

MONTAGUE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 3:30 pm, Town Hall Annex Meeting Room and via Zoom

In Attendance:

CIC Members: Gregory Garrison (GG), Chris Menegoni (CM), Jason Burbank (JB), Ariel Elan (AE) (arrived at 3:47pm)

Absent: Lynn Reynolds (LR)

Town Staff: Christopher Nolan-Zeller (CNZ) – Assistant Town Administrator; Sam Urkiel (SU) – Public Works Superintendent; Bryan Camden (BC) – Airport Manager (arrived at 3:46pm); Gary Collins (GC) – Airport Commission Chairperson (arrived at 4:12PM); Josh Lively (JL) – Airport Commissioner (arrived at 4:12PM)

Meeting called to order 3:35PM, GG Presiding

1. Call to Order and Approve any outstanding meeting minutes: 12/3/25

MOTION to approve the minutes of 11/12/25, by CM, JB Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, JB-AYE. MOTION PASSED

2. Review of Department of Public Works (DPW) Capital Article Requests (DPW Superintendent Sam Urkiel, invited)
 - a. Replace 2013 Wacker Neuson RD 12-A Roller (\$35,000)

SU explained that this was a vital piece of equipment for all projects involving asphalt replacement.

GG asked if this piece of equipment was readily available without a long lead time. SU confirmed that it was. The equipment would be compact with two small drums and used for patch work and trench work.

- b. Replace 2010 Ford Focus (\$50,000)

SU noted that this administrative vehicle was aging and had started requiring more maintenance. However, this item was comparatively a lower priority than the other requests.

- c. Replace 2013 F-350 4WD Pickup (\$80,000)

This vehicle was used for plowing and treating on a routine route during winter weather, as well as by building maintenance staff year-round. The bed of the truck

was previously replaced, but it was preferred to replace the entire vehicle before a motor replacement becomes necessary.

JB asked about the DPW's strategy for cleaning the vehicle's undercarriage. SU noted that this was done using a pressure washer with an undercarriage attachment, thoroughly spraying all components that could safely be cleaned this way.

d. Large Used Excavator (\$150,000)

AE and BC arrive.

SU explained that having an excavator in-house would have allowed for much more efficiency during projects such as last year's culvert replacement on South Ferry Road.

BC added that approving an excavator for the DPW would give the Town the advantage of having a small excavator (CWF), medium excavator (Airport), and large excavator (DPW) in its fleet.

SU added that a large excavator would have longer reach, and could be equipped with rubber tires rather than tracks for easier use on roads. A used excavator would be less than half the cost of a new one, which would be an estimated \$330,000.

e. Replace 2014 2032R Tractor (\$65,000)

This equipment was used primarily for winter sidewalk plowing and maintaining the grounds of the Parks & Recreation department. Its doors were replaced the previous summer by a student at Franklin County Technical School, which created substantial savings compared with a full cab.

f. Transfer Station Automatic Gate (\$30,000)

SU noted that the lack of an automatic gate was currently a safety issue and a cause of improper disposal at the site. The gate is always at risk of being inadvertently left open. The quoted automatic gate would provide access via a key pad.

g. Equipment and Major Repairs (Discretionary) (\$75,000)

This was a standard annual request for sudden unforeseen repairs or purchases needed by the department. The amount of the request would vary based on the account's balance on March 1, 2026, and would restore the balance up to \$75,000 (the amount was previously \$100,000 prior to FY26).

h. Alley and Non-Chapter 90 Road Paving (\$30,000)

The First Street Alley was repaved last year, and the Second Street Alley was planned for this spring funded by an appropriation from the previous year. SU's plan was to work southward to repave all downtown alleys over the next several years, although some alleys would be more expensive than others, especially if they required excavation and milling.

GG confirmed that once the downtown alleys have all been repaved, this recurring capital request will no longer be necessary.

SU noted that newer asphalts are often using more recycled material, which unfortunately requires more plastic and other additives that reduce its longevity. AE expressed general concern with the prevalence of microplastics. CM noted that Route 2 in Erving appeared to be a nearby example of a road that has needed regular repaving. SU added that New England's freeze-thaw cycles shorten asphalt longevity. Most asphalt used today was Recycled Asphalt Pavement (RAP), while traditional asphalt is significantly more expensive.

i. Sidewalk Replacement and Repair (\$15,000)

Masonic Ave's sidewalks were replaced in the past year, with more work planned in that same neighborhood for the upcoming construction season. SU noted the goal to continue the improvements from here to the end of the bike path, and that additional funds could be allocated from elsewhere in the department if this request was not sufficient to cover that.

GG asked if it was known how many miles of sidewalk the Town has. SU noted that this was not known.

AE asked if the Town generally knew what utilities were located underground before laying down new material, SU responded that this was often not known, with the past Summer's water main break on First Street being a troublesome example.

3. Discuss DPW long-term capital needs and ongoing capital projects including but not limited to:

a. Dump truck replacements (10-wheels approved 2024, 2025; 6-wheel approved 2025)

SU noted that the long-awaited truck approved in 2024 was expected to arrive before Christmas, and the other two were under agreement to be built. He noted that delays had been caused by a fatality and subsequent investigation at the plant where the truck was built. At this point, the vehicle had been assembled and was now being painted before finally being sent to the Town. In other news, the F-150 replacement approved in 2025 had taken place, and the new vehicle cost about \$18,000 less than the approved amount.

AE asked if the price of the dump truck had increased since initially approved in 2024. SU responded that there had been a minor increase in price which may require some funds to be paid out of the Snow/Ice budget.

b. Collections System Rehab Phase 2

The Town had contracted with Weston & Sampson Engineering to complete this phase, which would help reduce Inflow and Infiltration. A tentative project schedule had been established.

JB asked a follow-up question regarding recycled asphalt. SU noted that most plants use a 20% recycled mix, which includes sand and aggregates which worsen performance.

AE asked if street sweeping was still taking place each Spring. SU responded that it was, plus during other times of year as needed.

GG expressed interest in having a broader conversation after this budget cycle about traffic calming. SU noted recent conversations with engineers around road diets, which can have dual-benefits of reducing speeding while also reducing Inflow and Infiltration by lowering the amount of impervious surface. CM noted that these could be effective in certain areas, but expressed hesitation about making streets too narrow, noting that L Street is overly narrow and poses a hazard.

SU provided an update on the Unity Park Fieldhouse, which recently experienced a heating failure. The furnace was in need of replacement, but temporary repairs had been able to keep it serviceable. CNZ, SU, and Parks Director Jon Dobosz were working on a grant-funded strategy to replace the natural gas furnace with an all-electric heat pump system.

SU left the meeting.

GC and JL arrive.

4. Review of Airport Capital Article Requests (Airport Manager Bryan Camden, invited)
a. Up-fit and Repair F-450 Truck (\$26,000)

BC provided a presentation explaining the request. This vehicle was carried for replacement in 2033, but BC believed it could be functional for a longer period if up-fitted and repaired sooner. He noted that this vehicle was in exceptional shape despite its old age, and was well-maintained by his department. It had a fire body due to its previous ownership by a fire department. Improvements would include equipping it with a radio and a utility bed and lighting upgrades. BC hoped to start this process in July so the truck was ready for winter maintenance.

For other vehicles, BC was expecting another 5-7 years of useful life for the department's 2017 truck. Airport vehicles do lots of towing and snow plowing,

but overall travel fewer miles than those of the DPW. Unfortunately, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had switched to only funding emergency service vehicles, meaning that this was no longer a reliable funding source for vehicle purchases and upgrades. The Airport, DPW, and Clean Water Facility (CWF) all cooperatively share resources regularly. BC explained that he had only received Town funds for Airport fleet vehicles twice in recent years.

The Airport only had space to provide indoor shelter to about one-third of its fleet, with the most valuable items getting priority. BC noted that he is looking into options to expand vehicle/equipment sheltering in the next few years.

GG commended the Airport, CWF, and DPW for saving the Town substantial money through the departments' willingness to do in-house work that would otherwise be contracted out, also noting that the Airport was a crucial piece of Town infrastructure.

BC expressed pessimism about Eversource completing the necessary grid improvements required for the planned Airport solar project to move forward, with recent communications from them indicating these improvements are at least 10 years out due to "limited local consumption." GG asked if battery storage had been considered for development at the site. BC explained that many battery storage developers appeared to be weary of the area due to the intense opposition against proposed projects in neighboring towns.

JL commended BC for making great improvements in the Airport's operations. CM expressed agreement, noting that he had been swayed from once being skeptical about the Airport to being supportive.

JB left the meeting.

5. Discuss Airport long-term capital needs and ongoing capital projects including but not limited to:
 - a. Pioneer Aviation Ramp Project
 - b. Pioneer Aviation Backup Generator

BC noted that no other capital requests were being made for this year, as the backup generator project was fortunate to receive state funding.

6. Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting requirements

None.

7. 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 1/7.

8. Adjournment

MOTION to close the meeting at 4:55PM by CM, AE Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Nolan-Zeller