

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
In-Person at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and VIA ZOOM
Tuesday, January 29, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Chris Boutwell, Matt Lord; Town Administrator Steve Ellis; Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz; and Police Chief Chris Williams.

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

Approve Minutes of January 16, 2024

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Minutes of January 16, 2024 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

Personnel Board

Correct Reserve Officer Pay for John Dempsey effective 1/15/2024

Boutwell makes the motion to correct the Reserve Officer Pay for John Dempsey effective 1/15/2024. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Request current Sergeant list for Promotion from Civil Service

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Executive Assistant to request the current promotion list for Sergeant for the Town of Montague, and authorize the Police Chief to institute a process for picking the next officer based on the tie for the two current officers. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Review and Execute Proposed Contract with Walter Ramsey for Role of Town Administrator effective July 1, 2024

- Kuklewicz, Ellis, and Ramsey reviewed the Proposed Contract with Walter Ramsey for the Role of Town Administrator effective July 1, 2024 (vacation carry-over; compensation to Grade J, Step 3; flexibility over compensation time; and allowance for accreditation)
- *Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Proposed Contract with Walter Ramsey for Role of Town Administrator effective July 1, 2024. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

FY25 Budget Review and Recommendations, Steve Ellis

Review Budget Updates and Identify Unknowns

- Three pieces of the budget that have not yet been ascertained are:
 - 1) the major cost variable of health insurance
 - 2) the Town's cost and share of I/I and its treatment
 - 3) Franklin County Technical Schools' budget
- Decisions are forthcoming relative to how the Airport Budget is funded.

Review Selectboard Budget Changes

The Selectboard Budget has been reduced by just under \$12,000. This reflects the change in salary for the Town Administrator position; the ability to grant up to Step 5 for the new Town Administrator position; the increase of cost of memberships reflecting the AICP designation; and more room under Seminars to allow the Assistant Town Administrator to attend MMA or another conference, as well as allow the Executive Assistant to have additional HR training participation

Vote Recommendations re: Current Draft Budget

- In response to a question by Kuklewicz regarding Item 433 (Solid Waste), Ellis explains that the change in that budget reflects an 18% increase for the contract.
- Lord asks about the potential for Gill-Montague School District to make requests.

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- *Boutwell makes the motion to endorse the Current Draft Budget as discussed. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- In response to a question by Jeff Singleton re: using some money from sale of real estate, stabilization, or taxation, Ellis states that the Finance Committee has not made any conclusive vote or decisions relative to FY25.
- In response to a question by Jeff Singleton re: using Excess Capacity for the revenues to funds budget, Ellis states we don't know the answer of how much Excess Capacity we need until we know how much taxation our final budget will require.

Other (not on agenda)

Ellis reminds the Board that on February 7th, there will be meeting with the Finance Committee, the Gill-Montague Selectboard and Finance Committee, and the Gill-Montague School District Superintendent and Business Manager.

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

Review FRCOG DLT Assistance Options

Ramsey reviews the top three choices for FRCOG DLT Assistance Options:

- 1) Support to continue the development of a comprehensive planning process for technical assistance
- 2) Support for the FERC hydro re-licensing process
- 3) Brownfield revitalization technical assistance

Vote Intention to lay out Sandy Lane as a Public Way

Boutwell makes the motion to vote its intention to lay out Sandy Lane as a Public Way as shone on a plan entitled "Proposed Street Acceptance Plan 'Sandy Lane' Plan of Land in Montague, Massachusetts," dated January 18, 2024, prepared by Harold L. Eaton and Associates, Inc.; and to forward this vote to the Planning Board for its comments and recommendation pursuant to G.L. c. 41, §81G and §81I. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Execute Agreement for Professional Services with GZA Geoenvironmental, Inc. for Installation of three (3) landfill gas monitoring wells at the Montague Landfill and Burn Dump

Boutwell makes the motion to execute the Agreement for Professional Services with GZA Geoenvironmental, Inc. for Installation of three (3) landfill gas monitoring wells at the Montague Landfill and Burn Dump. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Other (not on agenda)

Ramsey states that the DPW Superintendent approached him regarding replacing the DPW dump truck. Kuklewicz would like this to be discussed with the Capital Improvements Committee.

Town Administrator's Business

Cannabis Control Commission Updates - Host Community Agreement Template and Social Equity Requirements

- Ellis states that we have received a model Host Community Agreement Template, which he and Lord have spent some time working through. All comments need to be received by January 31st.
- The two viable businesses that we have granted HCAs to are 253 Pharmacy and Flower Power. Both firms have been in touch with us about the implementation of the HCAs.
- There is a March 1st deadline, after which the CCC is going to begin to review all existing and new HCAs for compliance.
- We have two concerns:
 - 1) Specific requirements around social equity requirements (we could be held responsible for elements of their hiring plan as relates to social equity)
 - 2) They want us to list all of the fees and taxes that the companies would ordinarily be subject to (it seems ill-advised to have to list all of these).
- We also want to ask for some clarity relative to the process of bringing communities and HCAs into compliance.

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- Ellis states that Counsel has suggested that if we are not willing to simply accept the template, we ought to take the following approach: wait for the anniversary dates, see what clauses or omissions there may be, then work to develop a compliant agreement.
- Lord expresses his anxiety regarding the language in the draft and what they are expecting from a Town like Montague and what our capacity to perform that will be.
- The Selectboard gives its assent to submit what Ellis and Lord have conceptualized to date with any minor revisions as they might feel are appropriate.
- Ellis states that he anticipates receiving a request from 253 Pharmacy for the Board to consider granting them their medical license.
- With regard to the Social Equity Regulations and Requirements, we are going to be required to develop and adopt a plan that shows preference for any future license seekers that may be social equity eligible businesses. Our process is going to have to be made very transparent and needs to be posted both in Town Hall and on our website. The requirement takes effect on May 1st.

Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting/Republic Services

Ellis states that we should anticipate that there could be missed collections. We are all managing the process as well as we can at this point in time.

Next Meeting:

Selectboard, Monday, February 5, 2024 at 6:00 PM, In-Person at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, and via ZOOM

Boutwell makes the motion to adjourn at 7:48 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye