

MONTAGUE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 3:30 pm, Town Hall Annex Meeting Room and via Zoom

In Attendance:

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

Absent: None

Town Staff: Christopher Nolan-Zeller (CNZ) – Assistant Town Administrator; Bryan Camden (BC) – Airport Manager

Meeting called to order 3:30PM, GG Presiding

1. Call to Order and Approve any outstanding meeting minutes: 1/14/26

MOTION to approve the minutes of 1/14/26, by GG, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, LR-AYE, JB-AYE, AE-ABSTAIN. MOTION PASSED

2. Review of new Capital Article Request (Bryan Camden, Airport Manager, invited)
 - a. Install Multi-Use Pathway along Industrial Blvd & Renovate Pioneer Aviation Restrooms (Local match for grant: \$142,500)

BC explained that he had applied for grant funds from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for infrastructure improvements. His previous applications for this program were denied with the feedback that the projects were too small (only \$200-300k). Instead, this year's application sought to identify benefits to not only the Airport, but also the Town and Industrial Park. The funding request was drastically increased in the hope of leveraging funds for this project to improve safety and pedestrian access. Only a 5% local match was required, which could be paid from the Town's remaining Cannabis Impact Fee revenue. If the grant is received, work could start as soon as July.

AE asked if there were any requirements associated with this grant program. BC responded that standard FAA grant conditions apply, including a requirement for continuity of operations for a certain period of time that would not be an issue.

LR asked for a visual of the proposed multi-use path. BC shared a sketch of where this would approximately be located, noting that it would nicely compliment the planned bus stop and intersection improvements at Industrial Blvd and Millers Falls Rd this Summer. The work would mostly be on Town-owned rights of way,

but there were two private properties expected to need easements (owned by 253 Organic and Charter Next Generation, both of which had expressed support).

BC also noted that \$60k had been included in the estimated grant budget for the installation of a traffic light at the intersection of Industrial Blvd and Millers Falls Rd.

AE asked what was currently present in the areas where the multi-use path was proposed. BC responded that it was mostly grass, plus some gravel, with a few driveway crossings.

AE asked whether the proposed multi-use path would accommodate cyclists. BC responded that it would, and added that it was proposed to be about 8-10 feet wide with night lighting fed by electricity from the Airport. He added that the scope could be reduced in several different ways if only partial grant funding was awarded.

CM asked if the project design would be mindful of the possibility of a new Franklin County Technical School facility. BC noted that it would, and added that the Tech School project could possibly provide other related improvements, particularly if only partial grant funding was awarded by FAA. BC also added that the Industrial Park continued to see higher volumes of traffic and business activity.

GG asked about the current restrooms at the Pioneer Aviation facility. BC explained that there was currently a 3x5 ft unisex bathroom, and the facility needed to add at least one ADA-compliant stall, which would require new plumbing and drainage, and would also need a new janitorial closet with access to hot water. The grant budget also included two other room renovations, including a community meeting room and a waiting area that would serve pilots. BC expressed overall confidence and optimism in the grant proposal.

AE expressed support for the project and local match, noting that it would be an excellent use of the Town's Cannabis Impact Fee revenue, which could be difficult to identify eligible ways to spend. BC added that the project would not only benefit the Airport, but also the Industrial Park and the community as a whole, adding that he was aware Airport staff would be responsible for winter maintenance of the path.

CM asked about the feasibility of solar-based lighting solutions. BC explained that he was aware of a company that offered this equipment at a comparable price to traditional lighting, and that he would prefer this approach if it is feasible. CM agreed that this would be simpler than the need to excavate to install conduit for traditional lighting.

BC expressed that asphalt would be the most cost-effective material for paving the path, and that caution would need to be given to utility locations, including working with the utility providers to identify locations of their infrastructure.

GG noted that the committee would discuss internally. BC added that a decision from FAA was expected in late February or early March.

BC leaves the meeting.

GG expressed support for the project, and using a local match to leverage a much larger share of grant funding.

3. Discuss anticipated capital request by Police Department for Cruiser Replacement

CNZ provided an introduction to the expected request by new Police Chief Jason Haskins. Several of the current cruisers are from the 2017 model year and have water pump issues with expensive repair costs.

AE asked whether the department had recently skipped a year of its typical yearly cruiser replacement cycle. CM noted that two out of the past five years of cruiser replacements were deferred.

GG agreed to listen to Chief Haskins' rationale, and the committee agreed to invite him to its next meeting.

CM expressed general concern for the condition of the schools. AE noted agreement, expressing that the state does not provide adequate support to communities for education costs.

4. Review slate of capital requests and updates, vote recommendations

MOTION to recommend the Clean Water Facility (CWF) Requests for Secondary Clarifier Mechanism Replacements, a Super Duty Work Truck with Plow and Lights, and a Wastewater Facility Planning study for a total of \$1,176,000 by CM, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, LR-AYE, JB-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED

MOTION to recommend the Department of Public Works (DPW) Requests for Replacement of 2013 Wacker Neuson RD 12 – A Roller, Replacement of 2013 F-350 4WD Pickup, a Large Used Excavator, Replacement of 2014 2032R Tractor, a Transfer Station Security Gate, Replenishment of the Equipment and Major Repairs Discretionary Fund, Alley and non-Chapter 90 Road paving, and Sidewalk replacement and repair for a total of \$480,000 (to be adjusted downward depending on level needed to replenish Discretionary Fund to \$75,000 based on its balance on March 1, 2026) by CM, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, LR-AYE, JB-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED

MOTION to recommend the Selectboard office's request for flooring tile replacement at the Colle Building for a total of \$25,000 by CM, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, LR-AYE, JB-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED

MOTION to recommend the Shea Theater's request for Facility and Theatrical System Upgrades for a total local share of \$100,000 by CM, LR Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, LR-AYE, JB-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED

MOTION to recommend the Airport's request for Industrial Blvd Multi-Use Path and Pioneer Aviation Restroom Renovation and to Up-fit and repair F-450 Truck for a total of \$168,500 by CM, AE Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, LR-AYE, JB-AYE, AE-AYE. MOTION PASSED

5. Coordinate discussions with Finance Committee

The committee would meet again on 2/25. This would be followed by a joint meeting with the Finance Committee on 3/12 to present the final slate of capital articles moved forward.

6. FY27-31 Capital Plan Update

The committee agreed to thoroughly review the long-term capital plan at an upcoming meeting before approving an updated version. GG expressed particular interest in revisiting the current schedule for improvements in the 'Facilities' category.

7. Topics not anticipated in the 48 hour posting requirements

AE mentioned that a graphic had been shared at the most recent Selectboard meeting showing the long-term debt impacts if both the Library Main Branch and the new Franklin County Technical School projects move forward, expressing support for both projects, and noting that the Town could feasibly afford both while remaining under its maximum annual debt payment ratio of 15% of the general fund. However, it would be sitting above the recommended 4-6% range noted in the Town's financial policies.

GG expressed general confidence in the Town's financial policies, noting their origin as a collaboration between the former Town Administrator, former Town Accountant, and with assistance and consultation from credit agencies.

CM noted that in addition to these two projects, another \$5-10 million was anticipated in improvements to the Clean Water Facility. While this would not strain the General Fund's debt due to being paid primarily from CWF Enterprise, it would still be felt by residents in the form of higher sewer bills.

AE expressed disagreement with the Town Administrator's tone when presenting this data to the Selectboard, adding that the Library, Tech School, and anticipated Elementary School project in the next decade were the only foreseeable major building projects the

Town would need for quite a while, and that operating with debt representing 8-10% of the annual budget would not be a major problem.

JB clarified that while the forecasted scenario has the Town above its recommended debt ratio for about 8 years, it would not affect any existing bonds.

CM expressed skepticism with FCTS' assertion that a renovation of the current facility would be nearly as expensive and less cost-effective than an entirely new building, also noting concern that departments' operating budgets would be squeezed tighter in order to accommodate increased debt payments.

GG added that Montague has been viewed throughout the region as a positive example of successful public investment, and this has all been done despite currently sitting below the recommended 4-6% debt ratio.

LR noted that the Six-Town Regional Planning Board's efforts seemed to be faltering, and that some kind of regional movement was necessary in order to keep education costs sustainable long-term.

CM expressed fear that the Town may give too much leeway to engineers and architects on major projects, and that the Town must remain ever-prudent about not being sold more than it needs. AE expressed satisfaction with the work done by the Design and Project Management firms for the Library project to trim costs in order to keep it affordable to the Town.

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 2/25.

9. Adjournment

MOTION to close the meeting at 4:46PM by GG, JB Seconded. CM-AYE, GG-AYE, AE-AYE, LR-AYE, JB-AYE. MOTION PASSED

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher Nolan-Zeller