

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
In-Person at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and VIA ZOOM
Tuesday, January 16, 2024 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; DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron; CWF Superintendent Chelsey Little; Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen; Airport Director Bryan Camden; and Airport Commissioners Josh Lively and Seth Rutherford.

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

Approve Minutes of January 8, 2024

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2024. 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

Sewer Commissioners

Chelsey Little, CWF Superintendent

Execute *Local Limits Study* task order with Wright-Pierce Engineering for \$45,000

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the Local Limits Study task order with Wright-Pierce Engineering for \$45,000; and to authorize the Chair to sign it. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Capital request for updating 24' x 40' garage workspace for CWF staff

- Little explains that she is trying to get staff out of the hazardous environment in the operations building.
- The Farren property has a garage space which Little is looking at potentially converting it into a safe working space for staff. She is looking at doing windows, lighting, insulation, and mini splits for HVAC.
- In response to a question by Kuklewicz, Little states that they have porta-potties as a temporary solution.
- Little and Ramsey will work on a ballpark figure for the amount of the request.
- Kuklewicz suggests doing more study and investigation.
- Ellis states that when discussing how to utilize the space, one thought would be to lease it out to some other entity.
- Kuklewicz suggests the possibility of looking into the piece of property on Greenfield Road just past the plant.
- Kuklewicz would like a more firmed-up plan.
- Lord asks Little to compare projected timelines on how we are going to get the work done in the existing facility versus how long the garage workspace would be in use.

Request for additional funding to complete rate study analysis with Quantified Ventures using ARPA Funds designated for the AMP Grant-Supported Wastewater Collection System Study (Approximately \$10,000)

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the CWF Superintendent to move forward with the rate study analysis with Quantified Ventures under the existing allocation for the AMP Grant-Supported Wastewater Collection System Study (Approximately \$10,000). Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Request for approval to submit Congressional Earmark in support of planning for facility upgrades (headworks/operations/primary treatment)

- Little explains the request to submit the Congressional Earmark in support of planning for facility upgrades.
- Lord, Boutwell, and Kuklewicz feel that they do not want to diminish the urgency of dealing with the situation with the Strathmore.
- Kuklewicz encourages Little to look into other avenues that might help us get some study funding, as well as put this project on the radar of the CIC.

Biosolids composting and dryer study update

Weston and Sampson informed Little that having a dryer at the facility to treat compost on-site alongside composting will have no extra cost for us.

Monthly discharge summary

- There are no issues. The plant did really well last month.
- Ellis reviews CSO data for December.

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Erving/Millers flow overage and budget impacts

- With regard to the Erving/Millers flow, Little explains that this past year, we had an overage of 5 ½ million gallons. We are looking at over a \$94,000 overage fee. There is a line item in the budget, but it is capped at \$55,000.
- Little lists four options: (1) start the new fiscal year in the red; (2) encumber funds for the next fiscal year; (3) update the FY25 budget, which would impact the rates; (4) add a special article for Annual Town Meeting.
- Bergeron discusses what has been done and what still needs to be done with regard to investigating the source of this excess water. He has discussed with Wright-Pierce the option of using a lateral camera.

Steve Ellis, Town Administrator

Discuss Preparations for Renewal of Erving Wastewater Agreement

Our agreement with Erving Wastewater is due for renewal in October. We need to go to Town Meeting and request permission to negotiate and enter into a new agreement of up to 10 years. Ellis suggests that he, Ramsey, Little, and a Board designee meet with the Erving TA to discuss the agreement.

Tom Bergeron, DPW Superintendent

Update on Millers Falls I/I Investigations

(See above under "Erving/Millers flow overage and budget impacts")

Approve Tom Bergeron as NetDMR Signatory for EPA Reporting

Boutwell makes the motion to approve Tom Bergeron as the NetDMR Signatory for EPA Reporting. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Approve Chapter 90 Projects: Guardrails, \$140,956; Roller, \$52,795

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Chapter 90 Guardrail Project as discussed. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Chapter 90 Roller Project as discussed in the amount of approximately \$52,795. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Personnel Board

Personnel Status Change for Eric Cole to Truck Driver/Laborer in Training. Grade C, Step 3. Previous position:

Building Maintenance

Postponed until the next meeting

Review and Recommendations re: Selected FY25 Budget and Personnel Requests

DPW FY25 Request for Additional Sewer Collection System Maintenance Staff

- Bergeron explains that the additional Sewer Collection System Maintenance staff member would be brought in as a Truck Driver/Laborer.
- Ellis states that there are two decisions to make: (1) Does the Board/Sewer Commission feel it is appropriate to add the staff person, and (2) Where would this staff person be placed on the budget? Will this individual be a Collection System/Truck Driver/Laborer in training, or a General Truck Driver/Laborer in training?
- Bergeron states that the current positions being advertised for are three Truck Drivers and a custodian. There have been a couple of applicants, but they do not have CDLs.
- In response to a question by Kuklewicz, Olsen suggests two individuals working overtime for eight hours on a Friday would be equivalent to three employees working straight time Monday through Thursday.

Discussion of Collection System Maintenance Cost Allocation (Determination of General Fund and Enterprise Fund Expenses)

○ **Staff Cost Attribution for FY25**

○ **Capital Expense Cost Allocation**

- Kuklewicz would like Bergeron to have a full staff for a year and see what flexibility he can get with that, then revisit when we have more data. Boutwell and Lord agree.
- In response to a question by Lord, Bergeron states that he has been without a full staff for two years.
- Kuklewicz states that bringing people in without CDLs (and working with them to get their CDLs) would help get Bergeron fully staffed.
- Ellis states that the final taxation share of I/I will not be known until mid to late January.

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- Ellis states that we need to build a policy in the long term as to what qualifies as a shared expense and we need to have an approach of determining what the level of sharing should be. In other words, who is paying how much of that?
- Last year the Collection System/Lead Operator position was carried 100% in the General Fund Budget, and the Sewer Commission had indicated that it would revisit that decision and potentially split in accordance with how work has been apportioned.
- With regard to the I/I, Kuklewicz states that we will have some extra money once we can figure out where the heavy flows are coming from.
- Kuklewicz states that because of the short staff, he does not feel that we have good solid data with regard to how much of Kyle Bessette's time is currently devoted to the collection system.
- Lord feels that if there is a breach of regulatory requirements, the operating budget for the Town of Montague would be on the hook (not the Clean Water Facility) and it should be the responsibility of all the people of the Town to make sure that those events do not happen.
- Little uses the Montague GIS System Map to explain why she feels that there is a portion that the Town is responsible for on top of the Enterprise Fund.
- The Board is in agreement that they are going to leave things as they are for another year with regard to the Lead Operator position staying in DPW.

Charging Stations FY25 Budget Request (Walter Ramsey)

Lord makes the motion to change the pricing for per KWh at the Town-owned Charging Stations to 75 cents effective February 1, 2024. Seconded by Boutwell, unanimously approved. Lord - Aye, Boutwell - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- No motion was made to reduce or otherwise change the budget

Shared Services FY25 Budget Request (Carolyn Olsen)

- The FY25 Preliminary Budget is shared on the screen.
- Ellis thanks Olsen and the department heads for their work on the audit.
- No motion was made

Airport Solar Project Delay Implications for FY24-FY25 Budgets (Bryan Camden)

- **Update on Project Delays and Possible Next Steps**
- **Implications for Current Year (FY24) Budget and Operations**
- **Implications for FY25 Budget and Operations**
- Camden goes over the FY24-FY25 budget:
 - Solar Lease Issue
 - Solar Revenue Loss Puts Airport FY24 Deficit in Budget
 - Context for FY24 Revenue Shortfall

In response to a question by Lord, Camden states that if the staff hours are reduced by 30%, he would have to pick up the additional slack uncompensated with regard to safety inspections, brush cutting in the wintertime, equipment maintenance in the wintertime, mowing maintenance, vegetation maintenance, building maintenance and upkeep. Administrative work would have to be put on hold.

Consideration of Next Steps and Response

Ellis lists the following Potential FY24 Budget Solutions (ARPA, General Town Stabilization, Town Capital, RRA Sale of Real Estate, and Free Cash)

Boutwell makes the motion to put an article on Special Town Meeting for the amount of \$24,261 from Sale of Real Estate to be transferred to the Airport Budget. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

- The Board decides they would like to fund the other revenue that is needed through other Town funds and ask Ramsey, Ellis, and Olsen to craft a proposed article.
- Kuklewicz asks Camden and the Airport Commission to work on a discussion of what we should do next year.
- Kuklewicz would like to have a joint meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss some possible next steps.

Town Administrator's Business

Reminder of Budget Schedule and Joint Meetings

- Ellis reminds the Board of the Budget Schedule.

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- The Gill-Montague School District Joint Meeting with Gill and the School District is scheduled for February 7. Olsen is working on the location for that meeting.
- Ellis will be away on February 14 and the 21.
- On the 28th, Franklin County Technical School will be making its budget presentation. It is up to the Board whether they want to attend that meeting.
- FY25 budget recommendations is targeted for March 13 with the CIC and March 20 for the reconciliation of all votes. Ramsey will ask the CIC if the March 13 meeting can be switched.

Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting

None

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