

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE, BOARD OF HEALTH, AND SELECTBOARD
MEETING MINUTES
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019
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The Chair opens the meeting

- Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room
- **Finance Committee members present:** John Hanold, Fred Bowman, Jen Audley, Chris Menegoni, and Michael Naughton. Greg Garrison and Richard Widmer were absent.
- **Montague Selectboard members present:** Chris Boutwell and Michael Nelson. Richard Kuklewicz was absent.
- **Board of Health members present:** Chris Boutwell and Michael Nelson.
- **Others present:** Town Administrator Steve Ellis, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, Director of Planning and Community Development Walter Ramsey, Director of Health Gina McNeely, and DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron
- The Vice Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCTV and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. No one else was recording the meeting.

Minutes

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of February 6, 2019.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectboard Moved:

To approve the minutes of February 6, 2019.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectboard Grant Authorization

The Town was awarded a Complete Streets Grant in the amount of \$311,360. The grant must be expended by June 30, 2019.

Selectboard Moved:

To execute the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Complete Streets Grant award in the amount of \$311,360, and authorize the chair to sign the grant award and necessary documents.

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Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Board of Health Budget Request

The main change in the Board of Health Budget is a requested increase of \$26,160 in the public health nurse line item in order to hire a part-time town nurse. The current budget of \$4,000 only allows for communicable disease tracking, which we pay the Town of Greenfield to do. The attached Board of Health Questions and Answers provides most of the relevant information.

Additional Discussion:

- Ms. McNeely said it's possible that a nurse could be shared with one or two other towns. This would allow a full-time position with funding shared between communities.
- Mr. Naughton asked for feedback from the Board of Health and Selectboard. Mr. Boutwell said it's been a topic of discussion for years, and there's been difficulty with getting work done with only a 5 hour per week nurse. Now that a section of the Farren is closing, the board is getting more requests for public nurse services, primarily health checks. It's been 5 years since we last had even a 5 hour/week nurse.
- Mr. Nelson noted that there are unfunded state mandates in addition to service requests. Emergency management requires a nurse for tracking communicable diseases. All towns in state need to have emergency plans for public health emergencies, which a nurse could help with. Our current plans are at least 10 years out of date.
- Mr. Boutwell said that use of a FRCOG health agent was considered, but the cost of over \$90/hour is too high.
- Mr. Hanold noted the current vacancy of the Health Inspector and asked what the staffing plan was. Mr. Nelson said the initial plan was to hire new a new inspector, but due to Ms. McNeely's upcoming retirement, the plan changed to hire a new Director of Health sooner, using the unspent budget for the Health Inspector to help fund a new director. The new director would shadow Ms. McNeely for a few months prior to Ms. McNeely's retirement, and could hire a new inspector in Fiscal Year 2020.
- Mr. Naughton asked if 25 hours a week was enough for the Health Inspector. Ms. McNeely said there's enough work to support a fulltime position.

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- Ms. Audley said Ms. McNeely's retirement will be a loss for Montague, and that Ms. McNeely would be hard to replace, but noted that this does create an opportunity to decide on the ideal configuration for the Board of Health staffing. Ms. Audley is interested in looking at how other towns manage the department. Her research shows that most towns with nurses aren't comparable to Montague. Mr. Naughton asked Ms. Audley to share her research results through Ms. Olsen via e-mail, and expressed interest in what the ideal staffing model would be.
- Ms. McNeely said that most cities and towns have a local Board of Health. There are also a few health districts in the state, notably the long-time Quabbin health district serving Belchertown, Ware and Pelham. The important thing about districts is that each Board of Health maintains control over its town. Other models have a health commissioner and local boards are lost. There's also the cooperative health service from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), which offers various services cafeteria style. Currently 11 towns use FRCOG health services. Ms. McNeely also noted that boards of health are historically viewed as being expendable.
- Mr. Hanold expressed his disappointment that the Board of Health supported the addition of a Public Health Nurse only when Ms. McNeely's retirement and the re-assignment of the Health Inspector made the issue urgent.
- Ms. McNeely noted that there is increasing need for a nurse to deal with new health issues resulting from climate change and its impact on diseases and emerging pathogens.
- Mr. Boutwell said the Board of Health has considered sharing a director with another community. Mr. Naughton is interested in result of that discussion, which will be on next week's Board of Health agenda.
- Mr. Menegoni asked if a full time person could fill both the nurse and inspector positions. Mr. Nelson said this was considered, noting that the skill sets are quite different, but it's possible with right person.
- Mr. Ellis said he is looking forward to working with the board on the hiring process and said that the best staffing model may influence whom we hire, but whom we hire could also influence staffing decisions.

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DPW Budget Requests

Also see attached DPW Questions and Answers

Additional Discussion:

- After expected retirement at end of 2019, there will be only one employee who was employed when Mr. Bergeron started.
- The new Working Foreman is working out very well.
- Mr. Naughton asked if building maintenance and grounds maintenance are adequately staffed. Mr. Bergeron would like to add two employees who would trim tree canopies with the bucket truck. This is becoming an issue with large trucks. The Grounds staff trims trees between mowing and snow season, but with more staff they could do this all year long. Mr. Naughton asked if this would take more than one or two years to get caught up. Mr. Bergeron said there's enough work to keep two additional people busy each year.
- Mr. Naughton asked about canopy trimming and if the town would be liable for damage caused by low-hanging branches. If a vehicle gets hit by branches, town is liable for damages. Mr. Bergeron added that if staff is hired for canopy work, there must be two for safety – one on the bucket truck and one on the ground.
- Mr. Nelson asked what grounds staff do in winter. They maintain equipment, plow and sand, then some clean sidewalks. The department has extended the area of sidewalks they clear due to public requests.
- Ms. Audley asked about building maintenance. There are two full time employees in this area who do minor repairs and general maintenance. They prioritize their work themselves, and this seems to work out well. Mr. Ellis added that bigger and more complicated jobs are sourced out as our staff doesn't have the time to do this work.

Selectboard Budget Requests

Also see attached Selectboard Departments Questions and Answers

Additional Discussion:

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- Mr. Ellis said that he tried to hold costs constant were possible although some budgets have modest increases. Many things suggested as budget proposals have not been requested. There areas of needs of within the administrative infrastructure, most notably human resources, which is currently scattered among several departments. We have a personnel board but no specific human resources staff. Mr. Ellis recently met with a consultant who said it's an area in which towns tend to not spend, but then are forced to spend after running afoul of labor laws. There is also a lack of procurement capacity beyond the Town Administrator, even with some department heads doing certain levels of procurement. Mr. Ellis has requested an increase in line 5315 (Other Professional/Technical) for procurement assistance.
- Mr. Naughton asked how many people in town have signed up for Code Red. Mr. Ellis will try to find out. Mr. Naughton also asked for more consistency in use of Code Red, as well consistency in where information is provided. Various information is currently provided via Code Red, on town website and on Facebook. Mr. Naughton asked if this is best use of \$6,000, and also asked if notifications could be done by text message.
- Mr. Naughton asked about breakdown of legal expenses and "other matters" of \$4,400. Since there were smaller breakdowns, is this as broken out as much as possible? Mr. Ellis said they may be small or difficult to categorize, and offered to look at coding again at the end of the year.
- Mr. Ellis is very happy with current labor counsel, and noted it is also helpful to have the same firm handle all legal issues.
- Mr. Naughton said his question about employee competency related to the recent issue with the previous police chief being paid for over a year on admin leave, noting that a report was issued with findings, and that not all employees are trustworthy. Mr. Ellis said one thing that is difficult for public officials is when legal requirements don't allow them to be as up front about things as the public would like. Mr. Ellis emphasized that competence is a foundational expectation, but sometimes it is very challenging to remove people because of Civil Service and union protections. While some situations are very black and white, others are less so. Mr. Naughton noted that the situation that prompted his question did not involve union protections.
- Mr. Naughton asked about the food budget in the Selectboard request. Mr. Naughton has an issue with providing snacks for relatively short meeting, and noted that in his experience people attending meetings were expected to bring their own snacks if they wanted them.

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Mr. Ellis respects that different people have different views, but said that when we have day long meetings, exams or investigations, he feels we need to provide food and beverages. This is not essential, but Mr. Ellis thinks it's professional in context, and noted that he has less flexibility than his peers to offer this amenity. Ms. Audley noted that this can affect the workplace climate issue by making meetings a more comfortable work environment.

- Mr. Hanold noted that he had submitted the request for more information regarding expenditures for food for meetings, and the additional information in Mr. Ellis's written response resolved his concerns.
- Mr. Naughton liked the explanation, and is now convinced to support something, but is still uncomfortable providing snacks for a 2-3 hour meeting.
- Mr. Ellis left the meeting at 7:31 PM.

Library Budget Requests –

Suggestions, concerns to be resolved, and what we want to highlight or explain to the public about these budgets.

Suggestions for inclusion in the report:

- Ms. Audley is struck by the library's focus on the condition of their buildings and they don't have capacity or funds to think beyond how to keep those buildings open. In spite of capital request, she doesn't feel we have good overview of the condition of the library buildings.
- The condition of buildings is occupying so much attention of staff and trustees that it's difficult for them to plan for the future. It's important for trustees to have buildings in good shape. One reason they want to keep all three buildings is because they don't want town to be the owner of more buildings that are in such poor condition that they cannot be repurposed.
- Making requested improvements allows more focus on providing services.
- Mr. Hanold suggested that we mention collaborations with other agencies and making most of what they have. There is lots of synergy which allows for programs beyond what they can afford themselves.

Non-Capital Special Article Requests –

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Suggestions, concerns to be resolved, and what we want to highlight or explain to the public about these budgets.

- Airport ADA request information will depend on results of next week's meeting with the Airport.
- DPW discretionary – Mr. Naughton thinks the question is whether to lock in \$100,000 per year or continue the practice of bringing the total amount available at the beginning of each fiscal year to \$100,000.
- OPEB – Mr. Naughton would like to have better idea of what cash value is of having this account in terms of the impact on our bond rating. Mr. Naughton is still not convinced that we aren't better off simply paying benefits as we go.
- Ms. Audley suggested changing some language in the OPEB description to clarify that the town intends to fund OPEB more rigorously, but without necessarily having a formal funding schedule, and will get the new language to Ms. Olsen.

Discuss Questions and Answers –Any additional questions for any department can be e-mailed to Ms. Olsen by 8:30 Tuesday morning, and she will forward them to the appropriate department.

Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements –

Next Meeting Date: – February 20th to meet with the Airport, make recommendation on Schedules I and II, and review what to include in the Finance Committee Report regarding the Board of Health, DPW and Selectboard requests.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

List of Documents and Exhibits:

- Minutes of February 6, 2016
- BOH Questions and Answers
- DPW Questions and Answers
- Selectboard Questions and Answers

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BOARD OF HEALTH Questions and Answers

1. If a nurse is funded, and the former nurse's office is used for legislative presence, where will nurse work?

The legislative representative will not occupy the "nurse's office" so much that she/he interferes with the nurse. Also, I think residents will be pleased to have access to both a nurse and a legislative representative on the first floor of town hall.

The BOH is investigating sharing a full time nurse with at least one other community. If a shared nurse position is funded, the person would hold office hours in Montague and one or two other communities. In Montague the nurse would be required to hold wellness clinics at the senior center and other locations in the villages as has been done before, further freeing up the nurse's office space.

2. What is status of replacing Health Inspector and what is the transition plan for retirement of Director (staff changes, etc)

The BOH decided at their January 2019 meeting to advertise immediately for a director of public health. The intention is to have a new health director in place by late March or early April. That person will work with me until my retirement on or around June 20, 2019. Once the new director is hired we will advertise for a 25/hour/week health inspector. It seems only fitting that the new director should have a say in hiring a health inspector. It makes no sense to hire the director's subordinate.

3. As we consider the request for a Pub Health Nurse, is there a clear distinction between the services performed in each dept?

The BOH decided at their January 2019 meeting to advertise immediately for a director of public health. The intention is to have a new health director in place by late March or early April. That person will work with me until my retirement on or around June 20, 2019. Once the new director is hired we will advertise for a 25/hour/week health inspector.

It seems only fitting that the new director should have a say in hiring a health inspector. It makes no sense to hire the director's subordinate.

4. Is the unmet demand for nursing services enough to justify a benefited 20-hour position, or is the level set at half-time to maximize recruitment choices?

Please see the table below. We need a nurse if we can share the position with another town or two maybe we could do with 15 hours but not less.

Please note that the 2007 column includes only 9 months of date before the nurse left.

CD = Communicable Disease

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Nurses Annual Report	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	TOTAL
TB Infection, No Disease		14	7		1						22
CD Salmonella		2	1	3		4	1	1	1	2	15
CD Disease Pertussis		9	4	2		1	1	1		3	21
CD Hepatitis B		1	2	1			2	2	1		9
CD Varicella		1		1				5	3		10
CD Shigella			1								1
CD E. Coli			1								1
CD Listeria			1								1
Press Releases		36	24	17	22	17	15			8	139
CD Influenza							1	2			3
CD Hep A							1		2		3
Haemophilus Influenza						2					2
Hep A Immunization									5		5
Tetanus Immunizations								4	3		7
GRAND TOTAL FOR EACH YEAR	896	1,712	1,939	1,916	2,009	2,024	2,528	2,266	1,506	1,159	17,955

5. In last year's budget narrative you explained that for safety and other reasons, health dept staff would benefit from having certain items of work-related clothing and equipment, but you did not request funding for those items in last year's request and your request for FY20 doesn't mention them. Why?

Why? Because I simply do not have the time to lobby for personal safety. As you know, on November 1, 2018 I lost our 25 hour per week health inspector. That position has not yet been filled. Right now I am simply trying to put out the biggest fires by myself. Every year we are asked to level fund or cut our budgets. I am so tired of requesting money for important things I just don't want

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to do it anymore. I am tired. It is exciting to see Montague flourish isn't it? Downtown Turners is absolutely bustling. We have new businesses, we have the Great Falls Festival, Mutton and Mead, in 2018 the first annual 3 day RPM fest was held at the Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club, we also Hosted the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival, and a Cannabis Festival in 2018. It is all very exciting but the workload at the Board of Health is untenable. Sometimes magical thinking gets the best of folks and they start thinking a simple computer program meant to handle permitting and some inspections translates into decreasing staff; that is short-sighted and incorrect. Montague is growing, we have more restaurants to inspect, climate change is real, mosquito and tick borne illnesses are on the rise, a flu pandemic is very likely coming, we have a mandate to plan for emergencies, none of this work is going away.

6. Assuming that the "planned retirement" on 6.30.20 is the director, the Health Department is facing a major transition at the end of FY20! Will you and the Board of Health be looking at this and the current health inspector vacancy (and what appears to be a shortage of health directors, inspectors, and nurses regionally) as an opportunity to restructure the department or consider alternative approaches to promoting and protecting public health in our town?

There isn't yet evidence that there is a shortage of health directors, inspectors or public health nurses. What is evident is that a neighboring city, called a town, has so fouled up its mandate to protect public health by enforcing the state sanitary code that it stands alone as an embarrassment across the state. The perceived shortage you mention is a crisis of ignorance not necessarily of available talent and expertise.

I have a question for you: What other departments are you asking to restructure or consider alternative approaches to fulfilling their mandates? Do you believe Montague isn't worthy of a fully functioning, fully staffed Board of Health? Is there something I can do to help you understand the massive amount of work I do for Montague? Or is it the money? It's always the money and yet...I can promise you no one in Montague is drinking their own or their neighbor's sewage, because I know where the wells and septic systems are located. I can affirm that septic systems that have been installed over the past 19 years are indeed protecting our water resources. When you go out to eat in Montague you can know the establishment has been inspected for health and food safety. People are safer in their homes because of me. Abandoned, blighted houses are now rehabilitated and inhabited because of the work I do.

The Board of Health plans on hiring a Health Director as soon as possible and then filling the Health Inspector position for FY20. Having been in local public health for 25 years I strongly urge you to keep the Board of Health intact. Montague requires a full-time Health Director and a full time health inspector. All response is local, I am well aware of the state's push for "shared" services and "regionalization" but in Franklin County we have only the FRCOG trying to grab in towns under their extremely costly and stretched thin "Cooperative Public Health Service". It will be to Montague's peril if the town sells out local public health. We are the second most populace town in the country and our Board of Health has an excellent reputation.

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Right now the FRCOG has one health agent trying to provide services to 10 towns in Franklin County. Even though the towns are small this model is destined to fail because emergencies happen in every town and such light staffing is not conducive to protecting public health. Further, public health is called "local" because that is what it is meant to be. Local health directors know the community well, know the residents, know where things are, know the good contractors and the troubled restaurants, it is imperative to keep Montague's Board of Health.

7. You've clearly stated in your narrative that you believe Montague should re-establish the position of part-time public health nurse that was eliminated 10 years ago. I don't think you will find anyone on this board who thinks public health is unimportant, but we need more information to understand the problem ... and why Montague having its own half-time nurse is the best solution. So, for example, here are some questions you might try to answer: Does the proposal have backing/support from people or committees who understand the issues involved?

There isn't yet evidence that there is a shortage of health directors, inspectors or public health nurses. What is evident is that a neighboring city, called a town, has so fouled up its mandate to protect public health by enforcing the state sanitary code that it stands alone as an embarrassment across the state. The perceived shortage you mention is a crisis of ignorance not necessarily of available talent and expertise.

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8. Do other towns in the region that are demographically comparable to Montague have their own public health nurse?

Yes. As a matter of fact it is a bit embarrassing that given our size we don't have a public health nurse.

9. If so, how does their job description and compensation compare to what you are proposing?

It is exceedingly comparable.

Last year the Finn Comm asked me find out what it would cost to get nurse services from the FRCOG. I did the cost analysis research I got a quote from the "FRCOG's Cooperative Health Service" the cost was \$24,000/year for a 5 hour a week. The figure worked out to \$96.00/hour if one figures in 2 weeks' vacation when the nurse isn't available. I assure you it would be more money in 2020 to hire a nurse from the FRCOG. Fiscally sharing a nurse directly with another town or two is the best way to go. Also, for the purpose of emergency preparedness we need a nurse that is actually available to work on planning for emergencies and working during emergencies. The FRCOG has one nurse for six towns! Where is that individual nurse going to go to help out during a public health emergency? This is truly a terrible model. We share an animal control officer with Greenfield and Deerfield and therefore do not pay the overhead inherent in getting services from the FRCOG or some other entity.

10. Is there evidence of more positive outcomes for towns that have a town nurse, or evidence that Montague residents have experienced adverse effects from not having a public health nurse over the last decade? What services or programs are the town/its residents using currently that would be replaced if we had a town nurse?

I would say depriving residents of services they so fully utilized for almost 10 years is manifestly unjust. Over the last 10 years I have been forced to try to find and keep a 5 hour per week nurse and even with those minimal hours and 3 different nurses people still came to the nurse's offices hours to get vaccinations, medical screenings and referrals.

Over 9 years 9 months in Montague 15, 004 people and received immunizations from our town nurse. There is certainly evidence of positive outcomes for towns that have a nurse. Emergency department visits decrease when a town nurse is available to administer vaccines, annual flu vaccinations are well documented to save lives and decrease hospitalizations from the flu, follow up on communicable diseases and helping people with medication management are extremely important.

The committee is framing questions that are myopic to Montague. This causes you to miss the global impact local public health services have on our community, on our county, on surrounding counties, the state and so on. Public health is huge. We are ethically and morally bound protect and service society. We have a responsibility to take care of our residents, it is unsavory to expect other towns to do what we won't.

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Some services that sorely need to be reinstated include individual screenings for high blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, bone density screening, PT/INR for people on Coumadin/warfarin. Other services include, suture removal, dressing changes, vitamin B12 injections, immunizations, including annual flu clinics, pneumonia, Hepatitis B, TB testing for high risk individuals. Medication management, health education and medical referrals.

The fact that Conway, Gill, Deerfield, Greenfield, Erving, Amherst, Northampton, Ware, and Belchertown all employ town nurses should assuage any concern you might have that I am lobbying for a nurse because I have time to take writing long, desperate missives! □

Other services and activities of Montague's Public Health Nurse.

Health alerts, educational materials and press releases should be provided on a variety of public health topics to Montague residents in several formats. Some topics that were once and will again be covered in press releases were/are: vector-borne illness prevention, mosquito and tick control methods, prevention of Lyme disease, communicable disease follow up, immunization information, healthy homes, rabies control, food and other product recalls.

Health Promotion is a critical component of public health and is addressed in many ways. Besides one to one conversations with individuals requesting advice/information, literature should be frequently given or mailed as additional guidance. Brochure containers were once placed throughout the town of Montague at 6 different sites. The information was changed every month and covered aspects of wellness, health promotion, first aid, and tips on managing many diseases and disabilities. Information fairs were conducted at the Gill-Montague Senior Center during the flu/pneumonia clinic in the fall every year.

Technical and educational support to community agencies would again be provided via collaboration, consultations and hands on service. Agencies served were: Sheffield School, Hillcrest School, Turners Falls High School, Franklin County Technical School, Montague Catholic Social Ministries, Brick House, Survival Center, Greenfield Community College-Nursing Department, Gill-Montague Senior Center, Franklin County Home Care, and Visiting Nurses Association these agencies once served as outreach sites for community education materials, sponsored health fairs, promoted and participated in immunization projects for their students, patients, and staff.

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Department of Public Works Questions and Answers

190-PUBLIC BUILDINGS

1. The budgets for several accounts (for example, Electricity) are significantly higher than historically necessary. Why?

At this point, while there is some buffer, the FY20 requests are not out of line if you go back to the highest expense for each line item in the expense history and add a modest cost escalator.

2. Is there any explanation for why the Police and DPW buildings are now using more water?

There is not a noticeable increase in the water used by the Police Department, but the bill now includes a \$60 sprinkler fee. The DPW usage fluctuates quite a bit year to year, I'm not sure why, but the total cost is still less than \$1K/yr.

420-DPW

1. Retirement Dec 2019 appears to be planned for by existence of THREE Heavy Equipment Operators. Is this so, or is staffing changing?

There have been 3 HEOs. After a retirement a few years ago, the attempt was made to reduce HEOs to 2, but this did not last.

2. Several accounts in the 524# sequence seem underspent in FY2019; is stronger spending expected before July 2020?

Yes.

3. Other accounts in Department 422 rose per "current spending." Current spending does not seem to support all of it.

The following accounts had that description for the increase:

5242 Bldg R & M increased \$500 to \$3,500. The DPW is doing more maintenance on Town buildings. \$4,780 was spent in FY17.

5310 DOT Testing increased \$1,000 to \$3,500. The current budget of \$2,500 was already overspent as of 12/31/18.

5345 Advertising increased \$500 to \$1,500. The current budget of \$1,000 was already overspent as of 12/31/18.

5435 Tools increased \$500 to \$4,000. Last year almost \$7,000 was spent.

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5484 Vehicle Parts/Accessories increased \$5,000 to \$75,000. Last year almost \$79K was spent.

5582 Uniforms/Clothing increased \$1,000 to \$6,000. Last year \$5,800 was spent.

5783 Hoister/Other Licenses increased \$300 to \$1,500. Last year \$1,300 was spent.

661-449- WPCF HIGHWAY

1. What causes the fluctuations in this budget? Do you have a projection for how FY19 will come out?

\$21K of the FY16 expenditures were for expenses related to a special article project that required additional work within the scope of this budget. FY15 expenses included over \$16k to fix a rodder pump. The remaining fluctuations in the past were mostly to do with the natural variance in needs. It's worth noting that in FY19 we started using this budget to do more planned maintenance of the sewer lines, and expect to spend a majority of the budget each year.

2. What happens if this budget is overspent?

Since this budget is appropriated separately, an over expenditure would require either a reserve fund transfer, a town meeting transfer, or an end of year Chapter 44 Section 33B transfer.

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Selectboard Departments Questions and Answers

122-SELECTBOARD

1. Personnel Board – recommendations, if any, for change of wages for appointed Treasurer and Children’s Librarian?

Ms. Seymour is currently on step 3 and would normally go to step 4 for Fiscal Year 2020. Ms. Seymour requested an increase to step 7 for Fiscal Year 2020. On January 28th, the Personnel Board voted to recommend a compromise of the Treasurer/Tax Collector’s request, specifically recommending two step increases each for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 so that Ms. Seymour would be at step 5 for FY2020 and Step 7 for FY2021.

The Children’s Librarian position is more complicated as it is a union position and we are unable to discuss this until a resolution is reached.

2. What is the Code Red system used for? How often is it used? How many people have signed up for it? Could it be used more effectively, and if so how? In these days of Facebook and Twitter, is it still necessary?

Code Red Users

DPW – does not use

Town Clerk -uses code red to announce elections. This could be anywhere from 1 to 5 times a year – depending on the election cycle. Announcements are made the night before an election, stating the hours the polls are open and telling voters what is on the ballot. Receive positive feedback every single time code red is used. Residents like the reminder and always send thanks.

Police -it is an invaluable tool for missing kids/persons, school shooting or any major emergency the town may face and the utilization of code red can keep people informed (elderly) who may not be on social media. I also learned that code red can also be used area specific geographically which is a plus.

Parks & Rec – currently uses twice a year, once for Sawmill Run (for safety) and once for Eggstravaganza (for marketing)

Selectboard Office – has used it less frequently in recent years, but Wendy has used and is familiar with the tool, but Chief Dodge seemed to be the one who really mastered how to use it to target certain areas of town. We may need Code Red to come out to provide new training for key staff.

Steve’s Commentary – I think multi-modal communication is very important because our users are varied and do not necessarily actively pursue Town information and updates. The SB office

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uses the web site and, more effectively (we believe), Facebook, as distribution outlets. I've not actively used Code Red, but think it has its time and place and is an important tool.

3. (Police question not for Chief Williams) Can the residents and taxpayers of Montague be assured that competence is a requirement for employment by the Town, and that incompetence may constitute cause for dismissal?

Before I begin my response, I need to ask whether this question is truly one for the Finance Committee to consider as part of the budget development process. -- Steve

Competence is a foundational expectation of employment with the Town of Montague. In the context of police staff, as this question is framed, we ensure competence by following state requirements for both reserve officers and full time officers. The state's Reserve Academy includes 270 hours of training and its full Full-Time Academy includes 720 hours. Additionally, MPD runs its own Field Training Officer Program for Reserves after they complete the state program, to provide further evidence of their competence. The MPD provides ongoing training and active supervision, which is overseen by the Chief with support from the Lieutenant.

The job of law enforcement personnel is extremely broad and requires a wide range of skills and abilities. It is possible that individual officers may display relative strengths and weaknesses with respect to specific competencies, but we are confident that systems are in place to ensure a high level of individual and collective competence at the onset and over the course of officers' employment with the Town of Montague.

With respect to dismissal, the question may be complicated by protections associated with civil service and union contracts, but those protections do not negate reasonable expectations for job performance.

4. Please explain the need for 5582 Food I am reluctant to recognize Food as a regular requirement. Can the need be met by a pot-luck approach, lest staff meetings become more involved?

The Selectboard Office frequently finds itself as the facilitator of events of such duration that offering coffee and some food items would be appropriate. In the past 12 calendar months, this has included unusual events, such as full day investigative hearings, and more routine events such as full day civil service assessments, as well as multi-hour trainings by outside facilitators. We also hold 8 – 10 department leader meetings of 2+ hours.

Could we make it pot luck? Yes, but it would require coordination and require that staff members spend their off-time (or work time) and their own money for the purpose. In fact, that's how we manage all of our office holiday events, birthdays, and retirement parties. Those are generally celebratory events and it is reasonable to ask staff to support them in that fashion.

I requested the budget because I think it is fair and reasonable to provide a modest amount of food to people when they are in an extended meeting environment (DLT and training) and because it may be required when we have unplanned events such as the hearings and civil

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service proceedings I referenced above, as well as other events such as the full day State Cultural Committee site visit that the Town hosted when the TF village center was being evaluated for possible Cultural District designation.

5. Has there been any progress in determining what would be involved with closing the airport and returning the land to other uses? I ask because at last year's ATM Michael Nelson said that "we" need to get better information, and looking ahead to this year's meeting I'm curious if anyone has followed up on that.

The Town has for many years and on an ongoing basis accepted the standard terms and conditions associated with MassDOT Aeronautics grant programs, which would prohibit the Town from taking action to dissolve or reorganize the airport commission or from closing and re-purposing the airport for a period of 20 years from the time the grant is awarded and accepted by the community. I have not engaged MassDOT or legal counsel to explore the matter with greater specificity, but it is reasonable to assume that the town would need to repay some or all of the grant funds received from MassDOT within the past 20 years. Other funding sources may have similar requirements.

6. The 5315 amount seems to be settling in at a notably higher level than in earlier years. Are you adding work-scope that wasn't there before, or balancing workload by Exec Assistant?

We reduced the request for support for meeting minutes development by 16% to \$5,000 and added \$3,000 to allow for procurement assistance and cost estimating services, as required. This was a formal recommendation of the CIC and was encouraged by the Selectboard during my performance evaluation as a means to reduce the amount of time I devote to procurement and to help us access the expertise needed to get better quotes for building and other projects. I'd considered a small discretionary account that could roll across years, but given the discomfort the Finance Committee has expressed with such accounts, I thought this a better approach.

151-TOWN COUNSEL

1. Please provide a description of how this budget is being spent in FY19, and what the expectations are for FY20. I would like to have a better understanding of both what is being done and of the split between what might be called "routine" matters (contract negotiations, department questions, etc.) and extraordinary matters (suits brought by the town and suits brought against the town).

As described below, expenses through the first six months of the fiscal year totaled \$24,124, which projects very favorably relative to the \$98,000 allocation in the FY19 budget. It is possible that this line will remain substantially underspent.

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With regard to current year spending, collective bargaining will begin in earnest in February, requiring greater use of counsel as we work on contracts with NAGE, UEW, and NEPBA. This expense may continue into the first half of FY20, depending on how quickly sides come to agreement. Looking at some of our larger detail lines, expense related to the Southworth mill may continue over the next several months, but zoning related expenses should be completed following STM.

Expense Lines	Through 12/31/18	Total Legal Expenses by FY	
Zoning Bylaw Review	\$ 5,233	2018	\$ 78,753
Southworth Case	\$ 4,603	2017	\$ 94,991
Other Legal Matters	\$ 4,428	2016	\$ 69,569
Personnel Issues	\$ 3,903	2015	\$ 104,258
Collective Bargaining	\$ 1,663	2014	\$ 68,222
Strathmore Deed	\$ 1,610	2013	\$ 79,292
DPW Building Project	\$ 1,138		
Disbursements	\$ 1,549		
Total	\$ 24,124		

A year to year account of legal costs appears in that same table and shows the unpredictable nature of this budget and highlights the unpredictable nature of this line. I do, however, expect the legal budget outlook should remain favorable relative to appropriation this year. It is my recommendation that we maintain this budget at level funding for FY20 at this point in the budget process, but look at it as a place we could go to create flexibility later in the process if needed.

2. Does the consolidation of services with K-P Law result in any cost savings?

Yes, I believe it does, but that assessment relies on a simple matching of hourly costs (In FY19 KP is at \$185/hour vs SHQ which proposed \$225/hour). Having worked with both companies, there is nothing to indicate that KP is less time efficient than SHQ, particularly because they capped travel time at a maximum of 1 hour, which was similar to our SHQ attorney's travel time. In comparison to the years in which SHQ failed to bill the town for costs above our agreed upon \$20,000/yr retainer, well, that was a deal, but they were shifting us to straight hourly billing.

3. Is the amount adequate for a year with three labor contracts in negotiation?

Based on experience to date, which is limited, I think the \$98,000 is sufficient to cover the cost of contract development, but my experience with this year's process is not complete so I can't answer that definitively.

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946-GENERAL INSURANCE- Not a question, but kudos on efforts that have resulted in increased dividends for FY19. Keep up the good work!

228-183 COLLE

Electric bills have varied considerably, and the requested amount is more than \$2000 higher than all but two of the past six years. Why so high, and what explains the yearly variations?

FY18 actuals were \$9,000 and I proposed to trim the budget from \$13,000 to \$12,000 this year as an incremental step. Historically, some lines in this budget have been over-budgeted and I've ratcheted them down over the past two years. The reality is that this money comes from (and unspent funds are returned to) the Colle Special Revenue Fund, so there is no impact on the general operating budget or tax rate. Leaving space in these lines provides flexibility to deal with unexpected maintenance and other issues without seeking further appropriation, which is a positive of having some expenses over-estimated.