

MONTAGUE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 3:30 pm, Town Hall Annex Meeting Room

In Attendance:

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

Absent: Jason Burbank (JB)

Town Staff: Christopher Nolan-Zeller (CNZ) – Assistant Town Administrator, Samuel Urkiel (SU) – Public Works Superintendent

Meeting called to order 3:33PM, GG Presiding

1. Call to Order and Approve any outstanding meeting minutes: 7/16/25

MOTION to approve the minutes of 7/16/25, by GG, CM Seconded. CM-AYE, LR-AYE, GG-AYE, AE-ABSTAIN. MOTION PASSED

2. Annual committee reorganization

MOTION to nominate GG to continue serving as Chair, and to appoint CM as Vice-Chair by AE, CM Seconded. CM-AYE, LR-AYE, GG-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED

3. Review of Department of Public Works (DPW) Capital Article Requests for October Special Town Meeting (DPW Superintendent Sam Urkiel, invited)
 - a. South Street Culvert(s) Sliplining (\$50,000)

SU explained the purpose of a culvert, and that two culverts on South Street were in need of attention to prevent the road from collapsing, which would be far more expensive and require the culverts to be completely rebuilt. Sliplining allows a pipe to be inserted under the road, and the smooth edges of the pipe allow it to accommodate the same flow of water it currently handles despite the slightly smaller size. Each culvert will have a 36” diameter and be 40 feet long, and will cost \$20,000 to purchase. The DPW will install them using in-house labor, leaving \$10,000 for project contingency.

LR asked why the South Street bridge was replaced by MassDOT but not the bridge on Center Street. SU responded that the South Street bridge had been included on the state’s Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), allowing it to be replaced earlier that year, however the Center Street bridge had yet to be assigned a year for funding from the TIP.

AE asked if South Street had been paved since the bridge was replaced. SU responded that the DPW had re-paved sections adjacent to the bridge earlier that month, and expressed appreciation to MassDOT for the completion of the new bridge.

CM expressed that this request made sense from a cost avoidance perspective, and was a better solution than any alternatives.

AE expressed a wish to adjust the wording on the Capital Request form submitted by SU.

MOTION to allow CNZ and GG to review AE's suggested edits to the Capital Request submission to prevent the need to meet again prior to Special Town Meeting by GG, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, LR-AYE, GG-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION to recommend the DPW's capital request for \$50,000 to slipline two culverts on South Street by GG, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, LR-AYE, GG-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED.

4. Staff Updates

a. Updates on ongoing capital projects

Parking lot rehabilitation at Town Hall was underway. SU noted that the Town was still waiting on the 10-wheel dump truck authorized as a replacement purchase by Town Meeting in May 2024, and that the building of the truck by the vendor had taken an estimated 14-18 months.

AE asked if the appropriation approved by Town Meeting was still sufficient to pay for the truck despite the delays. SU responded that due to price increases, he expected the need to purchase the plow for the truck from the Snow/Ice budget.

SU updated the committee that the Meadow Road guardrail replacement project authorized by Town Meeting that year had been completed, with safety greatly improved by longer metal posts, reflectors, and reinforced banking.

CNZ provided a brief update on ongoing projects including the new Main Library project currently in design, the Green Communities grant received for weatherization improvements at the Unity Park Fieldhouse, ongoing design for the Montague Center Complete Streets grant-funded project, and the final stages of this Summer's phase of Avenue A streetscape improvements.

5. Review of Committee report to October 22, 2025 Special Town Meeting

CNZ explained that the South Street culvert project was the only capital request made for October's Special Town Meeting. AE asked if the draft report could be shortened, as it

felt overly bulky for a report only showing one capital request. CNZ responded that while much of the report was made up of formalities and an overall summary of the capital planning process, it would be possible to trim it so only an abridged 1-page version was actually distributed at Town Meeting unless otherwise requested.

AE expressed the wish to redesign the capital request form and the evaluation process it highlights, but acknowledged this would be a longer process than what could be accomplished in this meeting.

MOTION to approve the abridged report from the Committee to Special Town Meeting by GG, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, LR-AYE, GG-AYE, AE-ABSTAIN. MOTION PASSED.

6. Review and vote on acceptance of FY27-31 capital plan

The committee reviewed the up-to-date 5-year draft capital plan, including the spreadsheet of anticipated capital purchases. SU wished to prioritize the purchase of a new large excavator in FY27, and could delay the replacement of the 2008 International 7400 dump truck to FY29. He also agreed to delay the replacement of the 2015 F-250 pickup to FY28, and to delay the replacement of the two 2017 trucks to FY29.

CNZ highlighted various adjustments that were made to the current version of the capital plan, including the introduction of a 'Completed Projects' section highlighting projects wrapped up in the past year, and timing adjustments for several capital items after consultation with their respective department heads.

CM noted that the schools specifically should be a major point of the committee's attention, and that despite their long-term facility goals, the committee needs to be ensuring the current facilities have what they need to continue serving the community for another decade or more.

AE expressed discomfort with approving the finalized capital plan that day due to concerns over imbalance of project funding from year to year. GG recommended that CNZ share the current version of the plan in 'draft' form with the Selectboard and other relevant stakeholders as the FY27 budget cycle gets underway.

7. Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting requirements

SU explained the disastrous water main break that occurred the previous evening on First Street which resulted in severe disruption to silt and sediment and caused significant damage to the road. He added that the break was surprising given that the affected section of pipe was only about 50 years old, which is newer than most of the local area's underground water infrastructure. The Turners Falls Water Department is the owner of the infrastructure that failed, and the District would ultimately be financially responsible for the repairs.

8. Set next meeting date and time

The next meeting would be held in hybrid format in the Town Hall Annex Meeting Room and on Zoom at 3:30PM on 11/12.

9. Adjournment

MOTION to close the meeting at 4:58PM by CM, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, AE-AYE, LR-AYE. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Nolan-Zeller