

**MONTAGUE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.**  
**This meeting was held via Zoom and recorded:**  
<https://vimeo.com/853210925>

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

**Finance Committee members present:** Chair Francia Wisnewski, Vice Chair Dorinda Bell-Upp, Clerk Fred Bowman, and members Greg Garrison, John Hanold, and Chris Menegoni

**Finance Committee members absent:** Jennifer Waryas

**Others present:** Selectboard Chairman Richard Kuklewicz, Clean Water Facility Superintendent Chelsey Little, Director of Health Ryan Paxton, and Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen

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

**Meeting minutes:**

Mr. Hanold moved to approve the minutes of July 26, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.  
Bell-Upp – Aye, Bowman – Aye, Garrison – Aye, Hanold – Aye, Menegoni – Aye, and Wisnewski – Aye

**Clean Water Facility (CWF) Operations Building HVAC Replacement and Source Funds**

We had an appropriation for a new boiler, but the bids came in quite high. Then the Sewer Commission had a five hour retreat to discuss the many CWF topics, at which time they were made aware of the air quality issues in part of the building. Employees must wear PPE in parts of the Operations Building. It was decided to take a pause and look at the heating and HVAC issues together.

- There are lots of issues with 1964 operations building, which has had many hodge podge and band aid changes, including both the heating system and the HVAC system.
- The original quote for the boiler was \$113K, but when it was bid the sole bid came in at \$195K. After further discussion with the bidder, he came down to look at the facility and he was quite concerned about the complexity of both the heating and HVAC systems. The technician who had given the original quote had not recognized the extent of the difficulties in installing a new boiler. The bidder could still do the wood boiler, but we would need a propane system as backup.
- Aside from the boiler, there's still an air exchange system that has not worked for at least 12 years and needs to be addressed.
- Mr. Hanold said it sounds like both an increase in project scope and a more realistic view of the project.
- Mr. Bowman asked if there were any other issues that should be brought together with this for one large, complete project. The 1964 Primary treatment facility has a really old and poorly maintained infrastructure, but replacement would probably cost \$10M.
- Mr. Kuklewicz said they really need to work with CIC and CWF staff to determine all the needs and determine a long-range plan, but the boiler and HVAC are an immediate need.

- The Selectboard also discussed potentially funding part or all of this work with general fund revenues.
- Mr. Bowman supports spending a year studying the project and deciding whether to renovate or replace the building.
- Mr. Garrison noted that the CIC has this and other CWF projects on its agenda for August 30<sup>th</sup>, and that these would likely take multiple meetings to discuss. It is unlikely that the CIC will have any input ready until at least the end of September.
- Mr. Hanold asked what action was requested tonight; this was only a heads-up alert without a specific vote expected.

**Selectboard Consideration of Longevity for Non-Union Staff**

- On Monday, August 7, 2023, the Selectboard approved putting an article on the fall town meeting warrant that would amend our town personnel bylaws by adding a longevity allowance for non-union employees that is modeled on what is currently in the NAGE professional office union contract. This has been on the radar screen as something needing correction for a long time.
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- Longevity exists in part to compensate for being at the top of the pay scale, as union COLAs are generally on the low side to reflect the step increases that most employees receive. Longevity helps to balance that out a little, but it has not been available to non-union employees as it is not explicitly allowed in the current personnel bylaws.
- The current NAGE longevity amounts for each length of service are:
 

5 years	300
10 years	500
15 years	900
20 years	1,000
25 years	1,100
30 years	1,200
- There are 13 employees that would be affected by this change, 10 of whom would be affected for FY2024.
- Ms. Olsen further noted that if she had been hired as the Director of Assessing rather than the Town Accountant, both of which are classified as being on the same grade, she would have received over \$11,500 in longevity payments through FY2023.
- Mr. Hanold asked what the underlying issue was, and the primary driver is equity.
- While no vote is needed at this time, the committee members expressed support for this article.

**Stipend Review:**

Discussion of IT administrator

- Mr. Kuklewicz explained that while the Town’s IT Coordinator is responsible for coordinating service with the computer consultant and helping with small issues, the Police IT Administrator functions are the same as the Town’s computer consultant, including replacing and fixing hardware, installing software, troubleshooting all issues, and network management.
- The requested increased was brought forward by the Police Chief, and after considering the level of expertise required and what it might cost if the work were contracted out, the Selectboard determined that the request was reasonable.

- Mr. Hanold expressed mild concern that regularly granting stipend increases solely at the request of the recipient would lead to perdition and undo the Committee’s efforts to ensure a balanced review.
- Ms. Bell-Upp said it would be helpful to know how much time was spent on IT Administration, but that information was unavailable. Mr. Kuklewicz did note that it would be much more expensive to outsource the work.

Mr. Bowman moved to set the FY2025 stipend for the Police IT Administrator to \$6,000 per the Selectboard’s request. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

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

#### Discussion of Barn and Animal inspectors

- Mr. Hanold feels that the current Barn Inspector stipend of \$1,050 was disproportionately low compared to the current Animal Inspector stipend of \$1,575.
- After review of the information previously provided by Mr. Paxton explaining the work done and time spent on each positions, Mr. Hanold noted that the average annual hours worked on barn inspections was about 62 hours, which would allow for an hour per barn plus time to create the report required by the state. The generous average time per barn plus an implied rate of \$20/hour would account for travel costs and provide a starting point of \$1,240 as the adjusted base.
- The adjusted Barn Inspector stipend and the Animal Inspector stipend should both be adjusted by the 12% multiplier used for other positions.

Mr. Garrison moved to increase the current stipend for the Barn Inspector from \$1,050 to \$1,240, after which it will be increased by the same amount as provided for the other stipend increases.

Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

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

Ms. Hanold moved to increase stipends for the Animal and Barn Inspector positions by 12% for final FY2025 stipends of \$1,764 and \$1,400 respectively. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

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

#### Board Stipends

- The rationale for the different amounts between boards and for the additional amount for chair is that we started with an amount for the Selectboard, used 75% of that amount for the Board of Assessors and Board of Health to reflect the greater responsibilities of the Selectboard, and then provided an additional 10% to the chairs of each board for their additional duties and responsibilities.
- There was no interest in changing this rationale.

Mr. Garrison moved to increase the current stipends for elected boards by 12%, with final FY2025 stipends being \$2,640 for Selectboard chair, \$2,400 for Selectboard members, \$1,980 for Board of

Assessors and Board of Health chair, and \$1,800 for Board of Assessors and Board of Health members. Seconded by Mr. Bowman and approved.

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

Ms. Olsen asked if the committee would be willing to consider updating the hourly rates included in Schedule II, even though they are not technically stipends. Ms. Olsen suggested leaving the bottom of the ranges as is, but increasing the top of each range by \$2 to accommodate inflation and provide departments with some flexibility in the case of returning staff.

Mr. Garrison moved to increase the top of each hourly range by \$2. Seconded by Mr. Hanold and approved.

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

#### **Updates from Town Accountant**

- On July 28, 2023, the Department of Revenue certified Free Cash at \$612,927, Sewer Retained Earnings at \$620,201, and Airport Retained Earnings at \$1,263. These funds are now available for appropriation by Town Meeting.
- Revenue projections for FY23, notably Motor Vehicle Excise, were higher than actual revenues by about \$100K, so FY24 estimated receipts will be lower on the Tax Recapitulation than originally planned. Depending on final state aid figures, this may have the effect of slightly reducing the amount of excess capacity. FY25 revenue estimates will also be affected.

**Future meetings** – The next meeting will be September 13, 2023

#### **Future meeting topics –**

Review Affordable Assessment Calculation ?  
FY25 Budget Projections  
Review Fall Special Town Meeting warrant articles

**Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting** – none

#### **Finance Committee Adjournment**

Mr. Bowman makes the motion to adjourn at 7:21 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:**

Minutes of July 26, 2023

JH Planning Document

Draft Schedules I & II

Municipal Animal Inspector Description

Additional Information on Barn Inspector and Animal Inspector positions

# 9 AUGUST 2023 STIPEND PLANNING (Revised)

J Hanold outline

## SUMMARY OF 26 JULY DECISIONS

- \* 12% COLA approach chosen; figure to be level for next 3 years
- \* Forest Warden current stipend reduced to \$1,680 before adding 12% for future
- \* Selectboard is proposing that IT Administrator (Police) rise from \$3,000 to \$6,000
- \* Stipends set for several positions:
  - Forest Warden - from \$1,710 (present) to \$1,884
  - Tree Warden – from \$1,575 to \$1,764
  - Emerg, Mgt. director – from \$5,765 to \$6,444
  - IT Co-Ordinator (Town) – from \$2,100 to \$2,352
- \* Defer IT Administrator to 9 August to consider Selectboard rationale
- \* Defer Barn and Animal Inspectors to 9 August when more information will be available

## DECISIONS FOR 9 AUGUST

- \* Affirm decisions of 26 July
- \* Discuss Rationale for Selectboard proposal for IT Administrator and select FinComm figure
- \* Review new information on Animal and Barn Inspectors
- \* Consider raising Barn Inspector base, and set FinComm figures for both
- \* Discuss approach to Board positions
  - Relation of Chair-to-Member stipend
  - Relation of Selectboard to Assessor to Health Boards
  - Added information needed (if any)

## JTH PROPOSAL FOR SELECTED POSITIONS

- *Raise Barn Inspector base from \$1,050 to \$1,125? (subj. to discussion)*
- *Apply 12% to Animal and Barn Inspector positions*
- *Set IT Administrator stipend based on Selectboard rationale*
- *Set differential of Chair-to-Member at 10% (Selectboard, Assessors, Health)*

Animal Inspector:  $\$1575 + 12\% = \$1,764$

Barn Inspector:  $\$1,125 + 12\% = \$1,260?$  *(subj. to discussion)*

IT Administrator (Police): To Be Determined after discussion

Selectboard/Assessors/Health Chairs: 10% above Members

Relationship of boards to each other: To Be Determined after discussion

## DECISIONS FOR NEXT MEETING

- Set stipend for Selectboard, Chair & Members
- Set stipend for Board of Assessors, Chair & Members
- Set stipend for Board of Health, Chair & Members
- Send summary of FinComm proposals to Selectboard for their consideration

No change

voted by FC

**SCHEDULE I  
Elected Officials**

<b><u>TITLE</u></b>	<b><u>FY24 BUDGET</u></b>	<b><u>FY25 REQUEST</u></b>	<b><u>FY25 RECOMMEND</u></b>
<b>MODERATOR</b>	500	500	500
<b>SELECTBOARD</b>			
Chairman	2,355	2,355	2,355
Second/Third Members	2,140	2,140	2,140
<b>BOARD OF ASSESSOR</b>			
Chairman	1,765	1,765	1,765
Second/Third Members	1,605	1,605	1,605
<b>TAX COLLECTOR/TREASURER</b>	78,423*	82,394**	89,394
*Step 9			
**Step 10			
<b>TREE WARDEN</b>	1,575	1,765	1,764
<b>BOARD OF HEALTH</b>			
Chairman	1,765	1,765	1,765
Second/Third Members	1,605	1,605	1,605

**SCHEDULE II  
Appointed Officials**

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>FY24 BUDGET</u>	<u>FY25 REQUEST</u>	<u>FY25 RECOMMEND</u>
<b><u>ANNUAL STIPENDS</u></b>			
BOARD OF REGISTRARS (3)	625	625	625
BOARD OF REGISTRARS Town Clerk	900	900	900
EMERGENCY MGMT DIRECTOR	5,765	6,459	6,459
ANIMAL INSPECTOR	1,575	1,575	1,575
BARN INSPECTOR	1,050	1,050	1,050
IT COORDINATOR	2,100	2,352	2,352
POLICE IT ADMINISTRATOR	3,000	6,000	3,000
FOREST WARDEN	1,710	1,882	1,882
HEARING OFFICER	2,500	2,500	2,500
FARMERS MARKET MANAGER	4,000	4,000	4,000
<b><u>RATES PER INSPECTION</u></b>			
ASST. BUILDING INSPECTOR	35.00	45.00	45.00
GAS INSPECTOR	35.00	45.00	45.00
PLUMBING INSPECTOR	35.00	45.00	45.00
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR	35.00	45.00	45.00
<b><u>HOURLY RATES</u></b>			
EXTRA CLERICAL	15.00-16.75	15.00-16.75	15.00-16.75
ELECTION WORKERS	15.00-17.75	15.00-17.75	15.00-17.75
SUMMER HIGHWAY	15.00-16.75	15.00-16.75	15.00-16.75
SNOW PLOW DRIVERS	15.00-25.00	15.00-25.00	15.00-25.00
PART TIME POLICE OFFICERS	25.00-28.00	25.00-28.00	25.00-28.00
PART TIME DISPATCHERS	22.00-25.00	22.00-25.00	22.00-25.00
PARKS & RECREATION	14.25-21.50	15.00-22.25	15.00-22.25
AIRPORT INTERN	14.25-16.00	15.00-16.75	15.00-16.75



**SCHEDULE II  
Appointed Officials**

**NON-UNION EMPLOYEES NOT SHOWN ABOVE** (placed on NAGE Scale)

	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Range FY2024</u>		<u>Range FY2025</u>	
		Start	End	Start	End
<b><u>SALARIED</u></b>					
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	J	98,484	121,203	103,470	127,339
ASSISTANT TOWN ADMIN	I	89,532	110,185	94,064	115,764
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	G	64,035	78,423	67,277	82,394
TAX COLLECTOR/TREASURER	G	64,035	78,423	67,277	82,394
TOWN CLERK	G	64,035	78,423	67,277	82,394
CHIEF OF POLICE	I	89,532	110,185	94,064	115,764
DPW SUPERINTENDENT	H	81,393	100,168	85,514	105,239
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	G	64,035	78,423	67,277	82,394
LIBRARY DIRECTOR	G	64,035	78,423	67,277	82,394
CWF SUPERINTENDENT	H	81,393	100,168	85,514	105,239
<b><u>HOURLY</u></b>					
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	E	23.80	29.29	25.01	30.77
POLICE LIEUTENANT	G+8.5%	38.98	43.25	40.95	45.44
POLICE CUSTODIAN	A	15.95	19.63	16.76	20.62

**Informational Only: Fiscal Year 2025 budgeted wages –**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR	127,339	EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	30.77
ASSISTANT TOWN ADMIN	98,828	DPW SUPERINTENDENT	105,239
TOWN ACCOUNTANT	82,394	DIRECTOR OF HEALTH	78,806
TAX COLLECTOR/TREAS**			
TOWN CLERK	75,746	LIBRARY DIRECTOR	82,394
CHIEF OF POLICE*	127,743	CWF SUPERINTENDENT	96,280
POLICE LIEUTENANT	45.44	POLICE CUSTODIAN	20.12

\*includes additional 20% educational incentive pay

\*\* elected term ends 5/20/25 – balance of FY25 as appointed

### **Municipal Animal Inspector**

- A municipal animal inspector should be:
- Reasonably experienced in the care and handling of domestic livestock animals
- Generally experienced in their husbandry and be knowledgeable in the handling and care of other domestic animals such as dogs and cats.
- Knowledge and experience with common “urban wildlife” such as raccoons, skunks and bats that expose domestic animals and come under the jurisdiction of the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife will prove beneficial in the collection of specimens for submission to the State Rabies Laboratory.
- Municipal Animal Inspectors should familiarize themselves with domestic animal import requirements.
- They should also understand local ordinances (sanitary codes, zoning laws, etc.) which may form part of their duties to their primary nominating body at the municipal level.
- There are no scholastic, professional (i.e.: Veterinarians) or farm experience requirements for the position of Animal Inspector. A generalized knowledge of domestic animals will prove very useful.

### **The primary duty of the Animal Inspector:**

- Rabies control in the domestic animal population.
- Domestic mammals which come in contact with, or are otherwise exposed to the rabies virus must first be assessed to determine severity of risk. Depending on the vaccination status of the domestic mammal involved, it will be either quarantined or destroyed. Be sure to send in the Notice of Exposure forms that are used for this type of quarantine at least once a month.
- The Animal Inspector will be contacted by local veterinarians when a client presents an animal which may have had an encounter with a potentially rabid animal. Again, the severity of the situation must be assessed before determining the proper course of action.
- Any domestic mammal which bites a human or another domestic mammal must be quarantined for a period of ten days to determine the risk of rabies transmission. Be sure to send in the duplicate copies of the Order of Quarantine form at least once a month. If you do not have any animal bites in a six-month period, please send in a letter to that effect.
- The Animal Inspector must ensure that all animals (wild or domestic) which must be tested for rabies are captured and euthanized. The head must be removed, packaged

properly and submitted to the State Rabies Lab for testing. (Any questions, call the Rabies Lab at (617) 983-6385 for copy of protocol.) This is not to say that the Animal Inspector must perform these tasks personally, but he/she must ensure that they are completed.

- Historically, Montague paid a part-time Animal Control Officer to deal with all problem and wild animals including vicious dogs and rabid animals.
- To expect an untrained, unarmed, underpaid, unequipped person to track down and kill potentially rabid animals is ludicrous and will not happen in Montague unless we have a trained ACO.
- The police department and board of health work very well together yet board of health has felt significant impact from the loss of the town ACO. The board of health cannot and will not take on the duties of the ACO.

**Municipal Animal Inspectors are also responsible for barn inspections.**

- Get a good census of the domestic animal population of the town.
- Be sure that all of the animals appear to be in good health and free from disease.
- Observe animal housing and ensure ample food and water are supplied.
- Permission to inspect any premise upon which animals are kept is assured to Municipal Animal Inspectors under Section 7 of Chapter 129 of the MGL.
- The third duty of the Animal Inspector is to check ear tag numbers and date of arrival of cattle from out of state and to report this information on the Animal Inspector's copy of the Cattle and Llama Permit which is furnished to the Animal Inspector by the Department of Agricultural Resources
- Municipal Animal Inspectors may also be called to assist with other domestic animal disease quarantines in the event of an outbreak.

## Text of Email from Ryan Paxton

I just got off the phone with Kathy Burek who I have CC'd on this email. I was able to discuss each question from the finance committee inquiry with her and have attached her answers to the questions below.

1. Briefly, what is involved in a barn inspection and how long does one typically take to complete?
  - Fill out barn book, an item sent from Dept. Agriculture which takes approximately 10 hours to complete and must occur before any inspections.
  - Checking welfare and husbandry of animals and keeping a count of all animals for an annual census. This includes examining the animals themselves and the facility. **Per Ryan, this takes ½-1 hour each. (2018-2022 average is 52 barns/year, x 1 hour = 52 hours)**
2. Regarding the animal inspector positions, the Board of Health information simply noted "animals counted". What animals are counted/inspected, and does this relate to barn inspections?

All livestock animals are counted (horses, goats, pigs, chickens, lambs, steers, etc.) More related to Barn Inspector position than animal inspector. Each barn/property takes from 30 minutes to an hour each depending on size. There are approximately 50 barns, and they are significantly spread out throughout the community so there is a lot of travel time that requires planning for efficiency. **(without mileage reimbursement).**
3. How does "animals counted" relate to animal inspections, and what does an animal inspection include? Does it take a certain amount of time per animal or location, and if so, how much?

It is related to barn inspections. We do not count dogs/cats.
4. In the annual information provided by the BOH for 2018-2022, the "animals counted" doubled in 2021 and then went back to a more "normal" amount for 2022. What caused this anomaly, and how often does this type of thing happen?

We are not sure why this changed drastically, however a lot of folks got animals during the pandemic, and it is quite possible that many people moved or got rid of animals since that time. This trend is somewhat unusual and we do not have a way of predicting such a drastic change.
5. What is the average amount of time it takes to deal with:
  - a. animal bites to humans **(average annual # 2018-2022 = 14 x 2 hours = 28 hours/year)**

Typically, 1-2 hours; it can vary depending on the responsiveness of the parties involved.
  - b. animals bitten by other animals with unknown rabies statuses **(average annual # 2018-2022 = 14 x 2 hours = 28 hours/year)**

Typically, 1-2 hours; it can vary depending on the responsiveness of the parties involved.
  - c. bat exposures. **(average annual # 2018-2022 = 2 x 2 hours = 4 hours/year)**

Typically, 1-2 hours; it can vary depending on the responsiveness of the parties involved.
  - d. Monthly report to the Board of Health  
About 45 minutes to an hour **(12 hours/year)**

Carolyn's summary of time:

- As noted above, estimated time inspecting barns is 52 hours/year, plus travel. Add in 10 hours to complete the Barn book = 62 hours/year plus travel. Current stipend is  $1050/62$  hours = \$16.94/hour. Excludes compensation for mileage/travel time.
- As noted above, estimated time on animal bites/bat exposures per year is 60, plus 12 hours/year for monthly report = 72 hours. Current stipend is  $\$1575/72$  hours = \$21.83/hour.