

**MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
VIA ZOOM
Monday, September 12, 2022 at 6:30 PM**

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Chris Boutwell, and Matt Lord; Town Administrator Steve Ellis; BOH Member Melanie Zamojski; Clean Water Superintendent Chelsey Little; Montague Library Director Caitlin Kelley; and Town Planner Walter Ramsey.

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

Approve Minutes of August 29, 2022

Postponed

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

None

Melanie Zamojski, COVID Updates

- **Review of COVID trends**
 - Zamojski reviews Montague weekly cases.
 - We have had three results back on the wastewater treatment testing. There was a concerning spike which corresponded with other spikes in the area.
 - The grant grouping has been meeting every Friday. They are trying to figure out if they can put our area into a red, yellow, or green criteria based on numbers.
 - Epidemiologist Jack Sullivan explains that the wastewater data is not an absolute; a lot of it is based on metrics.
 - Sullivan reviews the Montague Clean Water Facility effective virus concentration over time.
- **EOHHS Offer of Free COVID Tests and PPE for Municipalities**

The State is giving away and we are ordering testing supplies to be available at the Town Hall.

Sewer Commissioners with Chelsey Little, Clean Water Superintendent

- **FY23 Projected Revenue, Expense and Rate Impact, Options**
 - Little displays on the screen and reviews the FY23 Projected Revenue, Expense and Rate Impact, Options.
 - We are not expecting to pay an invoice for a Millers Falls overage this fiscal year. Little suggests removing the Millers Falls overage.
 - Ellis states that the overages are weather- and repair-dependent, and we have been working hard to identify the source of the inflow.
 - Taking in outside liquid loads starting in January could be another revenue source to help offset the rates. Little thinks we can comfortably do two loads a week at 10 cents a gallon (18,000 gallons a week).
 - Boutwell states that a 10% or 11% increase will possibly not be well-received.
 - Lord approves of the biosolids handling but feels more comfortable with reducing the Millers Falls overage by \$40,000.
 - Ellis suggests that we should start the conversation for the FY24 budget with an assumption that we would have to put money back in for the overage.
- **Screw Pump Project Next Steps - Approval for Design Work**
 - Little shares that she has been working with Wright-Pierce. The conservative number that they have come up with for the Screw Pump Project is \$2 million.
 - We have the ARPA approved by the Selectboard for \$850,000.
 - Little is working with Wright-Pierce to come up with some other options to try to find funding for this project.
 - We are looking at USDA RD Grant Loan Program, who could do a potentially 75% grant, 25% loan (we would need \$500,000 from ARPA). It could be potentially as low as 50/50 (we would need \$1 million from ARPA).
 - Ellis shares that officials from USDA want to work with Montague as a community and have been charged with focusing more of their attention on communities that include environmental justice areas.

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- **Regular Sewer Commission Meetings/Briefings**

The Board discusses setting aside time (30-60 minutes) once a month to go over Sewer Commission issues. Kuklewicz and Little will discuss an agenda for an upcoming meeting in late September/early October, then work with Ellis and Bogusz on the time.

- **Sludge Contract Renewal Update**

The contract with Casella ends in December. We are hoping to re-negotiate if possible. If not, we're hoping to put out a bid package by the end of October.

Caitlin Kelley, Montague Library Director

Canal Program Series

- Kelley shares that she has put together a series of program on the history of the canal. The program will start on September 22 and includes a history stroll starting at the Discovery Center and will conclude with a number of programs, including Ramsey talking about a re-envisioning of the canal and what the future would hold and getting community feedback about that.
- In response to a suggestion by Boutwell, Kelly shares that there is an interest in having the programs at the Discovery Center live-streamed.

Personnel Board

- **Appoint Abigale Buedinger, Millers Falls Branch Library Assistant, NAGE, Grade A, Step 2, 12 hours/week, effective 9/13/2022**

Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Abigale Buedinger, Millers Falls Branch Library Assistant, NAGE, Grade A, Step 2, 12 hours/week, effective 9/13/2022. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- **Appoint Lillian Moss, Library Trustee, until next town election on May 16, 2023**

Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Lillian Moss, Library Trustee, until next town election on May 16, 2023. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- **Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Advisory Board Appointment**

Ellis gives a public notice that the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans Services District is looking for an interested member of the Montague Community to serve on their advisory board. There are a couple of meetings a year that they are expected to attend. The individual does not necessarily need to be a veteran in order to participate.

- **Appoint Planner Hiring Committee**

- Ellis asks the Board if he can post the position internally as it is a union position.
- *Boutwell makes the motion to create a Town Planner and Conservation Agent Hiring Committee, and to appoint the following individuals: Jen Audley, Mark Fairbrother, Bill Ketchen, Suzanne LoManto, Walter Ramsey, Ron Sicard, and Francia Wisniewski; with the term starting on 9-13-22 and expiration upon successful hiring of a new Town Planner. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

- **Update on ATA Transition Plan**

- Ellis states we would like to see Ramsey's transition occur on October 3. We believe Ramsey can well-position the Planning Office function with him in this other capacity over the short term.
- There are three different pieces to the Transition Plan: (1) preparing the Planner's Office for the transition, (2) formalizing the agreement, and (3) addressing the logistics of physical space.

Infrastructure Project Updates

- **Execute Canal District Gateway Enhancement Project grant contract amendment #4**

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the Canal District Gateway Enhancement Project grant contract amendment #4, and authorize the Chair to sign the document. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

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- **Montague City Road Flooding Relief project schedule**
 - The Montague City Road Flooding Relief project got bogged down in the permitting log jam at Army Corps of Engineers as well as Mass DEP for the water quality certificate.
 - Our grant funding expires in March 2023 so this fall is the last time we can execute the grant without an extension.
 - The engineer says that the bid docs can be ready as of tomorrow. We can advertise this project next week and have the bids open in early October.
 - The permits should be in hand within the next 30 days.
 - Boutwell feels that the sooner the project is done, the better for everybody.
 - Lord has reservations about bidding the project without the permits in hand, particularly going into the wet season.
 - Kuklewicz states we should get it out to bid, but we don't have to award the bids until we have the permits in hand.
 - *Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Town Planner to proceed with bidding for the Montague City Road Flooding Relief project, but not award that bid until the permits are in hand. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- **Burn Dump Capping**
 - The design work for the Burn Dump Capping is complete at this point and has been submitted to DEP for review.
 - The work involves the construction of a second future-proof stormwater basin at the bottom of the landfill, as well as the installation of infiltration trenches along the drip edge of panels on the northern part of the project.
 - The engineer estimates the cost to be up to \$352,000. Kearsarge received a bid for \$269,000 to do that work.
 - Ramsey is planning to submit a Fall Special Article request for an appropriation of \$11,975.45 to allow the Town to finalize this engineering phase.

Shea Theater Maintenance Fund

Request to Transfer \$3,000 from Community Development Unallocated to CD Shea Theater following Lightning Damage to Fire Alarm Control Panel

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the transfer of \$3,000 from Community Development Unallocated (Account 225-5-184-5200) to CD Shea Theater Maintenance (Account 225-5-184-5240) following Lightning Damage to the Fire Alarm Control Panel; and to authorize the Chair to sign it. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Receive Natural Gas Bids (Ken McCance, Yolon Energy)

Lord makes the motion to authorize the purchase of a 12-month contract for Sprague for the Town of Montague at the spot price on September 13, and a 24-month contract for aggregate with the Gill-Montague Regional School Department and Franklin County Technical School at the spot price on September 13; and authorize Lord to sign the contract. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Fall Special Town Meeting

- **Special Town Meeting Warrant is Open through Sept 15**

Boutwell makes the motion to Open the Special Town Meeting Warrant through the close of business on September 15. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Review Preliminary Draft Warrant**

Postponed until next week
- **Discuss Meeting Logistics and any COVID-related concerns**
 - Boutwell prefers in-person meetings, especially for discussing topics when the Town is spending a lot of money.
 - Discussion ensues about the difficulty of having an outside evening meeting in October.
 - The Board's consensus is to have an in-person meeting.

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Town Administrator's Business

- **Review Bid Results for Town Hall Roof**
 - After issuing award to JD&D Construction last week, they reneged.
 - Ellis states that unless we hear something different by tomorrow, we should go with K & G Remodeling INC. Our architect has spoken with that company and they fully intend to honor the bid.
 - If K & G turns out not to be qualified, Ellis will move toward Cape Cod Builders.
- **Execute Agreement for \$110,000 with JD&D Construction, Inc. of Webster, MA for replacement of the Montague Town Hall Roof. Authorize Notice to Proceed.**

We are holding off on this contract for now.
- **Sealer Weights and Measures Fee Update (effective 1/1/23)**

We are going to see a major increase in the cost of our sealer of weights and measures budget this year. The State is tripling the price.
- **MA Office in Disabilities ADA Improvement Grant Submission**

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Town Administrator to apply for an ADA Improvement Grant. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting/Double Poles**

In response to a question by Boutwell, Ellis states that he had spoken with Brian McHugh, who intends to get an update.

OTHER:

- The Turners Falls Power Canal service outage will take place Monday, September 19, 2022 through September 24, 2022
- FCSWMD Hazardous Waste Collection Day, Saturday, September 24, 2022

Next Selectboard Meeting: Monday, September 19, 2022 at 6:30 PM, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls via ZOOM

Boutwell makes the motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye