

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING
1 Avenue A, Turners Falls and VIA ZOOM
Monday, September 16, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM. Present were Selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz, Matt Lord, and Chris Boutwell; Town Administrator Walter Ramsey; Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz; Assistant Town Administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller; Town Planner Maureen Pollock; Board of Health Director Ryan Paxton; and FCRHA Director of Community Development Brian McHugh.

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

Approve Minutes: Selectboard Meeting September 9, 2024

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the minutes of September 9, 2024 as presented. Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Abstain, 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

- **Vehicular Accident**
 - Resident Shelley Madden discusses an accident in which a car hit a bicyclist. She said the driver was attempting to flee. Shelley has a medical background and states that she believes the bicyclist has significant injuries, including a head injury. There were other children who witnessed the incident and were also traumatized. She asks the Town to do something about the speeding problem in her area.
 - Kuklewicz states they will follow-up with the Police Chief regarding traffic issues in the area.
 - Business owner John McNamara states that there is a Town-wide speeding problem, especially since COVID.
- **Avenue A Ramp Expense**
 - McNamara asks what determines that a wheelchair ramp is too expensive.
 - Kuklewicz and Ramsey state that the quote we received on the Avenue A ramp was from a contractor. We were given a range to budget for it and the Town is required to strategize on ways to come up with that level of financing.
 - Kuklewicz states that we had looked at some ARPA funds, and there were other allocations that needed to be made which depleted quite a bit of it (the CWF pumps and the school district after school program). We will reassess ARPA funds in late October.
 - Lord states that it wasn't that the number was too high, but that there were competing priorities, a number of which had already gone through Town-Meeting approval and gone through bid.
 - The Selectboard will continue to try to find a way to finance the ramp (maybe CDBG).
 - McNamara also comments that when the Town had been awarded around \$2.5 million, residents were asked what they think we should spend the money on. However, none of their ideas were taken into consideration.
 - Kuklewicz states we have been very judicious with the money and distributed it to various projects in Town that benefits all of the residents.
- **Overgrown vegetation**
 - Later in the meeting, a resident presents photos he had taken on his walk that showed overgrown vegetation on the sidewalk.
 - According to Ramsey, the residents are responsible for taking care of the grass on the tree belt in front of their property. The DPW, however, is responsible for trimming the trees on the tree belt.

Recognitions

- **Carolyn Olsen, Town Accountant, 28.75 combined years of service**
An award was given to Carolyn Olsen for her service from September 1999 to September 2024.
- **Maxine Davis, Montague's Oldest Citizen**
This past Saturday Boutwell and Kuklewicz awarded the Boston Post Gold Cane and a commemorative pin to Maxine Davis as Montague's Oldest Citizen. She will be 103 on October 5.

Maureen Pollock, Town Planner

Montague Center Complete Streets Project - update and discussion

- Pollock shares that she has received a lot of feedback from residents with regard to improvements in the Montague Center area.
- If we are awarded the a complete streets grant for construction (\$500,000), we would need to prepare bid-ready construction documents. We would also have additional public outreach and community engagement.
- Issues of concern brought up from the public include speeding through the historic village center and its negative impact on pedestrians' and bicyclists' safety.

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- The top priority/goal for the project is to implement traffic-calming measures. These would include reducing traffic speeds; providing attractive and safer crosswalks for pedestrians; allowing safer, dedicated bicycle travel in this area; better defining of on-street parking; and improving access to the bus stop shelters and ensuring they meet ADA standards.
- Design concepts were discussed at the community meeting.
- In response to a question by Kuklewicz, Pollock states that the grant is open to the whole State and is pretty competitive.
- A resident (Mrs. Ryan) shares different stories in which speeders nearly caused accidents, and asks why this issue is not addressed with capital improvement funds.
- A resident shares that drivers go down School Street at more than 50 mph and she has almost been killed quite a few times. She has gone to the Police and the Highway Department and states they responded that they will never do anything until somebody gets killed. She asks about a two-way or a three-way stop sign.
- Pollock reviews designs created under the guidance of our traffic engineer and the FRCOG transportation planners and designers.

Follow-up Discussion on Cannabis Odor Complaints Flower power Growers, Inc. - 180 Industrial Boulevard (Discussion continued from August 19)

- Paxton reports that he has received 25 complaints about odor since the last meeting. One observation was that the odor was multi-directional (not related to wind). Several complaints occurred during the company's harvesting time.
- In response to a question by Kuklewicz, Paxton states that the Board of Health members are in favor of continuing to investigate the issue if anything changes, but Paxton says he hasn't found anything to be a nuisance.
- Paxton shares that he received correspondence from the Cannabis Control Commission offering to help facilitate any communications with Flower Power regarding the changes they have made. However, they are not going to do any separate investigation on-site.
- Flower Power CEO Josh Goldman states that they have made two changes: (1) reviewed historical data to learn from the patterns of observations, and (2) engaged a consultant to move in a more quantitative direction.
- Goldman reviews updates that they have made in the company:
 - 1) Looked at wind direction, which indicated that the majority of the observations were made when the wind was not blowing from Flower Power to JaDuke.
 - 2) Looked at timing: most of the odor happens at the very end of the process, the last 10-14 days as the flowers mature. Around 30% of the complaints were received when the flowers were not in that phase. Thus, other sources of potential odor are worthy of consideration.
 - 3) Inspected their equipment.
 - 4) Did a walk-around the facility. There was not a single instance in which they were able to observe anything other than a faint cannabis odor around the facility. What they smelled was the odor neutralizer.
 - 5) Turned up the neutralizer concentration, which resulted in more odor observations.
 - 6) Commissioned an independent entity to test the smell using a gas chromatography. Goldman reviews results of the sampling.
- In response to a question by a resident (Erin), Goldman gives the names of the consultants they have used (Fogco, MicroCool, and Cannabusters).
- Kim from JaDuke states that whether its Ecosorb or cannabis that they are smelling, it's a smell. She also emphasizes that no one knows with 100% certainty whether Ecosorb has any psychoactive materials or whether it is safe for children.
- Kim shares that Yankee Candle had a similar situation regarding complaints of odors, and they hired an environmental consultant who was able to come up with a system to address the issue. Mass DEP also does similar work.
- Kim states that they have yet to be given a definition of "noxious" and "nuisance" in a Town document.
- Lord states he would like to see the report from the consultant that Flower Power used.
- Waynelovich expresses his belief that the Town has a responsibility to protect its citizens and the 150 children at JaDuke.
- *Boutwell makes the motion to direct the Town Administrator to move forward with looking into the cost and feasibility of a third party consultant to discuss the cannabis odor complaints in the Industrial Park area. Seconded by Lord, approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Nay, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Brian McHugh, Director of Community Development, HRA

To authorize Payment #5 to Clayton D. Davenport trucking, Inc. in the amount of \$14,417.00 for FY22-23 Montague CDBG Hillcrest Neighborhood Park Construction Project

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize Payment #5 to Clayton D. Davenport trucking, Inc. in the amount of \$14,417.00 for FY22-23 Montague CDBG Hillcrest Neighborhood Park Construction Project pending receipt of the final close-out documents; and to authorize the Chair to sign the documents. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

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Assistant Town Administrator's Business

- **Authorize Contract of Services with Associated Construction Co. for the CWF Primary Effluent Screw Pump Station Upgrade project. Contract value is \$2,397,461.00 to be funded by existing Town Meeting authorization, grant from USDA Rural Development, and existing ARPA allocation**
Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Assistant Town Administrator to award the Contract of Services to Associated Construction Co. for the CWF Primary Effluent Screw Pump Station Upgrade project; contract value at the base bid of \$2,397,461.00 to be funded by existing Town Meeting authorization, grant from USDA Rural Development, and existing ARPA allocation. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Authorize Contract of Services with General Contracting Solutions, Inc. for the Carnegie Library Basement Rehabilitation project. Contract value is \$149,808.00 to be funded by FY25 Capital Appropriation and existing ARPA allocation**
Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the Contract of Services with General Contracting Solutions, Inc. for the Carnegie Library Basement Rehabilitation project; contract value is \$149,808.00 to be funded by FY25 Capital Appropriation and existing ARPA allocation. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Other project updates**
 - **South Ferry Road Culvert Replacement**
The new culvert has been received and is on-site, and the asbestos pipe has been removed.
 - **Montague Center Library Scrape, Repair, and Paint Window Project**
Larochelle Construction will begin the project on Thursday and expect to have the project done in a timely fashion.
 - **Town Hall Butler Building and Wooden Shed**
We have been working with Associated Building Wreckers to get some of the necessary assurances needed.
 - **11th Street Bridge**
This project went out to bid last week, due October 2nd. We have a pre-bid meeting this Thursday at 9:00 AM. The work will be divided between the DPW and the hired contractor.

Town Administrator's Business

- **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant strategy for stormwater management on the "Hill"**
 - Ramsey reports we were unsuccessful in getting funding for this round.
 - Last week Ramsey and Nolan-Zeller met with the MVP program folks, who gave them some feedback on how to build a more fundable project.
 - The Selectboard is in agreement with working with an engineer to better define a planning scope that helps us identify the scope of the problem.
 - A Request for Expressions of Interest will be due in about a month.
- **Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting**
 - **US Treasury Guidance on ARPA Funds**
On Tuesday we received some new guidance from the US Treasury Department about the spending of ARPA funds. We will check in with our ARPA staff once a month to give them some updates.
 - **Mass Cannabis Control Commission**
The CCC reviewed our host-community agreement with 253 Farmacy. Ramsey will come back to the Board next week with a proposed amendment agreement that reflects the CCC's concerns.
 - **Avenue A Streetscape Project**
The construction for the Avenue A Streetscape Project that was funded with the help of Congressman McGovern will be delayed to start until March; the granite is not due to come in until early December.

Next Meeting:

- Selectboard, Monday, September 23, 2024 at 6:30 PM via ZOOM

Boutwell makes the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye