

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD MEETING

VIA ZOOM

Monday, January 13, 2025 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; Assistant Town Administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller; CWF Superintendent Chelsey Little; Parks and Recreation Director Jon Dobosz; Library Director Caitlin Kelley; Turners Falls Airport Manager Bryan Camden; Town Planner Maureen Pollock; and Airport Commissioner Josh Lively.

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

Approve Minutes: Selectboard Meeting December 9, 2024 and January 6, 2025, if available

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Minutes of December 9, 2024 and January 6, 2025 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

Sewer Commissioners meeting with Chelsey Little, CWF Superintendent

- **Montague Center pump station graffiti and fencing update**
 - The CWF staff has cleaned the graffiti off the Montague Center pump station.
 - Little shares that fencing will be installed. This will be funded from the CWF pump station budget.
- **Declare Surplus Equipment: 1980 400KW Empire Emergency Generator Serial #2031128**

Little declares Surplus Equipment: 1980 400KW Empire Emergency Generator Serial #2031128.
- **Lake Pleasant grinder pump alarms update**

Little shares that grinder pump alarms will be installed at the Lake Pleasant site.
- **Permit Summary for December 2024**

Little displays the Permit Summary for December 2024. We have had low flows. Everything else looks great.
- **Millers Falls Overage/Flow update for 2024**

Little displays and reviews the Millers Falls Overage/Flow for 2024
- **Proposed CWF FY26 Budget and personnel discussion**
 - Little displays and reviews proposed CWF FY26 Budget
 - The Wages line will be updated after the next Special Town Meeting.
 - "Other Wages" covers pager pay.
 - We are going out to bid for a new hauling contract this spring. The amount is level-funded in the budget.
 - Due to the water meter change, Little has added another \$15,000.
 - With regard to the Millers Falls Assessment, we are currently in the middle of renegotiating a contract between Millers Falls and Erving.
 - Discussion ensues regarding the Millers Falls Overage Charge and whether an increase should be built into the budget.
 - Little mentions the position change from Administrative Assistant to Officer Manager. She anticipates the increase to be around \$6,702.
 - Lord feels that the list of duties of the Office Manager needs to be better prepared.

Jon Dobosz, Parks & Recreation Director and Orice Jenkins, Executive Director of Musica Franklin

Request for Special Entertainment License for May 10, 2025 for the Annual Family Funfest at Unity Park from 12:30 PM to 5:00 PM

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Special Entertainment License for May 10, 2025 for the Annual Family Funfest at Unity Park from 12:30 PM to 5:00 PM. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Jessica Atwood, FRCOG Planning Director

Overview of the Rural Downtown District Management Project and proposed one-year pilot program to hire a full-time business coordinator to support Turners Falls, Northfield, and Shelburne Falls. To be funded by a Rural Development Fund Grant awarded to FRCOG

- Pollock shares that the Town has been working with FRCOG in exploring ways to provide more support to downtown Turners Falls, Shelburne Falls, and Northfield Center.
- There will be a follow-up meeting tomorrow night geared towards business and property owners in downtown Turners Falls.
- Atwood gives an overview of the Rural Downtown District Management Project.
- Atwood reviews the proposed one-year pilot program to hire a full-time business coordinator to support Turners Falls, Northfield, and Shelburne Falls.

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Caitlin Kelley, Library Director

- **Announce Town acceptance into the Mass Public Library Construction Program for Carnegie Library, next steps**
 - Kelley shares that we got the grant for the Mass Public Library Construction Program for Carnegie Library. The award is for the design phase. We will be funded for the construction phase as well.
 - The next steps are as follows:
 - Appoint a Library Building Project Steering Committee
 - Hire a Project Manager, then an architectural firm
 - Once we get approval for our design, the State will calculate how much funding we will receive
- **FY26 personnel proposal: proposed Adult Services Coordinator (Grade E) and Library Technician/Assistant (Grade B)**
 - Kelley reviews the proposed positions for an Adult Services Coordinator (Grade E) and a Library Technician/Assistant (Grade B).
 - Kuklewicz states that we need to do some more financial review and get the input from the Finance Committee.
- **Personnel (*not on agenda*)**

Boutwell makes the motion to appoint Ellen Williams to the position of Children's Programming Assistant, Grade B2, effective January 21. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Bryan Camden, Turners Falls Airport Manager

- **Winter Special Town Meeting Special Article Request for \$24,000 from Airport Reserve Fund**
 - Camden summarizes the Winter Special Town Meeting Special Article Request for \$24,000 from Airport Reserve Fund.
 - In response to a question by Lord, Camden states that the overall Retained Earnings balance is just under \$25,000.
 - In response to a question by Lord, Camden states that 16 individuals were interviewed for the intern position, but none met qualifications or were interested in the work.
 - Lord states he is uncomfortable with Camden's decision to spend money outside of what Town Meeting had authorized.
 - Lively expresses support for Camden's decision, noting that it was for the safety of the airport.
 - Kuklewicz suggests quarterly meetings with Camden and/or Airport Commissioners to discuss challenges at the airport.
 - Lord states that the Selectboard wants to support the operational costs of the airport, but emphasizes that consistent, timely communication is important.
 - In response to a question by Lively, Ramsey states that if a department is running over a line item, they should talk to him. He would review the budget with them and, if needed, bring Finance Committee into the loop.
- **FY26 Budget Proposal**

Camden reviews line items that are different from last year's budget (full-time wages, intern position, electricity, fuel oil, building grounds maintenance, equipment repair and maintenance, etc.)

Personnel Board

- **Appoint DPW Groundskeeper Jason Kingsbury to Tree Warden to fill the vacancy. This is a stipend position @ \$147.00/month ending June 30, 2025**

Boutwell makes the motion to appoint DPW Groundskeeper Jason Kingsbury to Tree Warden to fill the vacancy; this is a stipend position @ \$147.00/month ending June 30, 2025. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye
- **Summary Review and discussion of proposed FY26 personnel change proposals from Council on Aging, Libraries, CWF, Cemetery, and Farmers Market. Recap of Wage and Class Study Recommendations**
 - Ramsey reviews the proposed FY26 personnel change proposals from Council on Aging, Libraries, CWF, Cemetery, and Farmers Market.
 - The personnel proposals have a cost of \$46,000.
 - We currently have an estimated surplus of \$93,000 when we look at revenues versus projected expenditures.
 - We need to account for the cost of the three Union contracts and general implementation of the Wage and Classification Study. Those contracts are currently still being negotiated.
 - We may need to look at decreasing the Excess Capacity.
 - Ramsey states that the Wage and Classification Study recommended bumping the Airport Manager position two grades.

Assistant Town Administrator's Business

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- **Review of FY26 Capital Requests**
 - Nolan-Zeller displays and reviews the FY26 Capital Requests.
 - In response to a request by Lord, Nolan-Zeller reviews guardrail maintenance work. Lord suggests talking to Pollock regarding potential funding sources.
 - Ramsey mentions that the FRTA bus stop improvements will be partially funded through the cannabis impact fees. This project is primarily funded by FRTA through a Shared Streets grant.
- **Other Project Updates**
 - Nolan-Zeller states that the updated procurement proposal from FRCOG regarding the CDBG-funded Third and Fourth Street Parking Lot Redevelopment that he meant to discuss this week isn't ready yet.
 - At the next meeting Brian McHugh will be discussing the upcoming round of CDBG funding.
 - Regarding the Avenue A Streetscape Project, materials are being dropped off. Construction will begin around mid-to late March. Nolan-Zeller is in contact with the property owners in the area.

Town Administrator's Business

- **Updates to Special Town Meeting Warrant. Addition of Tree Warden Article (#7). Warrant to be finalized/voted January 27, 2025**
 - Ramsey discusses the addition of the Tree Warden Article onto the Special Town Meeting Warrant.
 - The Finance Committee did a detailed review of the financial Articles and voted to recommend all of them except the Airport Article (they wanted some more information).
 - Kuklewicz quickly reviews each Article on the Warrant.
 - *Boutwell makes the motion to accept all of the eight Articles as presented for the Special Town Meeting on February 12th, and recommend them to the Town Meeting Body. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*
- **FY26 budget development updates**

No updates at present
- **Report on Farren/Montague City Zoning Project kickoff**
 - There was a kick-off meeting with the Town consultants last Friday. The Town has grant funding to hire a zoning consultant to help us develop zoning that reflects the vision that was developed earlier this year with community input for a village center with housing and some mixed uses for the former Farren site.
 - Ramsey asks the Board to give us more time to bring a Zone Change Article to the Fall Special Town Meeting.
 - Kuklewicz suggests putting out a Request for Expressions of Interest with regard to the building.
- **Topics not anticipated in the 48-hour posting**

None

Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining relating to NEPBA, UE, and NAGE Unions, if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the Chair so declares

- The Chair deems that holding this discussion in open session would be detrimental to the Town's position.
- *Boutwell makes the motion to go into Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c.30A, §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining relating to NEPBA, UEW, and NAGE Unions. Seconded by Lord, unanimously approved. Boutwell - Aye, Lord - Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye*

Next Meeting:

Selectboard, Monday, January 27, 2025 via ZOOM