

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
1 Avenue , 2nd Floor Meeting Room, Turners Falls, MA and VIA ZOOM
Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Chris Boutwell, and Matt Lord; Town Administrator Steve Ellis; Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz; Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Clean Water Facility Superintendent Chelsey Little; and Assistant Planner Suzanne LoManto.

Selectboard Chair opens the meeting at 6:00 PM, including announcing that the meeting is being recorded and roll call taken

Approve Selectboard Minutes from December 12 and 19, 2022

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the minutes from December 12 and 19, 2022 as presented. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

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

Representative Natalie Blais

Discuss legislative priorities and requests for 2023

- Kuklewicz reads aloud the list of priorities for Montague:
 - 1) Work on exiting Civil Service
 - 2) Demolition support for the Strathmore Mill
 - 3) Continuation of beneficial municipal grant programs
 - 4) State-level incentives for municipal training and services
 - 5) Thoughtful approach to exploration of continuing remote meetings
 - 6) Support for the cost of all the new election requirements
 - 7) Enhanced support for maintenance of roads and bridges
 - 8) Wastewater infrastructure
- Ellis adds that another priority involves fixing some of the errors that are left in the procurement code since its most recent revision.
- Discussion ensues about Exiting Civil Service:
 - Kuklewicz states our list is limited for new officers.
 - Ellis adds that our ability to recruit from a diverse candidate pool is affected. Very few people are interested in taking the tests. In addition, we do not have a large enough police force to maintain vacancies.
 - Blais states that there was a commission established at the State level. The Chair of the committee that worked on a commission is aware of what is happening in Town and is willing to be helpful to the extent that he can.
- Discussion ensues about demolition of the Strathmore:
 - Ramsey shares that we recently completed a master plan study for the district that was funded by the State, and the recommendation was to demolish the mill. The cost would be \$7 ½ million. Mass Development advises us to reach out to our elected officials.
 - Blais praises Ellis and Ramsey for all the work they have done to bring in money for that project.
 - Blais reassures us that they will also be looking for ways to help as demolition money is hard to find.
 - Ellis emphasizes that buildings like this will not wait - that once they start to fall, they become hazmat piles. There needs to be a set of programs to help communities that are not able to deal with properties of this nature. Waiting will not be to anyone's advantage.
 - Blais believes that another legislator did introduce a bill around demolition at the last session. She will look into this.
- With regard to grants, Blais shares that she and Senator Comerford just reached out to the administration to talk about the importance and need for our programs to continue to be funded.
- Discussion ensues about State level incentives for municipal training and services:
 - Kuklewicz shares that we have an opening in our Health Department and we are still searching for a candidate.
 - Blais shares that at the last MMA meeting, there was a discussion about the Division of Local Services putting in place this sort of program.
- Discussion ensues about continuing remote meetings:

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- Kuklewicz comments on the benefits of remote meetings.
- Blais states that she will do everything she can to push for an extension.
- Ellis requests that if we go in the direction of hybrid meetings, that there be a thoughtful plan that provides time and resources to support that direction.
- With regard to support for the cost of all the new election requirements, Blais states that she and Senator Comerford have been very communicative with the Chairs of the committees that are working on the Votes Act. There are bills pending about covering the costs of new election requirements.
- With regard to enhanced support for maintenance of roads and bridges, Blais shares that the need for more funding roads, bridges, and culverts was raised with the Healey-Driscoll Administration. Blais is reintroducing her bill on unpaved roads, as well as advocating for the Winter Roads Assistance Program and additional funding for Chapter 70.
- Discussion ensues about the Wastewater Infrastructure:
 - Kuklewicz states that we are going to be facing a major project in the future as the infrastructure of the facility is starting to deteriorate.
 - Blais shares that she and Comerford held a forum in Whately where stakeholders tried to identify solutions with regard to wastewater. This issue has also been flagged for the Healey-Driscoll Administration.
- Blais shares information of issues that have been and will be addressed: climate change projects, solar on rooftops, the new Office of Outdoor Recreation, an omnibus bill, and educational issues (school choice, special education, and transportation).

Sewer Commissioners

Clean Water Facility Updates, Chelsey Little, CW Superintendent

Discharge Permit monthly results

Little summarizes the December Discharge Permit results, our BOD, our TSS, and our pH readings; and states that the numbers are good.

Abatements requests, FY23 first half billing period

- *Lord makes the motion to approve the abatement for 376 Montague City Road, Montague. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*
- *Lord makes the motion to use 22,000 gallons for the second half bill for 376 Montague City Road, Montague. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Lord makes the motion to approve the abatement of \$17.39 and not bill for the second half, for 10 Unity St., Turners Falls. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 58 Grove St., Turners Falls. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*
- *Lord makes the motion to use 16,000 gallons for the second half bill for 58 Grove St., Turners Falls. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 10 Prospect St, Turners Falls, Baptist Church Society. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*
- *Lord makes the motion to use 10,000 gallons for the second half bill for 10 Prospect St, Turners Falls, Baptist Church Society. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 27 Center Street, Montague, and bill 30,000 for the second half bill. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Lord makes the motion to approve the abatement for 67 Main Street, Montague. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*
- *Lord makes the motion to use 13,000 gallons for the second half bill for 67 Main Street, Montague. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 1 Sherman Drive, Montague. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*
- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 1 George Avenue, Turners Falls. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*
- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 19 Unity Street, Turners Falls, and use 26,000 for the second half bill. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 64 Federal Street, Millers Falls. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*

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- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 146 7th Street, Turners Falls. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*
- *Lord makes the motion to use 68,000 gallons for the second half bill for 146 7th Street, Turners Falls. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Lord makes the motion to abate the bill for 13 Chestnut Street, Turners Falls. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously unapproved. Lord - Nay, Boutwell - Nay, Kuklewicz - Nay*

Discuss Bernhardt's request to treat the influent of approximately 19 houses in Colrain, MA

- Little explains Bernhardt's request to treat the influent of approximately 19 houses in Colrain, MA. She feels that treating it is not a problem, but is concerned that there could be logistical issues.
- The Board asks Little to find out if this is a permanent or temporary solution. Then we can figure out a rate.

Steve Ellis, Town Administrator

Review revised CSO Notification plan submission to Mass DEP

- Ellis shares that our preliminary Combined Sewer Overflow Notification plan has some holes in it, and he is working on filling those holes. He needs to submit an updated plan by January 12.
- This will have a budget impact for next year. It will also have an impact for this year as we have to add an additional module.
- *Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the CSO Notification plan for Mass DEP as requested. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Personnel Board

Appoint Anthony Montivirdi, Clean Water Laborer/Operator, UE Grade B Step 3, 40 hrs/wk, effective date of hire 1/23/2023

Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Anthony Montivirdi, Clean Water Laborer/Operator, UE Grade B Step 3, 40 hrs/wk, effective date of hire 1/23/2023. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Maureen Pollock Cell Phone Stipend, \$5.77/wk effective 1/04/2023

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Cell Phone Stipend, \$5.77/wk effective 1/04/2023 for Maureen Pollock. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Suzanne LoManto, Assistant Planner

Execute Mass Cultural Council Grant for Turners Falls Cultural District 2023 Programming and Projects, \$15,000

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the Mass Cultural Council Grant for Turners Falls Cultural District 2023 Programming and Projects, \$15,000; and authorize the Chair to sign it. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

FY24 Budget Development, Steve Ellis

- **Review FY24 Departmental Budgets and Personnel Requests**
- **Identify budget and personnel questions for January 17 Budget Meeting**
- **Confirm expected budget calendar**
- Ellis outlines the schedule:
 - Next Tuesday night, department heads will be invited in to answer questions about their budget submissions.
 - By the 30th, the Board will be in a position to make recommendations relative to the budget, which Ellis will share with the Finance Committee at their meeting on February 1st.
 - The Finance Committee will do a more extensive set of interviews with department heads.
- Kuklewicz would like a discussion about Town Meeting's request for a 24.7% increase.
- Lord asserts that the Finance Committee is looking for the Selectboard's opinion as the Personnel Board to do their analysis.
- Kuklewicz would also like to have discussions about the requests from the Town Clerk, the Library Trustees, the Moderator, and the Airport Commission.

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- Lord uses the narrative that the Library submitted as a good example because of the level of detail and analysis, and he would like something similar from the Clerk's Office and from the Airport Commission.
- Upon suggestion by Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, the Board decide that a discussion should also be had regarding the Board of Health's request for a medical director.
- Kuklewicz feels it is worth having people from the Police Department and the DPW in also, especially to talk about staffing.
- Lord brings up the fact that in the prior two years, the Airport had asked for allocations as revenue had not hit the expenses they were undergoing. He would like some assurance as to why things will be different now.
- The Board would like to talk about the police vehicle purchases.
- Ellis calls attention to the Legal Counsel Budget. He included an additional \$5,000 for the final phase of the FERC negotiations.
- Kuklewicz asks if we still need to have a discussion with regard to Excess Capacity, which Ellis encourages. This topic will be discussed at next week's meeting.

Wendy Bogusz, Executive Assistant

Invitation to participate to participate in Deerfield, MA, 350th Parade on June 10, 2023

The Board asks Suzanne LoManto to organize something that would enable us to participate in Deerfield's 350th Parade on June 10, 2023.

Winter Special Town Meeting, March 2, 2023

Discuss Logistics

- Lord wants to make sure we have a quorum and emphasizes the need to have people to show up.
- Ariel Elan shares that several individuals have shared with her their concerns for their personal well-being at in-person meetings.
- Ellis and Bogusz state that hybrid meetings are not an option.
- Bogusz shares that four or five people responded to a notice she sent out, stating that the reason they won't come is because of the location.
- The Board decides to do a survey.

Opening of 3/2/23 Winter STM Warrant

- *Boutwell makes a motion to set that any requests for the Winter Special Town Meeting Warrant need to be completed by Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 10:00 AM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Boutwell makes the motion to declare the Warrant for Special Town Meeting on March 2 open. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Walter Ramsey, Assistant Town Planner

Farren Care Center Demolition Discussions

Consider plan for basement demolition demo and infill

Boutwell makes the motion to accept the plan for the basement demolition as discussed, with the conditions as outlined by the Assistant Town Planner. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Consider acceptance of 356 Montague City Road Property

Boutwell makes the motion to accept 356 Montague City Road Property as discussed. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Town Administrator's Business

Approve Submittal of "STOP-School Violence Prevention Grant Application" by GMRSD

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Submittal of "STOP-School Violence Prevention Grant Application" by GMRSD, with the funding amount of \$19,980; and authorize the Chair to sign it. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

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Announce \$975,000 Federal CDS Grant for Avenue A Streetscape

Ellis announces that we have received a \$975,000 Federal CDS Grant for Avenue A Streetscape. This would help with continuing the general design themes. The area that we have designed that they are willing to fund is from the Discovery Center up to Third Street on the west side of the Town. We are hopeful that there is enough money to replace the traffic signal and improve ADA accessibility to the storefronts.

Update on FirstLight FERC Re-Licensing Process

The company has executed a policy where they signed an efficient flows agreement with State agencies. This may lead to other conversations as this agreement may affect other recreational activities or other parts of the river potentially. This agreement does not foreclose our ability to come to a settlement or other agreements that we might sign but doesn't guarantee that we will get to those either. We will continue to engage with the company.

Health Department Operations Update

We have a good plan in place with the emergency coverage provided by Greenfield and with the appointment of Gina McNeely. We have received a few résumés which we will be proceeding to work through to see if there are any viable candidates.

Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting

None

Boutwell makes the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved.

Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye