

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
APRIL 4, 2012
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- ARTICLE 1** **Funding for FY 2012 Collective Bargaining Settlement.** Article 1 would appropriate the sum of \$3,331 for the purpose of funding a settlement with the TOMEA Union for the current fiscal year (FY2012). It will be used to fund a 1 ½ % wage increase for those employees at the top step of their salary scale (step 18). It would also fund changes in longevity payments.
- ARTICLE 2** **Funding of FY 2012 Salary Payments to Non-Union Employees.** Article 2 would appropriate the sum of \$1,908 for the purpose of funding a 1 ½ percent salary increase for two employees who are currently at their top step (step 18). The town’s policy in the past has been to maintain parity between the union and non-union employees. This would do this, assuming that Article 1 is approved.
- ARTICLE 3** **Funding of Pay and Classification Study.** This article would fund the cost of performing a pay and classification study for the town. The last time this was done was eleven years ago. Typically such studies are performed every 5-7 years. There is evidence that suggests that our current salary schedule may be out of date and is causing greater turnover. The most compelling evidence for the appropriation is in the police department where arbitrators reviewed comparable wage data and concluded that the bottom six steps and every other step on our scale should be eliminated. Pay and classification studies aim to establish salary schedules that enable the town to be competitive with other communities and to attract and retain personnel. They also are designed to ensure equity between town employees.
- ARTICLE 4** **Appropriate Supplemental Funds for the Reserve Fund.** Article 4 would appropriate \$20,000 for the purpose of augmenting the reserve fund. The current balance in the reserve fund is \$1,500.
- ARTICLE 5** **Supplemental Funding for the FY 2012 Legal Budget.** This article would appropriate \$15,000 for the purpose of supplementing the FY 2012 legal budget. Although the Finance Committee recently approved a \$15,000 reserve fund transfer, the town will still need an additional \$15,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year. The driving force behind this request is an excess amount of unanticipated litigation.
- ARTICLE 6** **Appropriation of Funds for the Preservation of Town Records.** Article 6 would appropriate the sum of \$9,000 for the purpose of preserving town records dating from 1754 – 1925. This project would also involved digitization of town records.
- ARTICLE 7** **Funding of Supplemental Budget for Dispatch.** This article would appropriate \$9,000 for the purpose of funding a supplemental budget to cover a projected deficit in FY 2012.

ARTICLE 8 **Supplemental Appropriation for the Water Pollution Control Facility.** This article would appropriate \$40,000 for the purpose of funding a supplemental budget for the WPCF, to cover a projected deficit in FY 2012.

ARTICLE 9 **Funding for the Installation of a Water Line and Removal of a Fuel Tank at the Montague Center School Building.** Article 9 would appropriate the sum of \$25,000 for the purpose of funding the installation of a water line and removal of a fuel tank at the Montague Center School Building. The town is currently negotiating with a developer who is interested in purchasing the School and converting it into market rate, energy efficient rental housing. The two items that will be funded under this article are considered critical to the successful closing of this deal. If the developer proceeds with this project the town will not only realize \$50,000 in acquisition costs, but also avoid approximately \$30,000 in annual operating costs as long as the town owns the building.

ARTICLE 10 **Funding of Energy Efficient Lighting at the Shea Theater.** This article would appropriate \$14,000 for the purpose of installing LED lighting at the Shea Theater. The work will enable the Shea to save about \$4,000 per year in electric costs and between \$300-\$500 annually on tungsten lamp bulbs, and to reduce maintenance costs in excess of \$10,000 over the life of the LED's (12 to 15 + years). The estimated payback of this work is just over 3 years. The savings that will be realized by this project will significantly impact the viability of the theater in the future by reducing its annual operations and maintenance budget.

ARTICLE 11 **Appropriate Local Match for Airport Improvement Grant.** Article 11 would appropriate \$12,500 for the purpose of funding the town's share of a federal grant that will finance preliminary Design/Tribal Investigation associated with the completion of a phase of the perimeter fencing project at the Turners Falls Airport. The total project cost is \$250,000, with the town expected to pay 5% of cost.

ARTICLE 12 **Funding for the Henry Waidlich Conservation Fund.** This article would appropriate \$10,000 for the purpose of capitalizing the town's conservation fund. The town uses conservation funds to finance the local match for purchasing development rights on prime agricultural land under the Agricultural Restriction Program (APR). Thus far, the town has preserved 1,227 acres of land under either the APR or conservation restriction (CR) programs. In order to leverage State funds, towns are expected to come up with as much as a 20% match. Recently, as the fund's balance decreased, the state allowed Montague to participate with a 10% match, but there is no guarantee that it will continue to allow this practice in the future. The current balance in the fund is \$19,501. At one time, the town appropriated \$10,000 into this fund every year. This practice ceased when the town experienced budgetary problems.