

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

October 30, 2023

VIA ZOOM

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Chris Boutwell, and Matt Lord; Town Administrator Steve Ellis; Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; and CWF Superintendent Chelsey Little.

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

Approve Selectboard Minutes from October 17 and 23, if available

- Approval of Selectboard Minutes of October 17 postponed.
- *Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Selectboard Minutes from October 23, 2023. 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

Singleton expresses concern that the bus that goes to Orange will not be able to go on Montague City Road when the closure due to the work on the drain occurs on Wednesday. Ramsey states he will correspond with FRTA.

Executive Assistant Business

Update on Kim James-Caron, 20 N Street Compliance with Nuisance Dog Order

- Bogusz could not be present this evening.
- Ellis reports that according to the Town Clerk, the registration of the animals had not occurred as scheduled. This is a violation of the order. The Animal Control Officer has attempted to contact James-Caron. She has not responded. We received a communication that there could be 11 puppies in the home in addition to the four dogs that were discussed.
- Lead Regional Animal Control Officer Kyle Dragon states that ACO Giurgiu Calin did confirm that there are 15 dogs at the residence.
- Ellis states that we have issued a hearing notice for next Monday at 6:30 for the Board to consider finding James-Caron in noncompliance and in violation with the order.
- Giurgiu will be following up tomorrow.

Assistant Town Administrator Business

• **FY One Stop Award Announcements**

1. **\$132,700 - Site Readiness - Turners Falls Canal District Riverfront Readiness Project (Strathmore Site Demolition Planning)**

- The Site Readiness grant is administered through Mass Development, who has been working with the Town for the Canal District master planning process.
- The grant application was developed with some support from Tighe and Bond.
- We will have a kick-off meeting with Mass Development next week to scope out the project.
- There is still some discussion about incorporating Building 11 into the demolition design.

2. **\$500,000 - Rural and Small Town Development Fund - Avenue A combined Sewer Overflow and Bugger Line Improvements**

- This particular grant has funded upgrades to the Tech School Pump Station and helped fund the study for the sludge composting feasibility study.
- This year's funding will address CSOs.
- The grant application was developed with some support from Wright-Pierce Engineers. We worked closely with the Highway Water Department and the Clean Water Facility.
- The DPW will be responsible for managing this project.
- Ellis states that the Modified Implementation Plan identifies this project as one of our priorities for the coming five years.

• **Town Hall Annex Solar Project - Execute master purchase agreement and authorize limited scope of services for engineering study with ACE solar (\$192,930.52)**

Postponed until next week.

• **Review and authorize Agreement for Professional Services with Wright-Pierce Inc for the CWF Screw Pump replacement project. (\$273,628)**

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Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Agreement for Professional Services with Wright-Pierce Inc for the CWF Screw Pump replacement project (\$273,628); and authorize the Chair to sign the final documents. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye Kuklewicz - Aye

Town Administrator Business

- **Discussion of FY25 Budget Message and Process for Hearing Requests**

With regard to the level of Excess Capacity that the Board suggested maintaining in the FY25 budget, the figure that was settled on presents an approximately 3.5% increase. This leaves us some "wiggle room," but Ellis recommends requesting the Town departments to offer a level services budget request for FY25. These will be brought to the Board in late November or early December. The Board is in agreement with this plan.

- **Farren Care Center Property Update**

- A power plant had fallen into the river, which caused a slow-down in the demolition plans.
- They are unlikely to finish the final work (seeding the lawn, etc.) until the spring.
- They will continue to maintain the sidewalk through the snow season.
- The Expanded Phase 2 Environmental is in process, as are the agreements relative to the redevelopment funds and our title search for the property.
- Discussion ensued regarding whether the building that we are going to retain is going to be heated. Kuklewicz states that unheated buildings deteriorate more quickly.
- Ramsey states that the Building Inspector feels that the building would be okay to remain unheated for a couple of seasons.
- We need to make sure that maintenance of the property is an allowable expense under the Redevelopment Agreement.

- **Strathmore Mill Advocacy and Updates, and Report on 10/27 Strathmore Meeting with State and Federal officials**

- Our team has continued to and intensified our work with State and Federal Officials. The Governor's Office is very engaged. We have engaged with our Congressional delegation and other State officials and legislators.
- We are having ongoing conversations to see how we might put together a project funding package that would enable us to take action on that building before we start to see an acceleration of any collapse that might be indicated by the masonry and the roof conditions.
- We are considering Building 11 to be part of what is no longer viable.
- Ramsey shares that we had a walk-through this morning with officials from DPW, the Fire Department, and the Building Department; as well as three members of the Historic Commission. We did a tour of Building 11. The roof has failed. There are fewer and fewer safe areas. There was general consensus that it would not be wise to attempt to save that building.
- Ellis states that we are leveraging language in the 2018 Environmental Bond Bill, which set aside \$5 million for the purpose of demolition of the building.

- **Execute Amended MOU with Franklin Regional Council of Governments for the DPH Mass in Motion Project (Scope Revision)**

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the amended the MOU with Franklin Regional Council of Governments for the DPH Mass in Motion Project (Scope Revision). Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye Kuklewicz - Aye

- **Execute \$4,230 contract with Coleen Doherty to Coordinate the MA Executive Office for Elder Affairs Digital Equity Technology Training Grant**

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the \$4,230 contract with Coleen Doherty to Coordinate the MA Executive Office for Elder Affairs Digital Equity Technology Training Grant; and authorize the Chair to sign it.. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye Kuklewicz - Aye

- **Topics Not Anticipated in the 48-hour Posting Requirements**

- **Letter following Municipal Listening Session.** Ellis shares that he had been unable to attend the Municipal Listening Session Input meeting in Hadley. Following the legislative team urging him to give input, Ellis drafted a letter on the Town's behalf.
- **Dog Hearing.** There will be a follow-up dog hearing on the same date as the November 6 meeting.

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- **Site Visit.** Nova Real Estate LLC submitted a request for Certificate of Substantial Completion today. Town officials need to do a site visit to confirm that all improvements have been done. The site visit has been scheduled for Thursday, November 16, at 1:00 p.m.
- **Meeting Invitation from the Six-Town Regionalization Study Committee.** Kuklewicz shares that we have received correspondence from the Six-Town Regionalization Study Committee inviting us to a session in Gill on Tuesday, November 14, at 6:00 p.m. Ellis will confirm the location. This will be a joint Selectboard and Finance Committee meeting.

OTHER:

Next Meeting: Selectboard, Monday, November 6, 2023 at 6:30 PM, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and via ZOOM

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