

**MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
VIA ZOOM
Monday, November 21, 2022
Meeting Minutes**

This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/773606490>

PRESENT: Chair Rich Kuklewicz, Vice-Chair Chris Boutwell and Clerk Matt Lord. Town Administrator Steve Ellis; Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz; Administrative Assistant Shayna Reardon; Library Director Caitlin Kelley; FRTA Representative Jeff Singleton; Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: David Pinaridi, Margaret M and Ariel Elan, public; John Hanold and Dorinda Bell-Upp, Montague Finance Committee.

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Chair. The meeting is being recorded and a roll call vote was taken.
2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – November 1, 7 and 14, 2022** – The members received and reviewed the minutes of November 1 and 7, 2022. No questions. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Minutes of November 1 and 7, 2022 were approved as presented. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD** – David Pinaridi attended tonight’s meeting for his brother who was unable to be present. He inquired as to who has oversight of the Assessor’s Office. Steve Ellis stated he will send a written response to David’s brother Chris within the next few days.
4. **CAITLIN KELLEY, LIBRARY DIRECTOR**
 - * **Review Montague Libraries new strategic plan** – Ms. Kelley reviewed the results of the community survey with the Board. The information received was used to create a series of goals and objectives which include a multi-point access to information about library programming and services as well as increasing community engagement with all local history stakeholders to promote cultural heritage. The following Mission Statement has been approved – “The Montague Public Libraries offer material, services and programs to foster educational, cultural and recreational enrichments to the community. Everyone is welcome through our doors”. Other items of interest are a new monthly newsletter which will be available online as well as in print; she is making the reading room at Carnegie Library more comfortable and funding for a feasibility study to increase square footage is in the works.
 - * **Increasing Carnegie Public Library Hours in FY24, budget implications** – Ms. Kelley states she will be adding 6.1% to the FY24 budget to add additional hours to the Carnegie Library. Matt Lord asked if the needs will be prioritized. She stated she would like to resume discussions about expanding the Carnegie.
 - * **Request to submit Sustainable & Resilient New England Libraries Grant** – Ms. Kelley described this grant which goes towards the community resilience. The Montague Catholic Ministries has received a 5 month extension to become a Food Pantry member of Western Massachusetts. She is hoping the grant will act as a pilot towards the next move. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by**

Matt Lord, the Board authorizes Caitlin Kelly, Library Director to apply for the Sustainability Grant as described. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.

5. JEFF SINGLETON, FRTA REPRESENTATIVE

* **FRTA Updates** – Jeff shared his screen which presented the FRTA Advisory Board’s meeting agenda. He described each item on the agenda as follows:

- Human Services Transportation is a program to hire people who pick up people under a variety of State programs (i.e. Mass Health) for transportation. There used to be several other programs, but they have been consolidated into one. Unfortunately, there have been a lot of complaints, so there is now a Task Force evaluating it. They will attempt to put out a report in November.
- The Maintenance Facility on Sandy Lane will be done by the end of February. The road will be paved the week of November 30.
- The Access Program is an expansion of demand response where members of the public can pay \$5-\$6 to get a ride somewhere. Individuals can actually call in to get a ride. Everybody seems happy with this program.
- The Workforce Transit Program has collaborated with taxi services to get people to their work, particularly 2nd and 3rd shifts. It has been a little bumpy. We have received a grant to help us out with it so this program will continue next week.
- With regard to the Weekend Fixed Route Service, Singleton states that he pushed the Advisory Board to add some weekend fixed route service. This topic is on hold; there is a special committee looking at it.
- The Regional Transit Plan – FRCOG has obtained a grant to try to do a marketing evaluation.
- The Advisory Board reviewed the audit. They updated the assessments based on the most recent fiscal year. The Montague assessment has gone up to \$87,890, which is a 12% increase from the previous year.
- The Weighted Voting System – Montague now has 11.89 votes; Greenfield has 30.09 votes. The votes are based on time estimates.
- Singleton shared his town personal clear goals as 1) Saturday services that goes to Amherst and Charlemont and 2) make progress on a plan to try to increase ridership.

6. WALTER RAMSEY – ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

* **Authorize Notice of Award for Montague City Road Flooding Relief Project to Clayton D. Davenport in the amount of \$326,495.00 to be funded by the MEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant and Town of Montague Appropriation.** - Mr. Ramsey spoke with the Board about the award given to Davenport in the amount of \$326,495 as the lowest bid for the Montague City Road Flooding Relief Project which is funded by MEMA and Town appropriations. The Town is in the position to approve the project as he has met with the Army Corp of Engineers and the path has been charted out. Work cannot begin until Spring due to the weather and Davenport has stated they will hold the bid price. Permits will be finalized over the winter. Mr. Ramsey has submitted a 1-year request through MEMA for an extension as it will not be complete by the March 2023 original completion date. The Board did not have any questions. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board authorized Walter Ramsey to sign the Notice of Award for Montague City Road Flooding Relief Project to Clayton D. Davenport in the amount of \$326,495.00 to be funded by the MEMA**

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant and the Town of Montague Appropriation. Matt Lord aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.

*** Montague City Road Emergency Sewer Line repair project status, authorize use of contingency funds.** - The sewer line has been reconnected and back functioning. There has been some setbacks due to an abandoned water line that required removal. The high water table also slowed the progress of the project. A Change Order had been issued for the additional services necessary in the amount of \$29,750. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board authorized the use of contingency funds for the Montague City Road Emergency Sewer Line repair project. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

*** Town Hall Annex Reuse Study: Review Conceptual Space Plans, next steps** – Thomas Douglas Architects will be renovating the Town Hall Annex. There will be mechanical, electrical and plumbing of the Annex in the project. Mr. Ramsey showed the Board the two Phases of the project on the screen and described each phase. The architect will be available in December to answer any of the Board's questions. The Board expressed their concerns regarding storage space and Walter will share their thoughts with the architect. Ariel Elan also spoke as a resident regarding the price tag of the project and perhaps cut back on both handicap bathrooms to have one handicap accessible and the other an ordinary bathroom. Walter will also discuss when he meets with the architect.

*** Avenue A Streetscape Enhancement Project status** – This project is moving at a great pace. The sidewalk in front of Subway is almost complete. The granite curbing is weather-dependent. The sidewalk in front of Between the Uprights will start after Thanksgiving. The section in front of the Shady Glen will not start until the Spring.

7. FINANCIAL UPDATES

*** FY24 Budget Process** – Steve Ellis stated all departments are asked to provide a level-service budget by Monday, December 12, 2022. This time will then allow the Finance Committee and Selectboard to receive a package of draft budgets for review by mid-December. Any department that feels there would be substantial updates are asked to present their request to Steve so he may bring to the Board. He is aware of the Library as well as the DPW may need additional staffing. He also presented the budget calendar which will be used as a resource for upcoming meetings during the budget season. He hopes the tax classification hearing can be held mid-December over two meetings. The Selectboard is scheduled to bring the budgets to the Finance Committee on January 23, 2023. Tentatively, there will be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee, Selectboard and the GMRSD regarding the school budget on January 31 dependent on the signing of the school contract which is still in negotiations.

*** FY23 Budget Developments** – The FY23 budget developments have been discussed with the Fin-Com over the course of the Fall. Free Cash is 2.47 million dollars with the majority of the funds from Eversource who released it's funds at 14% interest. Another increased amount of funds is from the motor vehicle excise. Additional information regarding the Free Cash calculation will be presented to the Board at a future meeting. Rich Kuklewicz noted it would be judicious to focus these funds on the increase costs of electricity and fuel.

***Reserve Account Balances** – Steve stated the Town is in a better financial position historically. He discussed finances available for projects through the sale of real estate as well as keeping the general stabilization fund at or above what the financial policies require.

8. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S BUSINESS

* **Execute agreement with State for Sealer of Weights and Measures Services \$7,182** – The Town continues to pay the state for the service. Wendy and Shayna are working on a new fee schedule which should be available to the Board in the next week or two. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board authorized the Chair to sign the agreement with the State for the Sealer of Weights and Measures Services in the amount of \$7,182.00. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

* **Execute Mass Cultural Council's Local Cultural Council Program Grant \$8,300** – **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board approved the Chair to sign the agreement with the Mass Cultural Council's Local Cultural Council Program Grant in the amount of \$8,300. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

* **Execute Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP) Grant \$10,200** – **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board authorized the Chair to sign the contract with the MA DEP for Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP) Grant in the amount of \$10,200. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

***Execute contract with Helene Karl Architects (HKA) of Groton, MA for design, procurement and construction oversight services related to the Colle and Shea Theater roof replacement projects \$25,450** – This request has been deferred until the next meeting.

* **Hiring Update** – The Planner and Conservation hiring planning committee will forward 2 candidates at the next Selectboard meeting. The Board would like to receive documentation regarding the two candidates for their review prior to meeting them at a meeting and ask additional questions. The Health Director Hiring Committee is making good progress in obtaining candidates for the position.

* **PFAS Litigation Update** – Steve is not aware of any issues in the community.

***Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting** – Steve discussed with the Board the hours of the Town Hall being open the evening before Thanksgiving. They discussed closing the office at 4:00 p.m. for all non-essential personnel. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board approved the closing of the Montague Town Hall at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday the night before Thanksgiving for all non-essential personnel. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.** Rich suggests the Board look into a policy process for snow as well as holiday closing.

9. **NEXT MEETING DATE** – **Monday, November 28, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom**

10. **ADJOURNMENT** – **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Matt Lord, aye; Chris Boutwell, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

Respectfully submitted,

BettyLou Mallet
Scribe