

**MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING  
VIA ZOOM**

**Monday, November 28, 2022**

**Draft Meeting Minutes**

**This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded: <https://vimeo.com/776026559>**

**PRESENT:** Chair Rich Kuklewicz, Vice-Chair Chris Boutwell and Clerk Matt Lord. Town Administrator Steve Ellis; Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz; Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Jen Audley, Chair of Planner and Conservation Agent Hiring Committee; Angela Wheeler and Maureen Pollock, candidates; Lawrence George, owner of Brick and Feather Brewery, Inc.; Francia Wisnewski, Greg Garrison, Dorinda Bell-Upp and John Hanold, Montague Finance Committee members; Carolyn Olsen, Town Accountant; Kim from Ja'Duke with her father; Ariel Elan, resident.

**1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Rich Kuklewicz. The meeting is being held via Zoom, being recorded and all members present on a roll call vote.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – November 14 and 21, 2022** – There were no minutes available for review and vote.

**3. LIQUOR LICENSE HEARING**

**\* Brick and Feather Brewery, Inc., Lawrence D. George II as manager has applied for an alteration of Premises at 78 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Turners Falls The proposed alteration would be to add an outdoor seating area approximately 40' x 10' directly in front of the building to be bordered by planters and chains and includes 5 tables with 14 chairs.** - At the time of the hearing, there was technical difficulties and therefore, Lawrence George was unable to be part of the open discussion. Rich stated the public hearing notice went out on November 17, 2022. The proposal materials were in the member packets for review prior to the meeting. The information and request is pretty straightforward as well as this alteration would be on private property. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board approved the proposed alterations to the premises of Brick and Feather Brewery, Inc., located at 78 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Turners Falls as presented. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD** – Individuals will be limited to two (2) minutes each and the Selectboard will strictly adhere to time allotted for public comment. - No public comments.

**5. PLANNER AND CONSERVATION AGENT HIRING (Jen Audley)**

**\* Consider recommended finalists: Maureen Pollock and Angela Wheeler** – Jen Audley, Chair of the Committee, joined the meeting along with the two finalists. She provided an overview of the process and gave the names of the members of the 8-member committee. The supporting documentation was included in the member packets as well as posted on the Town's webpage. Maureen Pollock was the first choice due to her direct experience in working in Greenfield and Deerfield planning offices. The Committee is confident with their decision as Maureen is well known in the community. The conversation was opened for questions. The Board thanked both candidates for applying and working with

the town through the process. Steve offered comment that the two candidates were excellent and shares the thanks to both candidates as well as others that applied. **A motion was made by Chris Boutwell to authorize Steve Ellis to work with Maureen Pollock with a contract for the position of Planner and Conservation Agent. Second by Matt Lord. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

## 6. FINANCE COMMITTEE

\* **Adoption of Financial Policies related to Annual Budget Process, Capital Planning, Financial Reserves (Francia Wisnewski and Jen Audley).** - The Finance Committee called the meeting to order as there was a quorum. Jen Audley also stayed through this portion of the meeting in case there were any questions as she was Chair of the Finance Committee during the time these three policies were developed.

Francia created a PowerPoint presentation that she placed on the screen for all participating to view. She explained each policy (A-1 Annual Budget Process, A-2 Capital Planning and A-5 Financial Reserves). The Selectboard also received the updated policies for their review. John Hanold emphasized the considerable improvements made to these policies to make them clear and concise. Steve Ellis also stated these policies were aspirational and gave clear direction. Matt Lord asked a few questions regarding the reserve funds and Rich Kuklewicz gave a few examples where the funds have been used in the past. Matt Lord also asked about the Capital Improvement timeframe whether it is 1 year or 5 years. Greg Garrison clarified it is actually a 6-year plan with the first year being the current year and 5 years thereafter. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Selectboard approved policy A-1 Annual Budget Process, A-2 Capital Planning and A-5 Financial Reserves as presented. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

\* **Review of FY21 Audit Report, Update on Development of FY22 Audit Report** – Carolyn Olsen spoke with the members present about the annual audit. Her hopes are to have a clean audit. Information regarding the upcoming audit is on the Town's webpage under the Town Accountant's tab.

\***Montague Retirement Board request authorization for one-time Retiree COLA allowance of 5%(rather than 3% limit) on first \$18,000 of pension payment.** - Carolyn also spoke to the Board about the current cap by statute of 3% COLA. Legislature will grant a one-time increase up to 5% for retirees. The overall cost was given to the Board for their review. There were no questions from the Board or the Finance Committee. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board approved the request for a one-time increase of 5% on the first \$18,000 for the town's retirees. No other comments. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**Francia Wisnewski made the motion to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. Greg Garrison, aye; Dorinda Bell-Upp, aye; John Hanold, aye; Francia Wisnewski, aye. Adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.**

## 7. WALTER RAMSEY, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

\* **Request from Ja'Duke for off-site signage to Theater. Consider request and discuss potential policy for tourist oriented signage.** - Walter Ramsey spoke with the Board regarding the visibility challenge Ja'Duke is facing. Kim and her father also joined the meeting. Kim spoke to the Board stating the challenges they have been under from applying for signage through Mass DOT, Google Maps and the Town's zoning bylaws. She stated many visitors have been having difficulty finding the location

which is in the industrial park. The Board discussed their concerns of other businesses within the industrial park may have reservations for signs at the entrance. Rich suggested Kim and her dad approach Franklin County Tech School and perhaps have their name placed on their lighted sign at the entrance. Walter will draft a policy and run it by the stakeholders which will define the main thoroughfares and tourist attractions and bring the policy back to the Board for future discussion.

**\* Framework and timeline for issuance of Request for Proposals for development of between 5 and 12 units of housing at First Street municipal lot (Assessors Map 4 Lot 31).** - Walter described the parcel as well as presented on the screen it's location. This development would work towards the Town's goal which is also State Law to have 10% housing units as affordable housing. The application is due this winter and at this time, there are two interested developers; one being Habitat for Humanity. The Planning Board is in agreement with the current RFP of 5-12 units being developed on this parcel. He described the benefits of this project as a taxable asset, State will pay for new students the housing could bring as well as being an important step towards the current housing issue. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board endorsed the plan and recommends the issuance of the RFP in conjunction with the Planning Board. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**\*Update on Avenue A Streetscape Project** – Walter gave an up-to-date description of the continued work on the StreetScape project in front of Subway and Between The Uprights.

**\* Update on Schedule for FRTA paving of Sandy Lane** – Walter stated the grader is on site of Sandy Lane and due for the base coat to be applied on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Weather permitting, the top coat may also be applied.

Rich also asked about the collapsed pipe on the Montague City Road which Walter explained it has been connected again and back in operation.

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

**\* MIA Grant Award Announcement** – Steve stated \$6,500 has been received for the installation of guard rails at the transfer station which will be installed over the next few months.

**\* Request authorization to submit DEP Sewage Notification Assistance Grant Application** – Steve explained the background submission of this grant which Chelsey will request. It will allow monitoring through ADT of the ongoing flow at three sites as well as signs to be placed at the downstream release points.

**\*Update on Tax Classification hearing Process and Date** – Steve explained the tax classification hearing will be to determine the split of commercial/industrial and residential rates. The materials for the Board to review will be for their Monday meeting as well as a short meeting will be held on Wednesday with the Director of Assessing.

**\* Request to Transfer \$2,000 from Community Development Discretionary Unallocated account to Community Development Downtown Beautification account.** Steve explained the transfer request was due to the DPW funds have been expended for the purpose of weeding the planters. **On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the Board approved the transfer of \$2,000 from the**

**Community Development Discretionary Unallocated Account to the Community Development Downtown Beautification account. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.  
\* Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting – No other topics to discuss.**

**9. NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, December 5, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. as a hybrid meeting and Wednesday, December 7, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom for the tax classification hearing.**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion by Chris Boutwell and second by Matt Lord, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Chris Boutwell, aye; Matt Lord, aye; Rich Kuklewicz, aye.**

**Respectfully submitted,  
BettyLou Mallet  
Scribe**