

Montague SELECTBOARD MEETING
Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376
Monday, October 18, 2021

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM. Present were Selectpersons Rich Kuklewicz (Chair), Chris Boutwell, and Matt Lord, Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Executive Assistant Wendy Bogusz, Board of Health members Al Cummings (Chair) and Melanie Ames Zamojski,

VIMEO Meeting Link: <https://vimeo.com/635878358>

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

Approve Minutes: Selectboard Meeting October 4 and 12, 2021

Boutwell makes the motion to approve the Selectboard Meeting Minutes for October 4 and 12, 2021 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

Dave Harmon comments on the budget process: Has been helping Library with their budget this past year and is also a Town Meeting Member. This is the first time seeing the budget from the other side and for the past several years we have been working with a level service budget and working hard to keep expenses down. Then going to Town Meeting and seeing there was such a surplus as an example to purchase the robotic camera for the DPW when the question came up how is this going to be funded and it was from free cash, the reason given was "because the money was there" in part because of tight budgeting. I feel like when I was advocating to keep this budget really minimal and then to see there is a surplus and then it goes off in lots of other places all to benefit the Town. Doesn't see where the impetus for keeping the budgets that tight each year. Maybe there could be a mechanism to let some of that money go back to different departments for use rather than just be used for large expenditures. Doesn't feel anything is going wrong, but feels from his experience that things could go a little bit better. Steve will have a conversation with Dave at a later date.

Montague Board of Health

Board of Health Chair opens the meeting at 6:35 PM, roll call taken. Al Cummings and Melanie Zamojski Present

Review of Montague COVID Case Counts and Trends

- Cummings goes over Montague COVID-19 Weekly Update announcing 6 new cases for reporting period October 10, to October 16, 2021
- Ellis gives overview of Franklin County numbers details can be found here: <https://www.publichealthwm.org/covid-19/data/franklin>

Review Notice of COVID-19 Emergency Order: Indoor Mask Requirements

- Indoor Masks to be brought back before the Board on November 1, 2021
- Lord would like to hear input from businesses regarding mask mandate being rescinded then back on two weeks later and their thoughts on how this should be handled
- Dave Harmon would like to know what the goal of the Board of Health is regarding if the mask mandate is to protect the most vulnerable in our Town, (unvaccinated children, people who are immune-compromised) or across the Board? He has not heard beyond simple numbers and would like to know what the goal is. Especially since we will continue to see these ups and downs for a while and as mask mandates become less and less effective when you put them on and take them off.
- Kuklewicz states we don't have firm data, and it was the Selectboard that voted for the mask mandate

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Misty Jacques & Anya Jacobson, Bliss Life Foundation

Use of Public Property: G Street & 10th Street (The Patch), October 31, 2021, 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM, Halloween Trick or Treating; Entertainment License, G Street & 10th Street (The Patch), October 31, 2021, 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM

- Jacques goes over her request for the event. Would like to have one way traffic and block off traffic on 10th Street, has not received permission to use power company property yet, discussion regarding parking, and has spoken to the insurance company and can get insurance.
- Chief Williams: Misty came in and talked with them today, pointed her in the right direction for permitting, If she can't get an entertainment permit, people can play music in their own yards

Lord makes the motion to approve the request for Registration for Assembly, Public Demonstration, or use of public property to Misty Jacques on October 31, 2021 to effect the road closures on 10th Street (as noted on colorful attached plan) pending signature from the Police Chief and a certificate of insurance being received naming the Town as additional insurer. Seconded by Boutwell, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz – Aye

Lord makes the motion to approve the entertainment application on October 31, 2021 from Noon to 8:00 PM on the closed section of 10th Street pending approval from the Police and Fire Chiefs as well as receiving the certificate of liability Insurance. Seconded by Boutwell, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Board of Health adjourns the meeting at 7:09 PM

Personnel Board, Appoint Kelly Harris, Per-diem Dispatcher, \$21.00/hr, effective 10/19/21

Lord makes the motion to appoint Kelly Harris as per-diem Dispatcher at \$21.00/hour, effective October 19, 2021. Seconded by Boutwell, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Ferd Wulkan, Request for support of Single Payer Health Care at the legislative committee hearing

- Wulkan asks the Selectboard to support single payer health care legislation in anticipation of an October 26th Joint Committee on Health Care Financing Hearing on the “Act Establishing Medicate for all in Massachusetts”.
- Single payer health care would get rid of competing health insurance companies in favor of a single public or semipublic agency and allow residents the right to pick their own doctors and hospitals without co-pays.
- It was stated the state would benefit financially saving \$11 billion and acquiring greater bargaining power with pharmaceutical company's.
- The Board felt it was too early to take a vote and more information was needed. They offered the towns assistance with setting up Zoom meetings.

Town Meeting Debrief, Outcome and any necessary follow-ups

- Ellis states Town Meeting was wonderful, thanks FCTS, MCTV, Paul Interlande and Richard Ruth, partners and Town Staff for all their help to pull this off

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- Kuklewicz would like to see a letter sent to the FCTS, especially the Facilities Dept. Joe Maseski to thank them for their continued hospitality and they are a great partner for the Town.
- Ellis has sent a note to one of the Asst. Secretaries of Housing and Economic Development letting them know we are really gratified to find a path forward with the 5th Street pedestrian bridge we're going to continue to see whether there's any ability to get some kind of additional contingency funds to cover the bid overrun that we're paying for. I'm sure we're one of many communities that's dealing with these issues and I'd love to see the State apply some of its COVID relief funds to topping up its grants that were awarded prior to the changed market conditions
- Lord thought it would be lovely to have the meeting at Unity Park so people could walk to the meeting. Kuklewicz pointed out we would have to rent a tent which is very expensive.

Request to transfer \$2,000 from CD Discretionary Unallocated (225-5-184-5200) to CD Downtown Beautification (225-5-184-5233)

These are from old block grant funds from years ago, in some instances, when properties are sold the money gets replenished into the account. There is approximately \$30,000 in that account presently. When the Planning Dept. lacked sufficient funds for the plantings in Spinner Park we sought a path to get there not knowing the DPW also used this account to replenish a planter on the other side of Town so we went into the red in this account. We like to have \$1,000 in this account so we can do strategic improvements in the downtown.

Boutwell makes the motion to authorize the request to transfer \$2,000 from CD Discretionary Unallocated (225-5-184-5200) to CD Downtown Beautification (225-5-184-5233). Seconded by Lord, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Walter Ramsey, Town Planner

Issue notice of award for the 5th Street Pedestrian Bridge and Infrastructure Improvement Project to David G. Roach & Son's, Inc. for the base bid \$2,338,664.50

The Town has bid the project, we have a low bidder and now we have a budget to do the project. We have a written recommendation from McMahon Associates, our engineering consultant on the project who did the vetting of the low bidder, which is David G. Roach & Son's, Inc. and they are prequalified by MassDOT and there were no red flags with their reference checks. The recommendation is to award the lowest base bid of \$2,338,664.50

Boutwell makes the motion to issue the notice of award for the 5th Street Pedestrian Bridge and Infrastructure Improvement Project to David G. Roach & Son's, Inc. for the base bid \$2,338,664.50. Seconded by Lord, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz - Aye

Authorize Downtown Winter 2021-2022 Overnight Parking Program. Permits Available starting Monday November 1

- Recommending continuing winter overnight parking program as has been done over the last two years without any changes. We've seen an increase in participation in the program and it's been a success. Program to run December 1 to April, 2022.
- The town has applied for a downtown parking management study which will look at the overnight parking policy; we are awaiting on the announcement of funding so we can review the policy and make updates if necessary

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Town Administrator's Report

GMTA Building Lease and Sale Update

- GMTA Committee met last week and we're hoping FRTA will get good construction bids so the project can move forward. Everything is starting to align for when the FRTA no longer needs the FRTA building.
- Montague's position has been to get rid of the building once it is no longer needed by FRTA. We are putting together a lease document that can be carried forward if we begin to start the sale process of the building.
- I left the meeting assured that the City of Greenfield shares Montague's sensibility that we do not want to disrupt FRTA daily operations.

State Level Redistricting Update

- Montague will not see a change in Representation.

FCTS Collective Bargaining Representative

- Brian Keir of Bernardston was named as the Municipal Collective Bargaining Representative for the Franklin County Technical School District for collective bargaining purposes.

Topics not anticipated in 48 hour posting

- There will be one lane closure or complete closure from the white bridge going over to the hill by Stop & Shop on Thursday, October 21 for milling and again on Thursday, November 4th for paving.
- The sidewalk work on Turnpike Road and Montague Street is going very well and moving quite rapidly, but unfortunately I've seen at least one place where they poured concrete around redundant poles that had not been removed by the power company yet. I ask that we reach out to Eversource stating our displeasure that double poles still remain. Kuklewicz states he will not vote for any new poles in Town until he sees progress.
- Ellis has set up a meeting with our community representative for tomorrow.

Anticipated executive session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a) (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Selectboard's bargaining position (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America)

Boutwell makes the motion at 7:52 PM to go into executive session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a) (3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Selectboard's bargaining position (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America). Seconded by Lord, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Lord – Aye, Kuklewicz – Aye

Boutwell makes the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 PM. Seconded by Lord, approved unanimously. Boutwell – Aye, Nelson – Aye, Kuklewicz – Aye.