

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
SEPTEMBER 29, 2016
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- ARTICLE 1. Amend "Schedule I - Elected Officials" as Adopted at the May 7, 2016 Annual Town Meeting.** This article would amend the vote taken under Article 4 of the May 7, 2016 Annual Town Meeting establishing FY 2017 salaries for the elected officials (Treasurer/Collector and Town Clerk). The amendment would increase the amounts voted at the Annual Town Meeting by 1%, bringing them into line with the salary increases being requested at this meeting for non-union appointed officials and the three labor unions.
- ARTICLE 2. Amend "Schedule II --Appointed Officials" as Adopted at the May 7, 2016 Annual Town Meeting.** This article would amend the vote taken under Article 5 of the May 7, 2016 Annual Town Meeting establishing FY 2017 salary ranges for the non-union appointed officials. The amendment would increase the amounts voted at the Annual Town Meeting by 1% bringing them into line with salary increases being requested at this meeting for elected officials and the three labor unions.
- ARTICLE 3. Appropriate Funds for the Settlement of the FY 2017 Police Contract.** This article would appropriate \$18,050 for the purpose of funding the implementation of the collective bargaining agreement with the International Brotherhood of Police Officers for FY 2017, with Increases to be paid retroactively to July 1, 2016. Change includes a 1% wage and increases in payments to K-9 officers for time spent caring for the K-9s.
- ARTICLE 4. Appropriate Funds for the Settlement of the FY 2017 TOMEA Contract.** This article would appropriate \$16,100 for the purpose of funding the implementation of the collective bargaining agreement with the Town of Montague Employee Association for FY 2017, with increases to be paid retroactively to July 1, 2016. Change includes a 1% wage increase and increases in longevity pay.
- ARTICLE 5. Appropriate Funds for the Settlement of the FY 2017 U.E. Contract.** This article would appropriate \$100 for the purpose of funding the implementation of the collective bargaining agreement with the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, local 274 for FY 2017, with increases to be paid retroactively to July 1, 2016. Changes include a 1% wage increase, increases in longevity pay and increases in pager/on call pay. Only \$100 is requested because the cost can be absorbed in the budget due to vacancies.
- ARTICLE 6. Appropriate Funds for Increases to Non-Union Salaries in FY 2017.** Article 6 would appropriate \$7,004 for the purpose of funding FY 2017 salary increases for Non-Union personnel commensurate to those being requested today at this meeting for the three labor unions and elected officials, with the increases to be paid retroactively to July 1, 2016. This represents a 1% wage increase.
- ARTICLE 7. Appropriate Funds to Cover the Additional Salary Needs During the Training Period of a New Treasurer/Collector.** This article would increase the appropriation voted for the Treasurer/Collector Department at the May 7, 2016 Annual Town Meeting by \$4,500.

The current Treasurer/Collector is retiring at the end of November and wants to train the new Treasurer/Collector for two months. The current budget cannot absorb all of the additional cost, and the training is considered to be very important.

- ARTICLE 8. Appropriate Funds for the Creation of Additional Classroom Space at the Hillcrest School.** This article would appropriate \$60,000 for the purpose of restructuring the stage area at the Hillcrest School to add classroom space.
- ARTICLE 9. Appropriate Funds for the Replacement of Pillars at the Sheffield School.** This article would appropriate \$10,000 for the purpose of replacing pillars in the front of the Administration Office at the Sheffield Elementary School. The pillars are rotting and in poor condition.
- ARTICLE 10. Appropriate Sewer Retained Earnings for the Purpose of Reducing Sewer Rates.** This article would appropriate \$200,000 from Sewer Retained Earnings for the purpose of reducing sewer rates. Even if the town meeting approves this article, and it also rescinds Article 20 of the May 7, 2016 Annual Town Meeting as requested today in Article 11, the sewer rates would still increase by 17% due to an unanticipated decline in other sewer revenues (e.g. from taking in sludge from other communities).
- ARTICLE 11. Rescind Article 20 of the May 7, 2016 Annual Town Meeting.** This article would rescind the appropriation of \$200,000 from sewer user fees into the sewer capital stabilization fund. When this appropriation was voted in May, it was based on the assumption that in FY 2017 the town would continue to generate the same level of revenues from taking in sludge from other communities that it had in the prior fiscal year; and that it would be prudent to set aside a portion of these revenues into the sewer capital reserves. Since that time the town has had to significantly reduce its sewer revenue estimates for FY 2017 because the sewer plant is expected to generate much less revenue from sludge. This is due to staffing and other issues.
- ARTICLE 12. Appropriate Funds for the Purpose of Purchasing and Equipping a Vehicle for the Police Department.** This article would appropriate \$27,000 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a vehicle in the Police Department. This vehicle would be unmarked and used by the detectives.
- ARTICLE 13. Appropriate Funds for the Purpose of Purchasing and Installing Permit and Inspection Software in the Building and Health Departments.** This article would appropriate \$28,100 for the purpose of purchasing and installing permit and inspection software and equipment for the Building Inspector and Board of Health, including one year of technical support and the payment of all costs incidental. Montague is one of very few towns still issuing building and zoning permits manually. The total startup cost of \$28,100 includes \$11,600 for software, setup, data conversion and training and \$16,500 as the first year's annual license/support fee. Use of the software will greatly increase the speed, accuracy, completeness and coordination of these permits and would also ensure any required review and approval of other town departments.
- ARTICLE 14. Appropriate Funds for the Purpose of Purchasing and Installing a Phone System in Town Hall, and the Wiring for the Phone System and Other Technology.** This article

would appropriate \$25,000 for the purpose of purchasing and installing a phone system for the Town Hall, and purchasing and installing wiring for the phone system and other technology. The current phone system used by the Town Hall dates to 2005, and some phones need to be replaced but replacement phones are no longer available. New wiring is needed to install new phones using current technology, and to connect each phone to a central switch in the Town halls server room. It was also felt that it made sense to install/update dedicated wiring for each computer and printer at the same time since the wires will all run along the same paths. The actual phones, related setup, and additional hardware costs are estimated to cost \$6,000 and the wiring for the phones an additional \$6,000. Wiring for the additional data connections is estimated at \$15,000, but combining the wiring projects is expected to reduce the total cost resulting in a final combined cost of \$25,000. The new phone system is also expected to reduce the monthly cost of phone bills for the town.

ARTICLE 15. Appropriate Funds into the Town Stabilization Fund. This article would appropriate \$73,346 into the Town Stabilization Fund. This would bring the total balance of the Town Stabilization Fund up to 5% of the town's general operating revenue, the minimum level recommended by with the Town's financial policies.

ARTICLE 16. Montague Intervention in DPU Docket 16-103. This article would repurpose \$20,000 in funding that was appropriated, but not expended, under Article 33 of the May 7,2016 Annual Town Meeting to fund the town's participation in DPU Docket 16-103, a proceeding aimed at ending Berkshire Gas Company's moratorium on natural gas hookups in Montague and surrounding communities. (a detailed explanation of this proceeding is contained in an attached handout)