

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
MAY 5, 2012
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

ARTICLE 1

Funding for the Restoration or the Demolition of the Former Cumberland Farms Building on 38 Avenue A. This article would appropriate the sum of \$30,000 for the purpose of either remediating the mold and fixing the roof of the former Cumberland Farms building or as an alternative, tearing the building down. The property is under the control and, will ultimately, be under the ownership, of the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (MEDIC). This article would provide the EDIC with the flexibility in handling the disposition of this property. The EDIC is currently under an order from the Building Department to remediate a mold problem in the building and to repair a leaking roof. It is also currently entertaining an offer from the Montague Cable Television (MCCI) to lease the facility. As a condition of the lease, that organization would undertake the needed remediation at its own cost, as well as rehabilitate the building for its future use. If that were to occur, the town would have no immediate financial liability. In the event that the EDIC is unable to negotiate a lease arrangement with MCCI, however, the EDIC would be faced with the prospect of either funding the remediation itself, at a cost of approximately \$15,000, or in the alternative tearing the building down at a cost of approximately \$32,000. Because bid prices slightly exceeded the \$30,000 figure contained in the warrant, there will be a need to amend that number on town meeting floor.

ARTICLE 2

Accept Donation of St. Anne's Rectory Building on Sixth Street in Turners Falls. Article 2 would authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept a donation of the St. Anne's Rectory Building in Turners Falls. The building is currently owned by Citi Mortgage Inc. of Fallon Missouri. Although the owner has not as yet made an offer to donate this property to the town, this action was recommended by the staff of the Citi Mortgage organization and is currently awaiting a formal decision by its board. If the committee votes not to donate, this article will be withdrawn at town meeting. If the decision is still in abeyance on May 5, 2012, it is recommended that the vote still be authorized to avoid the need for a special town meeting later in the Spring or summer.

There are obviously many risks associated with the acceptance of this property, but, if experience is any teacher, these risks are far outweighed by the danger of this property falling into the wrong

hands. If we have learned anything from our previous experiences it is that securing early control of properties is in the town's best interest. The worse case scenario for the property would be for it to remain vacant for a long period of time, to fall into significant disrepair, to come into town ownership (through tax title) when it is too late to save, and to force the town to spend significant funds to demolish the building. This scenario has been played out many times in Montague – for Strathmore, “J” Street Apartments, the Rod Shop and most recently, Cumberland Farms Building. If the town accepts this property, we would immediately assess its potential use for town use. One possible town use is as a senior center. This would need to be explored. If a town use is not an option, we would place the property into our very successful commercial homesteading program. Under this program we would put out a request for proposals to developers who would be able to secure the property for a significantly reduced purchased price in return for a solid commitment to invest funds in the rehabilitation of the property and the creation of jobs. This model was used in the development of the Ristorante DiPaolo and the Northeast Foundation for Children Seminar Center, which leveraged \$900,000 in private investment, created a significant number of jobs, and contributed significantly to the Turners Falls Revitalization.

ARTICLE 3

Funding for Replacement of Flags. Article 3 would appropriate the sum of \$1,910 for the purpose of purchasing flags and accessories for use throughout the community. The town installs American flags for display from Memorial Day, through July 4th and Veterans Day. The condition of flags has deteriorated to the point where many need to be replaced.