

MONTAGUE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Accessible Via Zoom Only

Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 3:30 pm

In Attendance:

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

Absent: Lynn Reynolds (LR)

Town Staff: Christopher Nolan-Zeller (CNZ) – Assistant Town Administrator

Meeting called to order 3:34PM, GG Presiding

1. Call to Order and Approve any outstanding meeting minutes: 4/9/25

MOTION to approve the minutes of 4/9/25, by GG, CM Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, JB-AYE, AE-ABSTAIN, LR-ABSENT. MOTION PASSED

2. Review capital appropriations from Annual Town Meeting

CNZ thanked the committee for its work throughout the recent budget cycle and Annual Town Meeting, noting that about \$4.63 million had been appropriated for capital projects, including \$3.29 million for infrastructure, \$853,000 for vehicles and equipment, \$276,000 for parks and public spaces, and \$39,000 for facility improvements. He emphasized the role the committee plays in keeping the Town functioning.

3. Review of current 5-year capital plan

CNZ reviewed the current FY25-30 capital plan, approved in April 2024, noting that an update would involve replicating pieces while updating to show current projects and emerging department needs. Page 26 includes a timeline in which the committee updates the 5-year plan over the Summer and votes to adopt a finalized new version by September, which then gets reviewed by the Selectboard and Finance Committee. This would then lead into the Fall, where planning for the Spring Annual Town Meeting would begin taking place. At minimum, CNZ stated the need to consult with department heads of the Libraries, Schools, Clean Water Facility, and Public Works departments over their upcoming capital needs, due to their high volume of anticipated requests.

AE noted that the schools and library were made more complicated by the uncertain future of their facility needs based on large building projects being planned.

GG recommended that CNZ contact the Library and School departments to hear initial thoughts, and ask whether their current 5-year plan should be adjusted. AE specifically noted the School District's Business Manager and Facilities Director could provide an accurate picture of the schools' anticipated needs. CM added that due to the unique circumstances of the schools in which the regional school district operates out of Town-owned elementary school buildings, the Town needs to take extra care to maintain these facilities responsibly. CM also noted that the Carnegie Library is a historical asset that needs to be preserved whether the library stays in it or not.

AE recommended asking department heads to prioritize which needs are immediate, and which ones could potentially wait.

GG explained that while some years have seen the Town flush with Free Cash able to use toward capital needs, this would not always be the case, and raised the idea of establishing a preliminary budget at the start of the capital planning cycle to help determine how much will need to be trimmed. CM expressed agreement with this, also noting that more diligence in planning could help reduce the chances of encountering years with unexpectedly high needs.

AE expressed disagreement with this model, stating that it would always be worth hearing department heads' assessments of levels of urgency for their requests, and that trying to fit all requests within a predetermined budget ignores the Town's obligation to be routinely investing in its assets.

GG expressed that having a rough idea of the available capital budget for a given fiscal year could help the committee and Town make more strategic decisions about the timing of investments, adding that it would not be possible to achieve all of the projects currently listed on the plan.

AE noted that federal grants would likely be less forthcoming in the next few years.

CNZ noted that Clean Water Facility's eventual plan for development of a composting/drying facility could help to generate additional revenue for that department. CM added that it would also reduce expenses for shipping out biosolids.

4. Next steps in the FY27-31 5-year capital plan update; correspondence with department heads

GG recommended that CNZ consult with department heads on whether all of the items for their department on the current 5-year capital plan were still deemed necessary.

5. Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting requirements

None.

6. Establish next meeting date(s)

The next meeting would be held in-person in the Town Hall Annex Meeting Room at 3:30PM on 7/16.

7. Adjournment

MOTION to close the meeting at 4:20PM by CM, AE Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, JB-AYE, AE-AYE, LR-ABSENT. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Nolan-Zeller