

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 2011
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- Article 1 Appropriation of Funding for Repairs at Montague Center Town Hall**
Article 1 would appropriate \$20,000 to fund repairs at the Montague Center Town Hall Building including but not limited to (1) removing a chimney (down to roof level), (2) capping the same chimney at roof level, (3) providing power venting for the furnace, (4) making necessary repairs to the roof and slates, (5) repairing damage to the ceiling from leaks on the second floor, and (6) making any other necessary masonry repairs.
- Article 2 Authorize Board of Assessors to Negotiate Extension of the Existing Three Year Agreement for Property Values with First Light Hydro**
Article 2 would authorize the Board of Assessors to extend its Three Year Agreement for Property Values with First Light Hydro to include a fourth year due to the reallocation of certification years. Previously, we were scheduled for a DOR certification in 2013. This has now been put off by the State until 2014.
- Article 3 Increase the FY 2012 Appropriation for Information Technology.**
Thirteen of the town's thirty two workstations and the town server need replacement. Of those thirteen workstations, two are known to be seven years old; the others have no known (or at least any readily available) date of purchase. The \$8,200 voted annually to cover computer replacement has been used to initiate a cyclical schedule of replacement. At the current rate of replacement several of these very old workstations will not be replaced for two additional years; and they frequently receive errors caused by their inability to meet the needs of current technology.
- This project will replace the town server with a powerful server capable of functioning in the same manner as the current server for some departments and simultaneously functioning as a terminal server for other departments. The terminal server function allows the replacement of traditional work stations with thin client workstations at half the cost of the traditional work stations. In future years, the cyclical replacements will be converted to thin client work stations.
- Article 4 Authorize the Use of Retained Earnings to Reduce the Sewer Rate.**
Article 4 would authorize the Board of Selectmen to use \$90,000 from the sewer retained earnings account for the purpose of stabilizing or reducing the sewer rates for FY 2012. This article is voted in most years, and is similar to the town's use of free cash to reduce the tax rate.

Article 5 Change in the Method of Financing the Roof Replacement on the WPCF Operations Building

This article would change the method of financing the replacement of the roof on the WPCF Operations Building. Originally (i.e. at the May 7, 2011 Annual Town Meeting), the town voted to fund the entire amount (\$50,000) from Sewer Retained Earnings. Article 5 would change that to \$42,959.20 from Sewer Retained Earnings, with the balance (\$7,040.71) to come from Sewer Enterprise Fund Balance Reserved for Unspent Bonds.

Background: When borrowing for capital projects, the amount borrowed does not always exactly match the final total expenditures. When less money is borrowed then spent, it creates a deficit in the Fund Balance Reserved for Capital Projects. When more money is borrowed then spent, the excess goes to Fund Balance Reserved for Unspent Bonds, and can only be spent on expenses for which the town can borrow. Article 6 uses some of the current \$9,154.75 in the Fund Balance Reserved for Unspent Bonds to close the current deficit in the Fund Balance Reserved for Capital Projects, and Article 5 closes out the remaining balance in the Fund Balance Reserved for Unspent Bonds.

Article 6 Funding of Borrowing Deficit for CSO/Facilities Plan

Article 6 would appropriate \$2,114.04 from Sewer Enterprise Fund Balance Reserved for Unspent Bonds to finance an existing borrowing deficit for the CSO/Facilities Plan Project, voted under Article 16 of the May 5, 2001 town meeting.

Article 7 Vote to Rescind Prior Appropriation for Belt Filter Press

This article would rescind the \$400,000 appropriation and borrowing authority for the purchase and installation of a belt filter press at the WPCF, which was voted under Article 19, May 6, 2000 Annual Town Meeting. This project was incorporated into the Combined Sewer Overflow project.

Article 8 Appropriation to Fund First Year Cost of Arbitration Settlement with Police Union

Article 8 would fund the first year (FY 2011) cost of implementing an arbitration settlement with the IBPO Police Brotherhood Union. The cost would be \$2,850 which represents a one-time, 1.5% bonus payment for individuals at the top step (Step 18) of the salary schedule. A vote to accept the cost for the first year of the settlement constitutes acceptance the entire arbitration settlement. The second year cost is addressed in Article 9, and the third year cost of approximately \$17,650 will be included in the FY 2013 budget. The third year cost includes the above changes plus the elimination of steps 1-5 and all remaining odd steps resulting in a 7-step wage scale (instead of 18 steps) with a higher beginning wage and 4% step increases.

- Article 9 Appropriation to Fund Second Year Cost of Arbitration Settlement with Police Union**
Article 9 would fund the second year cost of implementing an arbitration settlement with the IBPO Police Brotherhood Union. The cost would be \$6,300 for FY 2012. This is for a 1.5% bonus payment for officers who at the top step (Step 18) on July 1, 2011. If Article 8 passes, these changes are automatic. This article would simply provide a funding source for the changes.
- Article 10 Appropriation to Fund Costs of Financing the FY 2011 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the TOMEA Union.**
This article would fund the costs of financing the FY 2011 collective bargaining agreement with the TOMEA union. These costs are calculated at \$2,700.
- Article 11 Appropriate Additional Funds for Pump Station Survey**
The Town appropriated \$20,000 for a pump station survey at the May 7, 2011 annual town meeting. Since that time, the WPCF has determined that the actual costs will be closer to \$30,000. This article would appropriate an additional \$10,000 for this purpose from sewer retained earnings.
- Article 12 Appropriate Funds for Operations and Maintenance at the Montague Center School Building**
Article 12 would appropriate the sum of \$15,000 for operations and maintenance costs at the Montague Center School Building. This appropriation assumes that the town will continue to own the building during the remainder of the fiscal year. The costs include heat, electrical and security.
- Article 13 Appropriate Funds to Reimburse Gill-Montague Regional School District for Capital Costs Incurred in the Maintenance of the Sheffield School Building.**
This article would appropriate \$21,910.52 to reimburse the Gill-Montague Regional School District for costs incurred in the rehabilitation of the Sheffield Boiler Works. The problem was discovered after the Annual Town Meeting had been completed, and the work had to be done prior to the reopening of school. Our lease agreement with the School District provides that the Town is responsible for capital improvements, subject to town meeting appropriation.
- Article 14 Pay Prior Year Bill to Police Department**
Article 14 would appropriate the sum of \$600 to pay a prior year longevity payment to a police officer.

- Article 15 Rescind Prior Year’s Appropriation and Borrowing Authorization for Infiltration and Inflow Work**
Article 15 would rescind the authority to appropriate and to borrow \$150,000 for the purpose of correcting inflow and infiltration problems in the Unity Street, High Street, and L Street areas, as voted as Article 32 at the May 1, 1999 Annual Town Meeting. This appropriation is no longer necessary because the town opted to implement a different strategy for accomplishing the same objectives under the CSO/WPCF Facility Upgrade Project that was recently completed.
- Article 16 Rescind Prior Year’s Appropriation and Borrowing Authorization for Infiltration and Inflow Work**
Article 16 would rescind the authority to appropriate and to borrow \$150,000 for the purpose of correcting inflow and infiltration problems in the Unity Street, Millers Falls Road, Seventh Street, High Street, Marshall Street, Avenue B, L Street, and Montague Street areas. This appropriation is no longer necessary for the same reasons cited in Article 15 above.
- Article 17 Appropriate Funds for the Purpose of Providing a Town Match for Grant to Implement Brown Fields Work at Strathmore Mill**
Article 17 would appropriate and authorize the borrowing of \$130,000 to provide a town match to a grant that would fund the remediation and removal of asbestos and non-asbestos containing debris from the 2007 arson that destroyed Strathmore Building #10 (approximately 2000 tons of material). This activity supports two existing industries whose operations have been obstructed by this material and in addition is a critical first step in the Strathmore Mill’s road to redevelopment. The town’s contribution will leverage a \$200,000 sub-grant from the FRCOG Rural Brown Fields Clean-up Fund. Total project estimated cost is \$340,000.
- Article 18 Authorize the Board of Selectmen to Enter Into 30 Year Lease Agreement for Land at the Landfill Site.**
This article would authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a 30 year lease to private vendors interested in developing a solar energy generation facility on the capped portion of our landfill.
- Article 19 Amend Zoning to Include Regulations for Solar Facilities and Installations**
This article will add a new section to the zoning by-law that will allow for the orderly development of solar energy installations and facilities and to minimize the environmental impact of such facilities. Under the proposed amendment accessory solar installations are allowed in all districts with conditions. Ground mounted solar facilities over 2,000 square feet in area are subject to special conditions and are allowed by right in Industrial (ID) and by special permit in Historic Industrial (HI), and Recreational-Education (RE) and Unrestricted (U) districts.

Article 20 Amend Zoning By-Laws by Dissolving the Limited Business District and Rezoning the Two Remaining Limited Business District lots.

There are currently two parcels that comprise the Limited Business District that combine for a total of 0.09 acres. In an effort to streamline the by-laws, the Planning Board proposes that Assessors Map 11 Lot 21 at 5 Carlisle Avenue be rezoned to Residential (RS) and Map 11 Lot 140 off Millers Falls Road be rezoned to Neighborhood Business (NB). Limited Business District will be removed from Section 5 of the By-Law.

Article 21 Authorize Board of Selectmen to Convey Properties in Millers Falls that Were Recently Taken by the Town under Tax Title Foreclosure.

Article 21 would authorize the Board of Selectmen under Chapter 40, Section 15 to convey on terms and conditions as determined by the Board of Selectmen, an interest in the parcel of land identified on Town Assessor Map 29, Lot 116, but also known as 26-28 East Main Street, 30 East Main Street and 34 East Main Street in Millers Falls, to include all land and buildings.

Article 22 Appropriate \$400,000 into the Town Stabilization Fund

Article 22 would transfer the sum of \$400,000 from Free Cash into the Town Stabilization Fund.

Article 23 Appropriate the Sum of \$7,895 to Fund a Planning Project at the Turners Falls Airport in Anticipation of \$150,000 in Federal and State Grants.

Article 23 would authorize the appropriation of \$157,895 for the purpose of funding a Planning Project consisting of archeological investigation for the completion of Phase Two of two phases for the Runway Reconstruction Project at the Turners Falls Airport. The total cost of the project is \$157,875, with \$150,000 funded from state and federal grants, and the balance of \$7,895 to come from Airport Retained Earnings.