Tom Bergeron feels Mark is doing a wonderful job. **Boutwell made the motion to authorize the personnel change of Mark Nelson to Mechanic effective June 7, 2022 to the UE Grade D, Step 3 in the amount of \$22.06. Seconded by Lord. All in favor. Unanimously approved.**

- **Appoint Roy Dennis, DPW Shop Foreman, NAGE Grade E. Step 6, 40 hrs week, effective 6/13/22**

The Board received a Personnel Status Change Notice for a New Hire in their packets. Tom explained how Roy left and came back and would like him to replace the lead mechanic who left employment. **Boutwell made the motion to authorize the hiring of Roy Dennis as Shop Foreman effective 6/13/22 on the NAGE Grade E, Step 6 at the rate of \$25.51 for 40 hours/week. Seconded by Lord. All in favor. Unanimously approved.**

- **Appoint Ryan Bergmann, DPW Summer Help, 40 hrs. Week, 3 months, effective 6/7/22**

The Board received a Personnel Status Change Notice for a New Hire in their packets. Tom mentioned that Ryan Bergman is a college student who would be hired to help with the grass trimming and watering of trees. **Boutwell made the motion to authorize the hiring of Ryan Bergman as DPW summer help for 40 hours per week for 3 months at the wage rate of \$14.25/hour. Seconded by Lord. All in favor.**

Tom mentioned the need of a building maintenance mechanic as well as a janitor for the town buildings. Anyone interested can connect with the DPW.

6. TOM BERGERON – DPW SUPERINTENDENT

- **Closure of Center Street Bridge over Sawmill River Bridge**

Tom was notified by the State Mass Bridge District that the Center Street Bridge had deteriorated and needed to be closed immediately. He received signs and a map showing the locations of the signs and then proceeded to close the bridge. There has been controversy regarding the signs, therefore, the crew made some adjustments. There are "No Outlet" signs on order. The signs on Route 63 are property of the State. Rich asked for a few folding signs stating "Local Traffic Only" and "Bridge Closed". Tom has sawhorses to use for the Local Traffic Only signs he can use. Steve mentioned that the South Street Bridge does not have a restriction for weight so the fire trucks will be able to use. He is also aware of the concern in town regarding safety and is working with the Town and State for signs. Steve also mentioned the State's commitment to the South Street Bridge.

A resident in the audience complimented the Town DPW with the work being done for the Center Street Bridge and made a few suggestions regarding signs on both sides of the road to be placed at the top of the road near the church. Another community member asked for the Center Street Bridge to be placed on the list to repair with the State. Chris asked Tom and Stee for more signs to be placed on either side of Route 63 utilizing the State as well as the town. Ariel Elan asked for long-term, solar powered signs to be placed at specific sites as well as suggests tourist signs created and placed in areas to promote local businesses which could be effected by this closure.

- **Accept Fuel (Gas, Diesel, Oil) Bids for FY23 with the FRCOG**

Tom received information from FRCOG of bids through Dennis Burke. Steve mentioned every year the town works with the Director of Procurement in FRCOG for fuel bids/pricing. The Board reviewed the documentation provided by FRCOG. **On a motion by Boutwell and seconded by Lord, the Board authorized Tom Bergeron to execute the fuel purchases for FY23 through FRCOG in the following process: Gasoline at \$4.50.5/gal; Diesel at \$4.78.7/gal and #2 fuel oil at \$4.44/gal. All in favor.**

- **Trash and Recycling Collection Changes to 5 Day Schedule Effective 6/6/22**

The Board received information in their packets stating effective immediately, Republic will be changing to a 5-day collection schedule and a list of streets which will be changed from a Wednesday to a Monday schedule for pick-up. Rich also stated he received information from a resident on Davis Street who states the rubbish has not been picked up for about a month. Steve stated there are new drivers and that the town is working with Republic to hold them accountable.

7. **CANAL DRISTIC BRIDGE UPDATES**

- **DOT Bridge Replacement Plans**

Steve and Rich attended a meeting recently with the Mass DOT regarding the developments in the Canal District. The "green bridge", the "white bridge" and the Bailey Bridge all need replacement and will be expedited. The State has these three bridges on a list of allocations through the Governor's Bond Bill to replace these three bridges. The timeline is to have the the bids ready for 2026 and a 3-year project following the bids. This project would completely replace the bridges and realign the canal area. All of the bridges would include pedestrian walkways. Steve stated this was a sudden announcement by the Mass DOT and that they are very committed to this project. Funds will be made possible by Federal infusion of bridge projects across the state. Estimated total costs is \$54,048,466.17.

- **Implications for 5th Street Pedestrian Bridge Project**

It was the Town's intent to have the 5th Street Pedestrian Bridge project complete within the year. The approach of the Mass DOT regarding the 3 bridge project would only allow for the 5th Street Bridge to be utilized for 4-5 years. Rich asked the Board if the Town should look to redirect some of the funds to the area to enhance before investing for just a few years? He feels it does not make any sense to put money into the bridge for only a 4-5 year use before it is destroyed by the 3-bridge project. He also stated there is a complexity regarding the wall of the canal. Matt raised the concern for the employees using the pedestrian bridge to their place of employment. Steve stated the employer will offer shuttling service. Steve discussed the contract with HED and that it is protected as it is not the first time a project as large as this has superseded another project.

It was mentioned that the meeting with Mass DOT was a positive one where there was open discussion regarding these entire projects. Walter Ramsey said the grant funds already spent was for design costs. The materials have not been fabricated yet so can place it on pause. Work that has been done to this point will only benefit the community.

Lord makes the motion to request that town staff communicate to all vendors to pause construction of elements of the MassWorks project related to the pedestrian bridge and to investigate redirecting grant funding towards other elements of the original intended project, including bid alternates that were not accepted due to a lack of funding. Town staff are to report back to the board at its next convenient meeting with the outcome and conclusion of those discussions. We are discontinuing elements related directly to the fabrication and installation of the pedestrian bridge. Seconded by Boutwell, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

8. **WALTER RAMSEY – TOWN PLANNER**

- **Update Comprehensive Plan Grant Agreement to allow for release of all funds by June 30, 2022, Announce project website (www.montagueplans.org) and release of Community Survey**

Walter explained to the Board that this is just administrative amendments to change the end date to June 30, 2022. Work can continue but the funds would be available up front. **Boutwell made the motion to authorize the Chair to sign Addendum A of the Comprehensive Plan Grant Agreement to release funds by June 30, 2022. Lord seconded. All in favor. Voted unanimously.**

- **CD Development Discretionary: Use of \$1,550 for 38 Avenue A Property Appraisal to facilitate sale of parcel by Montague EDIC**

Walter mentioned working with a real estate agent and the owners of the property. An appraisal will be done and this is the request for the funds for the appraisal. This is the Old Cumberland Farms/Discovery Center building. **Boutwell made the motion to authorize the Chair to sign the Standard Contract Form. Seconded by Lord. All in favor and voted unanimously.**

9. BRIAN MCHUGH – FCRHRA

- **CDF-G-2020-Montague-00896 – Authorization to disburse payment #5 in the amount of \$4,925 to Berkshire Design for Avenue A Streetscape Phase III Construction Administration Fees**

Brian spoke with the Board and described this request. **Boutwell made the motion to authorize the disbursement of payment #5 in the amount of \$4,925 to Berkshire Design for the Avenue A Streetscape Phase III Construction Administration Fees. Lord seconded. All in favor. Voted unanimously.**

- **Authorization to disburse payment #1 in the amount of \$158,751 to H.M. Nunes & Sons Construction, Inc., for Avenue A Streetscape Phase III Construction fees.**

Boutwell made the motion to authorize disbursement of payment #1 in the amount of \$158,751 to H. M. Nunes & Sons Construction, Inc for Avenue A Streetscape Phase III Construction fees. Lord seconded. All in favor. Voted unanimously.

- **Extension request to extend the FY20 grant implementation period to 9/30/2022.**

Brian described the request to extend the FY20 grant implementation from 6/30/22 to 9/30/22 as there is leftover money due to project bids coming in lower. **Boutwell made the motion to authorize the chair to sign the letter for DHSD. Lord seconded. All in favor. Voted unanimously.**

- **CDF-G-2021-Montague-00931 – Authorization to sign Grant Administration Professional Services Contract between the Town of Montague and HRA**

For the 2021 Block Grant, **Boutwell made the motion to authorize the Chair to sign the grant between the Town of Montague and the Housing Development as presented. Lord seconded. All in favor. Voted unanimously.**

- **Authorization to sign Professional Services Contract between the Town of Montague and Berkshire Design Group, Inc. To provide bidding and construction administration services for the Avenue A Streetscape Phase III Continuation Project.**

Lastly, this is a contract between the Town of Montague and Berkshire Design Group for the bidding of Avenue A near Subway and Between the Uprights. This is the Phase III design. **Boutwell made the motion for the Chair to sign the agreement of professional services between the Town of Montague and Berkshire Design Group. Lord seconded. All in favor. Voted Unanimously.**

10. ARIEL ELAN – MONTAGUE ENERGY COMMITTEE

- **DPU " Future of Gas" Docket 20-80**

The Board received a memo from Ariel Elan/Energy Committee to review. Ariel was in the audience and explained to the Board the need for this revised letter. The Gas Docket 20-80 was presented as well for the Board's review. **On a motion by Lord and seconded by Boutwell, the Board moved in conjunction with the Montague Energy Committee to submit comment to the Department of Public Utilities as presented in Docket Item 20-80. All in favor. Vote unanimously.**

11. JEFF SINGLETON – FRTA ADVISORY BOARD

- **FRTA Advisory Board Bylaw Proposal**

Due to time constraints, Jeff offered to discuss this information at the next meeting. He will be placed on the June 13, 2022 agenda.

12. VOTE TO APPROVE DEED – FEDERAL STREET PARCEL (48-0-0148)

The parcel has been sold at auction. Steve asked the Board to approve the deed of the Federal Street parcel. The closing price was \$113,000. **Boutwell moved to approve and execute the Deed for property located at Federal Street (Tax Map 48-0-148) Montague and authorize the Town Administrator to execute any and all documents in connection with the closing on said property. Seconded by Lord. The entire Board will sign the authorization. All in favor. Voted unanimously.**

13. UPDATE ON SELECTBOARD OFFICE STAFFING

- **Position Descriptions**

Steve gave an update on the Selectboard Office staffing. Job descriptions have been circulated to key staff who will be involved with positions for their feedback. He'd like all job descriptions to be approved next week. The Administrative position will be engaged with the union. He mentioned that Greg Garrison of the CIC is interested in being on the interview committee as a resident. Kim Williams from EDIC also expressed interested. Others included would be town employees such as Tom Bergeron, Chelsea Little and Wendy Bogusz.

- **Logistics**

Steve mentioned that the Retirement Board, who is a non-town entity, would like to consider a space on the first floor of the Town Hall. Renovations would be necessary but not relatively costly. The costs would be the Retirement Board's responsibility.

14. EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT'S BUSINESS

- **Liquor License Updates**

Wendy mentioned the request for an extension of the liquor license for Hubies Tavern to be either reopened or transferred by June 30, 2022. Hubies will need to write a letter to the Board requesting an extension as they are continuing to market the property. The Board is willing to work with the owners.

The Town also received notice of an informational hearing with the ABC for Santo Taco to be held tomorrow. The hearing was requested due to the investigator looking at a trailer request to be taken from site to site. The liquor license was issued for the site only as the alcohol will be locked up on site and no alcohol will be provided on the trailer.

15. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S BUSINESS

- **Community One Stop Grant Application: Strathmore Mill Project Submission**

Steve described the Community One Stop Grant Application and the project has been earmarked on the Governor's Bill.

- **FY23 Budget Update – WPCF Generator Earmark**

Steve stated Senator Comerford put a \$100,000 earmark for the generator of the WPCF. The expected cost is \$125,000-\$130,000 so the will greatly help with costs.

- **General Pierce Bridge Advocacy**

Steve placed the question before the Board about the painting of the General Pierce Bridge. Senator Comerford's Office asked the town if they would like their office to continue to be an advocate for the town regarding the completion of the bridge. The painting of the bridge would extend the length of the

project and at this time, with the recent meeting with Mass DOT regarding the other 3 bridges, he asks the Board member's thoughts. Chris would like to see the General Pierce Bridge through its completion which includes the painting. Rich has mixed feelings but does not want to spend another year waiting for it to be painted. Matt also is in agreement to put the painting on the back burner.

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

There were no other topics for discussion this evening.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION – G.L. c.30A, s21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (NAGE, UE and NEPBA) Votes may be taken.

On a motion by Boutwell and second by Lord, the Board will be entering into executive session under G.L. c30A, s21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (NAGE, UE and NEPBA) and votes may be taken. The board will adjourn after the executive session meeting only to adjourn the regular meeting. All in favor and unanimously approved. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kulkewicz, aye.

17. OTHER – Next Selectboard Meeting: Monday, June 13, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. via ZOOM

18. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m. to enter into executive session.

Respectfully submitted,
BettyLou Mallet
Scribe