

**SECTION 2**  
**TOWN GOALS AND THE FY 2015 BUDGET**

## Town Goals and the FY 2015 Budget

The following is a discussion of how the proposed spending plan relates to the town goals that have been described above and in Appendix "A". Many of the programs and services that our departments offer, and have offered for many years, already meet specific town goals and objectives and these "maintenance goals" continue to guide the allocation of the majority of financial resources that the town appropriates. There are other instances, however, where departments are proposing "new initiative goals" which address previously unmet community needs and concerns. Some of these initiatives require the creation of a new program or activity and the allocation of financial resources for the funding of expenses and/or additional staff. Others are able to provide a higher level of services for the same or less resources through greater efficiency. The following is a discussion of some of the more significant staff initiatives, the goals that the departments hope to achieve and the accomplishments to which they can already point.

### **(1) Support a Safe and Harmonious Community for All our Residents**

- Police Department will hire and train a police officer to perform the tasks of a School Resource Officer in the Franklin County Technical School. This will also enable the department to place an additional officer on the streets, at no cost to the town, during vacations and the summer months.
- Planning Department is seeking CDBG funds for the upgrading of lighting in Downtown Turners Falls. Besides saving a significant amount of money, this initiative will greatly increase security.
- Health Department is implementing the Attorney General's Receivership Program for the most dilapidated rental properties, which is expected to result in the elimination of major housing code violations.
- The Department of Public Works is working with the State on the implementation of major road improvements, including the upgrade of Greenfield Road and Hatchery Road and Montague City Road at the bike path crossing.
- The feasibility of developing a new DPW Garage, Senior Center, and Library is currently being studied.

### **(2) Guide Appropriate Use of Regional Significant Resources of Our Town**

- The Board of Selectmen is currently working with local residents to identify ways to increase participation by the town in the long term transportation planning efforts of the FRTA
- The Police Department is currently entering the second year of a shared Animal Control Officer position with the towns of Greenfield and Deerfield.
- The River Culture Program is currently cooperating with the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and other regional entities on the efficient and effective delivery of cultural programs and activities

- The town continues to support the efforts of several regional entities that are able to offer the same or better level of services through the economies of scale that they realize. These include the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, which provide a high level of transportation and other planning, the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, and the Eastern Franklin Veteran's District which provides a shared veterans agent. The town's membership in the Hampshire County Health Group also has enabled the town to realize significant savings in its health insurance costs through the power of joint purchasing.

**(3) Guide Appropriate Use of Our Open Space and Sensitive Natural Resources**

- The Conservation Commission, through the implementation of the wetlands protection act and town Open Space Plan has been an effective custodian of the town's open spaces and sensitive natural resources.
- The Town Planner and Conservation Commission have also been strong advocates for the preservation of prime agricultural lands and have facilitated this process by soliciting town meeting appropriations into the Conservation Fund.

**(4) Support Quality Educational Opportunities for All Our Residents**

- The Selectmen and Finance Committee will continue to work with its counterparts in the Town of Gill to support the development of a quality, affordable education in the town's public school system. This would include development of assessments in accordance with the principles established by the Tech Committee and formalized in "Table B"
- The Selectmen will support the continued development of programs and activities by the River Culture which enhance the cultural awareness of town residents including those related to the historical development of the town.
- The Library is currently offering a wide array of educational program for the town's youth, and soon plans to expand its offerings to adults.

**(5) Preserve and Enhance the Historic, Architectural, and Cultural Character of our Town**

- Through the River Culture Program the town has sponsored programs designed to celebrate the history and culture of the town. In 2011, River Culture was the recipient of one of the State's most prestigious accolades –the Commonwealth Award as a creative community
- The town has pledged to respect the historic, architectural and cultural character of the community when it implements projects involving the adaptive reuse of town-owned properties. Montague has made a strong commitment to historic preservation in all of its villages and at the Historic Canal Industrial Area.
- The Board of Selectmen actively supports special events which highlight Montague's cultural diversity.

**(6) Ensure the Quality of Our Residential Neighborhoods and Our Residential Growth**

- One of the primary objectives of the town is to protect the quality of our residential neighborhoods through the removal of eyesores. The Health Director, working in concert with the Building Inspector and other code officials, is currently

implementing the Attorney General's Receivership Program – a program that involves six of the most derelict private properties. The goal of this program is to stimulate rehabilitation of these properties, and transfer ownership to responsible owners if necessary.

- This year the Planning Department will begin implementing the Turners Falls HUD Livability Plan – a comprehensive effort to improve the quality of life for residents living in and visiting the Downtown Turners Falls area.

**(7) Improve our climate for quality commerce and industry, including agricultural/forestry businesses**

- The town is currently completing pre-development planning and design for a new Industrial Park to be located at the former landfill site on Turnpike Road. The goal is to work with the FRCOG to prepare state and federal grant application to secure funds for one hundred percent of the cost of the Park. The Montague Industrial Park expansion area, located behind the Franklin County Technical School, is currently at or near its capacity.
- The Planning Department is currently renewing its efforts to market the adaptive reuse of Strathmore Mill Complex for light industrial use through a Request for Proposals process.
- The town has made a strong commitment to downtown revitalization in downtown Turners Falls and Millers Falls.

**(8) Improve our active and passive recreational opportunities**

- This year the parks and recreation department will seek grant and other funding for the development of a Skate Park at Unity Park. This project builds upon the extremely successful effort to upgrade facilities at Unity Park. Over the past three years the town has used \$1.2 million in Community Development Block Grant funds to create what has become one of the premier recreational facilities in our region. The Skate Park will be a major enhancement to the Unity Park facility.
- The DPW is currently working with Mass Department of Transportation on cross walk enhancements in Montague City that will make it much safer for bicyclists, using the Canal Bike Trail, to cross Montague City Road.
- This year the DPW will have, for the first time in the budget, a full year of funds supporting a second groundskeeper. This position will ensure that the park improvements that were made can be properly maintained.

**(9) Create a Financial Framework in which Long Term Planning is an integral component of the budgeting process; where financial matter are subject to explicit (and written) policies; where all departments are provided with adequate resources (public and private) to do their job in a way that maximizes financial benefit to the town; and where services are provided by town departments in the most efficient and effective manner.**

- The FY 2015 Town Administrator budget is being developed in a manner that is consistent with the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) model (See Section \_\_\_\_ criteria). The budget will include a long term financial plan.
- The Town Administrator will work with the Finance Committee and Capital Improvements Committee on the development of written financial policies.

- Technology upgrades are planned in the Assessing Department and Library, where e-books have become a staple.
- The Water Pollution Control Facility has created a model for the efficient and effective operation of its department. Through major changes in the way it processes waste it will not only significantly reduce the cost of treating sewage but possibly avoid future costs to meet Federal Wastewater standards. The department has also initiated innovative and creative relationships with other communities in the region which are generating significant new revenues for the Sewer Enterprise, which will help to mitigate the impact of major capital needs.

**(10) Create a work environment in which the Town is able to attract and retain the most qualified employees; where the town staff receives the most appropriate level of training and professional development to do their job efficiently and effectively, to meet statutory requirements and to avoid law suits; and where employees are fully aware of their duties, responsibilities and town expectations.**

- One of the major expenditures contained in the recommended budget is the full implementation of the pay and classification plan which is designed to make Montague competitive in the municipal labor market. The study found that prior to the study the pay of Montague employees was about 7.5% below the average of comparable communities.
- A request has also been made by the WPCF Superintendent to reclassify all plant staff to a level that is higher than that recommended by our personnel consultant. This is a matter that is more appropriately dealt with through the collective bargaining process. This is not meant to be a comment upon the merit of the request.

**(11) Create an environment in which good customer Relations exist (between departments, with the public and taxpayers, town meeting members, state and federal agencies) are primary; where customers are always treated with courtesy and sensitivity; where accessibility to town staff and its programs/services is facilitated; and where good communication with all customers is valued.**

- Town departments currently employ a team approach to the delivery of programs/services and problem solving. This includes teams that specifically deal with economic development, code enforcement and financial management.
- The Board of Selectmen is also committed to enter the budget on the town web site so both the public and town meeting members.