

MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded:
<https://vimeo.com/821488489>

Finance Committee Chair Francia Wisnewski called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Finance Committee members present: Chair Francia Wisnewski, Vice Chair Gregory Garrison, Clerk Dorinda Bell-Upp (arrived at 6:07PM) and members John Hanold, Chris Menegoni (arrived at 6:04PM), and Fred Bowman

Finance Committee member absent: Jennifer Waryas

Others present: Town Administrator Steven Ellis, Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen, Airport Manager Bryan Camden, Parks & Recreation Director Jon Dobosz, and Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey.

The meeting was recorded by MCTV as well as by Carolyn Olsen.

Meeting minutes:

Mr. Garrison moved to approve the minutes of April 5, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.
Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

Mr. Garrison moved to approve the minutes of April 26, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.
Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

Transfers:

MGL Chapter 44 Section 33B Transfer – these are transfers between existing appropriations that can be made during the last two months of a fiscal year and through the first 15 days of the following fiscal year. Approval by both the Selectboard and Finance Committee is required.

The Airport has experienced several unexpected expenses this year. There is also a slight surplus in Airport Employee benefits as benefits for all eligible employees are budgeted, but not all were needed. The Airport Manager is requesting a transfer of \$10,100 from Airport Employee Benefits to Airport Wages and Expenses. The Selectboard will approve this transfer at their meeting on May 15, 2023.

Mr. Hanold asked about the FY24 Budget. Mr. Camden said that the FY24 budget increase should have a little more leeway and noted that a lease agreement that will provide \$216K in annual revenue was signed on May 5th, and this is expected to start generating retained earnings.

Mr. Hanold moved to approve a transfer of \$10,100 from Airport Employee Benefits to Airport Wages and Expenses. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

Reserve Fund Transfers – current balance of Reserve Fund is \$49,275

The previous transfer is not enough to meet all of the Airport's expenses through June. Of particular note are some expenditures made in anticipation of a grant that has not yet been awarded. Ms. Olsen recommended requesting a transfer of an amount sufficient in case the grant is not received by June 30, as the Finance Committee can always take a later vote to rescind any unnecessary amount. This request was approved by the Airport Commission.

Mr. Menegoni expressed concern that additional town funds were being requested to support the airport after earlier public assurances that the airport was fully self-funded. The needs this year and last year were due to a combination of a lack of available information to properly budget for newly acquired property and unexpected price increases in many areas. The substantial increase in the FY24 budget along with the new lease revenue should eliminate any future need for taxation to fund airport expenses.

Mr. Hanold moved to approve a Reserve Fund transfer of \$20,000 to Airport Equipment Repair and Maintenance (600-5-482-5244) Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisniewski – Aye

Town Planner Maureen Pollock is requesting a transfer of \$1,500 to pay the final bills for the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. Payment of the network fees was an unexpected expense of \$1,380, and the remaining balance is insufficient for the final electric bills for FY2023.

Mr. Garrison moved to approve a Reserve Fund transfer of \$1,500 to EV Charging Stations. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisniewski – Aye

Parks & Recreation Director Jon Dobosz is requesting a transfer of \$2,500 to pay the final bills for the Parks and Recreation. The playground equipment is requiring more repair and maintenance than expected, and this account has been increased for the FY24 budget to accommodate these expenses.

Mr. Garrison moved to approve a Reserve Fund transfer of \$2,500 to Parks & Recreation Facilities/Grounds Maintenance (001-5-630-5242). Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Waryas – Aye, and Wisniewski – Aye

Capital Improvement Committee 5 Year Plan Presentation

Assistant Town Administrator Walter Ramsey presented the CIC's 5 Year Plan.

Mr. Hanold asked if Boards and Commissions were directly involved in ensuring their departmental needs were included. Mr. Ramsey worked directly with department heads, who in turn take direction from their Board or Commission.

Mr. Ramsey invited feedback and hopes for final adoption of the Plan in July.

Mr. Ellis reminded everyone that these plans are not static, and we should still expect that unexpected issues will continue to cause the plan to evolve over time.

Annual Town Meeting Debrief

- The Pre-Town Meeting gathering at 8 AM seemed helpful and attendance exceeded expectations.
- Mr. Bowman suggested offering a meeting 2-3 weeks before the annual town meeting to review the subjects on the warrant, policies, and procedures and noted that this would be particularly helpful to new town meeting members.
- Ms. Bell-Upp suggested having people submit their questions in advance. She noted that the main questioners continued to ask questions during town meeting, but others seem to have been happy to have their questions answered earlier.
- Mr. Hanold said he had spoken at length about OPEB with two members, and while they still asked questions at town meeting, the earlier conversation seems to have diffused some of their concerns.

Discuss Committee Reorganization/Transition Plan

Ms. Waryas is not requesting reappointment to the committee. Ms. Wisnewski has accepted reappointment, but noted that she will now be travelling frequently, and will step down if others would like to join.

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Ellis noted that:

- Ms. Bell-Upp has volunteered to be on the Six Town Regionalization Planning Group
- Beanie Pierce has been appointed as Transitional Town Clerk
- Ryan Paxton has started work as the new Director of Health
- The bids for the Shea and Colle roofs came in overbudget after the low bidder withdrew their bid. The plan is to review the specifications and rebid in late summer.
- The Senate Ways and Means Committee has released their version of the state budget. It looks like our original state revenue estimates are safe.
- The Division of Local Services has issued information on linking fees, or fees imposed on developers to help fund affordable housing. It looks like Montague would be unable to benefit from these, so there is no strong impetus to pursue the required special legislation.

Future meetings –

- June 14th – end of year business, plan for stipend review process

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting – none

Finance Committee Adjournment

Mr. Bowman makes the motion to adjourn at 7:37 PM. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, Waryas – Aye,
and Wisnewski – Aye

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Olsen

Documents and exhibits:

Chapter 44 Section 33B Transfer Request for Airport

Reserve Fund Transfer Request for Airport

Reserve Fund Transfer Request for EV Charging Stations

Reserve Fund Transfer Request for Parks & Recreation

CIC Capital Improvement Plan FY25-FY29