

# MONTAGUE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

## Meeting Minutes

### Meeting Accessible Via Zoom Only

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87625766041?pwd=vZP4gMftmrlHFg11j6kuFULFDVL3cW.1>  
or Phone: (646) 931-3860 Meeting ID: 876 2576 6041 Passcode: 915540

### In Attendance:

CIC Members: Gregory Garrison (GG), Chris Menegoni (CM), Ariel Elan (AE), Lynn Reynolds (LR), Jason Burbank (JB)

Town Staff: Christopher Nolan-Zeller (CNZ)- Assistant Town Administrator, Chelsey Little (CL) – Clean Water Facility Superintendent

### Meeting called to order 3:31PM, GG Presiding

1. Call to Order and Approve any outstanding meeting minutes: 1/8/25

AE suggested adding additional language to the description of the Public Works facility.

*MOTION to approve the minutes of 11/13/24, with AE's amended language by LR, CM Seconded. CM-AYE, GG- AYE, LR- AYE, AE-AYE, JB-AYE. MOTION PASSED*

2. Review of Clean Water Facility (CWF) Capital Article Requests for Annual Town Meeting (CWF Superintendent Chelsey Little, invited)
  - a. Purchase used mini-excavator (\$60,000)

CL explained that her department currently rented or borrowed an excavator for in-house construction projects, as well as groundskeeping at the CWF and 8 pump stations. Purchasing a brand new excavator would cost upwards of \$100,000, and a low-mileage used one would serve its purpose fine.

GG noted that both DPW and CWF have been borrowing the Airport's excavator. CL added that this was a much larger machine than her department needs, and is sometimes too large to fit into tight spaces when necessary. Sharing this piece of machinery between three departments during busy Summer construction season is also challenging from a timing perspective.

GG asked if there was sufficient storage on-site for a mini-excavator. CL responded that there was, as old materials were being cleared out behind the building.

GG asked if maintenance on the machinery could be done in-house. CL responded that when possible, the in-house mechanic would do maintenance, but major repairs would need to be contracted out.

GG asked what buckets would be purchased for the excavator. CL responded that she expected only a 24" bucket to be needed for small use.

- b. Portable emergency generator (\$30,000)
- c. Lake Pleasant station generator (\$37,800)

CL noted that her department was strategically replacing two pump station generators per year, and the ones at G Street and J Street station generators were recently done. All the old generators are from 1980, with Lake Pleasant currently running on the former portable generator.

GG asked if there was any resale or tradable value to the old generators. CL responded that these would have scrap value only, as serviceable parts for them are no longer made.

AE commended CL for her thorough documentation.

GG clarified whether the role of the generators was to keep the stations operational in case of a power interruption. CL responded that it was, and this is required by law, also noting that a maintenance technician services each one twice yearly, and the Town has used the same technician for 20 years.

GG asked who would be doing the installation work. CL responded that the Town would contract with an electrician, just as it did for the G and J Street stations, and the old generators would be scrapped.

- d. Thickened sludge pump replacement (x2) (\$104,000)

CL explained the function of the thickened sludge pumps. The current equipment is from 1981, with the drives updated in 2010. The current setup is very dangerous, and resulted in a note from the Department of Labor Standards during an inspection due to the exposed piston pump. New pumps would be enclosed, much safer, and require less maintenance.

AE noted that the current system had a nice appearance despite its old age, and asked whether the safety issues were known in 2010. CL responded that only the drives were replaced in 2010, while the pistons themselves were over 40 years old.

CL noted that this was a planned and normally-scheduled improvement.

GG asked whether the new pumps were designed for a different sludge composition than what the facility processed 40 years ago, when paper mills still operated in the Town. CL responded that the pumps should work for any type of thick fluid or sludge.

GG asked if labor would be performed in-house. CL responded that it would. GG added that a mini-excavator would likely be helpful for this project.

JB asked whether there were currently two or three thickened sludge pumps. CL responded that there were currently three, and this was being reduced to two with the replacement. The third could be discontinued and removed while still maintaining 100% redundancy with two. Typically, only one will be used at a time, swapped on timers to create equal wear and tear.

GG recommended that CL consider requesting funding for this project from CWF Capital Stabilization instead of Retained Earnings. CL noted that CWF Capital Stabilization had a current balance of about \$260,000, which has been built up well in recent years.

AE asked how CWF Capital Stabilization was replenished. CL responded that old Retained Earnings and unspent project allocations were transferred over to this fund, also noting that Retained Earnings only needed a simple-majority vote to allocate at Town Meeting, while spending from CWF Capital Stabilization needed a two-thirds majority.

GG suggested that CIC draft a letter to be distributed at Town Meeting praising the CWF and DPW's willingness to take on in-house construction projects, which have led to significant savings for the Town in recent years.

*MOTION to draft a letter endorsing the CWF and DPW's in-house project management strategy, and for CNZ to draft the CIC's report to the February 12 Special Town Meeting by GG, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, GG- AYE, LR- AYE, AE- AYE, JB-AYE. MOTION PASSED*

### 3. Next steps in FY26 capital planning cycle

CNZ shared the up-to-date list of capital requests, and explained recent updates, including the combining of two Parks & Recreation projects (playground resurfacing, tube slide), into one (Unity Park playground improvements), also adding tentative funding sources for several items. He informed the committee that Special Town Meeting was officially scheduled for February 12 at 6:30 PM at Turners Falls High School.

### 4. Status review of ongoing major capital projects

CNZ updated the Committee on the successful grant application to the MA Board of Library Commissioners, with the Town receiving \$100,000 to undertake the process this year of schematic design work for a new or renovated Carnegie Library.

5. Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting requirements

None.

6. Establish next meeting date(s)

The next meeting would be virtual at 3:30PM on 1/22.

7. Adjournment

*MOTION to close the meeting at 4:17PM by JB, CM Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, LR-AYE, AE-AYE, JB-AYE. MOTION PASSED*

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Nolan-Zeller