

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

VIA ZOOM

Monday, January 30, 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; Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz; FCRHA Director of Community Development Brian McHugh; Finance Committee Member John Hanold; Town Clerk Deb Bourbeau; and Town Meeting Moderator Ray Godin.

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 January 17 and 23, 2023 if available

- Lord mentions some changes that he wants made on the minutes.
- *Lord makes the motion to accept the minutes from January 17 and 23 with changes as described. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - 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

Public Hearing

FY22.23 Montague CDBG Grant Application (Community Development Block Grant Program)

- Lord reads aloud the legal notice.
- McHugh clarifies that the Streetscape Improvements Project is actually a design project, not a construction project.
- McHugh gives some background on the funding sources for the CDBG Grant.
- McHugh reviews the activities that are being proposed in this year's grant application (Social Service Programs, Hillcrest Neighborhood Playground Construction, Housing Rehabilitation, and Avenue A Streetscape Design Project).
- M. Jackson asks if this is supposed to begin in October? McHugh responds that we should hear about the grant by middle of summer with an expected start date of October 1 and projected for 1 year from there. Then there will be another round next March.
- M. Jackson knows there has been prior discussion with the Town finding ways to sustain its support for some of the partners in the social service sector through the gap in CDBG funding and wants to make sure it remains on folks radar as a need.
- Ellis points out that the Board has not made an official policy change relative to the total share of a typical CDBG grant round that would be devoted to social services. Given that the Board hasn't discussed this as a long-term matter, we have to advise all of the agencies that may have proposals included in this, that we cannot guarantee the same level of funding. We have found it difficult to get enough money to execute capital projects and put money into housing rehab. As we talk about sustainability and gap funding we have to be transparent that the Board has not at this point made a long term strategic choice relative to long term changing its mix or CDBG grant support of social service programs.
- in terms of long-term strategic choice relative to long-term changing its mix for CDBG Grant support of Social Service Programs.
- In response to a comment by Ariel Elan, Ellis states that the Town is only supporting The Brickhouse's programs that were mentioned.
- With regard to the playground, Kuklewicz wonders if the location is the best place given Gill-Montague's plans for elementary school realignment and building a new school.
- Ramsey responds that the design for the playground started before a new school was proposed. It is impossible at this time to note where the ideal location for the playground would be. If a new school will be built, it would be possible to relocate the new playground structures.
- In response to a question by Jeff Singleton (regarding Housing Rehabilitation), McHugh states that \$350,000 will be allocated to 7 units.
- In response to a question by Singleton, McHugh states that two people from FCRHRA, Alyssa Larose and Gina Govoni have attended the Affordable Housing Committee meetings that are mainly working on the Overlay District; and Ramsey confirms that there is coordination between the two groups.
- Ramsey and McHugh clarify which parts of the design for the Streetscape project each source is funding.
- Chair closes the public hearing.

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Designate Walter Ramsey, Assistant Town Administrator as the Town's Environmental Certifying Officer

Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Walter Ramsey, Assistant Town Administrator as the Town's Environmental Certifying Officer; and authorize the Chair to sign the certificate. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved.

Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Suzanne LoManto, Assistant Town Planner Use of Public Property: Northeast Unity Car Show, Sunday, September 24, 2023, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM; Road Closure: 1st St. from Avenue A to Unity Park Hill. Unity Park and the far parking lots would still be accessible from Second St., co-sponsored by RiverCulture

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the request for Use of Public Property: Northeast Unity Car Show, Sunday, September 24, 2023, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM; Road Closure: 1st St. from Avenue A to Unity Park Hill. Unity Park and the far parking lots would still be accessible from Second St., co-sponsored by RiverCulture. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Details of the Smithsonian exhibition 'Crossroads: Change in Rural America' February 5 - March 23 at the Great Falls Discovery Center, co-sponsored by RiverCulture

- LoManto states that individuals from DCR will be assembling the Smithsonian exhibit on Wednesday through possibly Friday.
- The exhibit consists of six three-dimensional kiosks.
- The ribbon-cutting is this Sunday from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
- There is a kick-off event at the Shea Theater on February 11. A short documentary will be shown, and music will be provided by Valley Voices.

Brick and Feather Brewery, 78 11th Street

For Reconsideration: Alteration of Licensed Premises (ABCC requested further information)

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the request for the outdoor license for Brick and Feather Brewery as presented. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Shawn Hubert, Hubies Restaurant & Tavern

Update on Liquor License Transfer

Kristi Bodin reports that the Shea Theater has all of the information that they need from Hubert. It is now up to the Shea to move the application forward. Bogusz will review the application, then schedule a public hearing.

Ric Smith, Sheepdog The Movie, LLC

Use of Public Property: Independent Film; Multiple days between 2/14/23 - 3/9/23, time and location varies (as per attachment)

- Smith shares an updated schedule for shooting the movie.
- Ellis asks Smith to give the Selectboard weekly briefings by each Thursday and provide all possible notice about any last-minute changes.
- Kuklewicz suggests Smith coordinate with Bogusz to get a general Use of Public Property permit that can hopefully be approved next week.
- Smith is willing to give weekly updates at the Selectboard meetings.

FY24 Budget Review and Recommendations

Conduct Final Review of FY24 Budget Requests

(See following bullet)

Consider Preliminary Budget Recommendations for Finance Committee

- *Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Moderator's Budget as presented. Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Nay, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Registrars' stipend increase from \$525 to \$625 as requested. Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Nay, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Library's Budget as presented. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Boutwell makes the motion to support the request of the Budget for Department #197 Farmers Market. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

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- *Boutwell makes the motion to support the increase in the Cemetery Budget as discussed. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Boutwell makes the motion to approve the staff increase and budget increase as requested by the Town Clerk. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- *Boutwell makes the motion to support the request of the Airport increases for the positions and the budget as discussed. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- Discussion ensues regarding the requested DPW/CSO position. The Board decides to postpone their approval until after a job description has been created.
- The Board decides that it is not ready to come up with an overall budget recommendation for the Finance Committee at this point. It is willing, however, to forward the personnel recommendations.

Consider Adoption of DPW Discretionary Account Funding Policy

- Ramsey summarizes the DPW Discretionary Account Funding Policy
- Kuklewicz states he would feel better if the money was more evenly distributed (i.e., he would like to see the plan).
- Lord states he does not understand why the budget is laid out this way, rather than having the Superintendent say "I want this much money for trucks, this much money for a tractor, this much money for repairs," etc.
- Hanold states that this policy codifies the Finance Committee's practice and tightens the controls that Lord expressed. One of the concerns that the FC needed to consider was that if Bergeron has a breakdown, he would need to have something he could respond to quickly. Hanold states this policy would provide more oversight.
- Kuklewicz states that having a separate item brings visibility to it. The policy tightens up some of the past practice.
- *Boutwell makes the motion to approve and adopt the DPW Discretionary Account Funding Policy. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Wendy Bogusz, Executive Assistant

Special Town Meeting Logistics (Poll Results)

- Bogusz shares and summarizes the poll results: 37% prefer an indoor meeting and 17% prefer an online meeting, 60% state that they would very likely attend a meeting held indoors at the high school, 1.72% said they were unlikely to attend, and 60% state they would attend an online meeting.
- The Board decides that an in-person meeting is the way to go.
- Godin encourages having an in-person meeting at the high school.
- Godin states that the Selectboard, Town Administrator, and Finance Committee will be moved off of the stage and put in front of the Town Meeting Members. This will be done on a trial basis.

Liquor License Seasonal Populations

Boutwell makes the motion to submit to the ABCC our Seasonal Population Estimation Form of 8,800 people. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Walter Ramsey, Assistant Town Administrator

South Street Bridge Design Public Hearing Review

- No major issues came up at the Public Hearing Review.
- The construction is going to be advertised in May of 2024. Construction will begin in fall of 2024.
- The "real work" where the bridge will be closed and replaced will take place in summer of 2025. There will be 100 days of construction.
- The new bridge will be slightly higher and longer than the existing one.
- Environmental permits are required for part of this project, which will lead to a need for a temporary easement from a private property owner.

One Stop For Growth Expression of Interest Period/Submissions

Ramsey shares potential projects for the One Stop for Growth Expression of Interest submissions: (1) advancing the design work associated with Strathmore Demolition Plan, (2) advancing the Long-Term Control Plan for the CSOs, (3) seeking funding to do environmental due diligence for the Farren property, and (4) advancing our wayfinding plan for the Village centers and/or a public art master plan.

Other (not on agenda)

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Ramsey states that members from the Wood Bank are looking to apply for a grant for approximately \$15,000 for some equipment. This topic will be brought up at next week's meeting.

Town Administrator Business

Execute Agreement with FRCOG for FRCOG Collective Highway Products and Service Bids and Contracts for FY 2024, \$3,100

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the request for the Collaborative Procurement with FRCOG, and name Tom Bergeron, Highway Superintendent as the authorized person for the highway bids; and let the Board approve and sign the document. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Plan to transition Town Clerk and Treasurer/Collector from Elected to Appointed Positions

Ellis shares that both our Town Clerk and Treasurer/Collector feel that it is time for the Town to consider changing the historical system and moving their positions from elected to appointed. This would allow for us to choose from a broader candidate pool when the time comes. This issue would need to be added on the Special Town Meeting Warrant on March 2.

Consider Supplemental CSO Monitoring/Reporting Contract with ADS Environmental Services

Ellis shares that there will be a \$6,200 one-time fee for a tool that would allow us to have all of our automated email notifications go out to all intended recipients relative to CSO public notifications. We would anticipate receiving a contract proposal for FY24 that we would ultimately put out to bid, that would shape our understanding of what our budget will be like next year for the full integrated packet of services.

Authorize Participation in Additional National Opioid Settlement Agreements

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Town Administrator to signal Montague's desire to opt in the participation in new settlement for the National Opioid Settlement Program. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Update on Expected FRTA Bus Maintenance Facility Timeline

The updated timeline for the completion of the FRTA garage and their moving in and having it commercially operable is the month of May.

Update on Refiling of Legislation to Remove Montague Police from Civil Service (HD-367)

Representative Blais and Senator Comerford have filed House Docket 367, which is a renewal of our request for separation from Civil Service for our police force.

Plan to Repaint Town Hall Common Areas

The common halls were last painted 18 years ago. Bergeron will see if he can cover having them painted under his Operations and Maintenance Budget for Town Buildings. If not, Ellis will ask the Selectboard to use Community Development Discretionary funds.

OTHER:

GMRSD Budget Meeting: There is a joint meeting with the Gill-Montague School District, Finance Committee, and Selectboard at the high school tomorrow night 6 PM in room 228. This will be a hybrid meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENT: 5 Villages One Future Comprehensive Plan Workshop Saturday, February 4, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Turners Falls High School Cafeteria. Lunch, childcare, and transportation provided. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/montaguecommunityworkshop>

Boutwell makes the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 PM. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye